

Preliminary Submission by the ANU Gender Institute

prepared by Emerita Professor Margaret Jolly

We are delighted to see the development of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action and First Nations Gender Justice Institute and look forward to your launch in March 2024. We celebrate the way in which this is designed by and for First Nations women and will create a space for First Nations women and girls 'to come together and share stories and translate lived experience into evidence, informing policy and decision making and shifting systems'. As members of the Gender Institute, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, we are committed to the principles which underlie this framework and in particular the fact it is led by First Nations women and is independent of government. We are excited by the three themes announced about 'measuring change outcomes, ensuring a strong accountability and evaluation approach, and strengthening data sovereignty and governance.

In this preliminary submission we first list some of the important projects which have been funded by the Gender Institute and/or led by its members and affiliates in recent years. We then list some publications by one of our members that expressly relate to measuring change and protecting and strengthening data sovereignty and governance. We conclude with a precis of a major project funded by DFAT which developed an innovative methodology in a space where global indicators of poverty and gender equality can reinforce racialised hierarchies. We see it as crucial that all these parameters are perceived through a First Nations lens. These projects exemplify how collecting data from women on the ground can eschew extractive research practices, and 'ensure a diversity of voices, and how research and project outcomes can be accountable and accessible to these voices'.

First, here is a brief selection on some of our recent projects funded by the Gender Institute or engaging its members. The first is a project in which June Oscar the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Social Justice Commissioner at the AHRC has been vitally involved and co-funded.

Caring about Care



Caring about Care is a research project co-led by Elise Klein and Janet Hunt and funded by the Gender Institute. The project focuses on the unpaid care work performed by First Nations women and seeks to address the gap in literature on the subject. Using qualitative research and fieldwork, the project is ongoing and aims to lead into further research, with the researchers submitting an application for Australian Research Council funding. Working with First Nations women and organisations, the research seeks to understand how First Nations women themselves conceptualise care work, how they value and experience it, including its challenges, how much of it they do, and how and if policy could better recognise and value it.

The fieldwork for this project has been completed, and the group will further publish two research reports, a workshop report, a working paper, and at least one academic article. The research group is a continuous project which will remain active after publication of these reports, connecting researchers across ANU.

Proposal and Aims

This research aims to provide an understanding of the full scope and nature of unpaid care work performed by First Nations women, the complex realities shaping decisions around unpaid caregiving, and the associated impacts on women.

The project focuses on four questions:

1. How do First Nations women conceptualise care work, including its scope and nature?
2. How do First Nations women value and experience care work?
3. What volume and type/s of care work are First Nations women regularly engaged in?
 1. Can and how do women negotiate the volume and type of care they provide?
 2. What formal and informal support is available for women undertaking care work?
4. How might the care work of First Nations women be more formally recognised and valued including through policy?

Research Significance

The social and economic implications of undertaking unpaid care work have long been a subject of academic and policy discussions. However, research on First Nations' women's unpaid care roles is extremely sparse. There is an enduring need, therefore, for research that supports First Nations women to share their own stories and experiences of unpaid care, which *may include not just care of family and community, but also care of Country and care of culture*. This research needs to more deeply understand the multifaceted nature of First Nation women's care, as well as how different types of care work can intertwine and overlap to produce layered experiences and effects.

Furthermore, there is also limited empirical evidence to make a case for effective policy options. This is partly because the amount of unpaid care work that First Nations women perform remains invisible to scholars and policymakers. The significance of this project is that it will be the first study to expand existing feminist research on care work, by

exploring what care work means for First Nations women. The research is intersectional in nature, and is designed to enable First Nations women, led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar, to advocate for effective policy responses.

Associated Members



Chay Brown

Position: Research Scholar

School and/or Centres: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Website: <https://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/people/ms-chay-brown>



Associate Professor Elise Klein

Position: Associate Professor - Crawford School of Public Policy

School and/or Centres: ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Email: Elise.Klein@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/persons/elise-klein>



Associate Professor Janet Hunt

Position: Associate Professor

School and/or Centres: ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Email: janet.hunt@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/hunt-je>



Dr Mandy Yap

Position: Fellow

School and/or Centres: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Email: mandy.yap@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/yap-ml>



Dr Yonatan Dinku

Position: Research Fellow

School and/or Centres: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Email: Yonatan.Dinku@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/dinku-ym>

Also of relevance are three past projects funded through Gender Institute grants, other ANU funds and external sources.

Guidelines for Media Reporting on Family and Domestic Violence in the Northern Territory

June – December 2021, **Dr Chay Brown**

Gender Institute Report on Outcomes

Media Changing the Story: Media Guidelines for the reporting of domestic, family, and sexual violence in the Northern Territory.

Grant details

The Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group (TWFSG) decided to develop media guidelines for the reporting of domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV) after their experience when one of their members, R.Rubuntja, was murdered in 2021. The media response was challenging for the group to navigate, and so inspired them to develop guidelines for media professionals and anyone involved in creating media releases.

TWFSG, as well as other Aboriginal women and workers in the DFSV sector in the Northern Territory, have long been concerned about the reporting of DFSV and Aboriginal people. Some media's lack of awareness and knowledge of cultural obligations and sensitivities, coupled with a gendered approach to reporting on DFSV generally, has sometimes resulted in conflict, shame and stigma for some individuals, families and organisations. The intention of the media guidelines was therefore to engage with media professionals as allies and bring them together with Aboriginal women's groups and the DFSV sector to collaboratively develop media guidelines that build a shared understanding of the causes and drivers of violence against women, and support media to report on DFSV in ways that is culturally safe and victim-survivor centred. The media guidelines, entitled *Media Changing the Story*, have been disseminated throughout the Northern Territory. The media guidelines, and the process through which they were created, was reported widely in the Northern Territory as well as national First Nations media, including on the ABC, *Koori Mail*, and *The Conversation*.

Project details

In mid-2021, a series of workshops were held with media professionals, Aboriginal women's groups, and the DFSV sector throughout the Northern Territory. A survey was also distributed to media professionals to gain further input. The survey as well as the products created in the workshops were used to produce the draft guidelines. A series of expert reviewers from the media, DFSV sector, and primary prevention were invited to review the

draft guidelines. This feedback was used to revise the media guidelines, and the final version was validated and approved by TWFSG. The media guidelines were launched on the Alice Springs Court Lawns on December 8th 2021, which was reported widely in local media. The co-authors of the media guidelines gave a presentation, hosted by the Gender Institute, on the guidelines in March 2022.

Impact

Media Changing the Story has been widely reported on within the Northern Territory and has been warmly received by media professionals. The media guidelines have also been used as an advocacy point, with several letters from the DFSV sector to media outlets to challenge problematic reporting referred to the guidelines. There has also been widespread engagement and interest in the media guidelines at the Australian National University and the Northern Territory Government, with several requests for the authors to present the guidelines to various groups, including Territory Families and the ANU Postgraduate and Research Students' Association. Although the media guidelines have been reported nationally by some First Nations media, and TWFSG has received many requests from journalists from around the country requesting a printed copy, national media has been slower to engage with the media guidelines. However, the guidelines have already proven to be a useful artefact, as they are being used by the DFSV sector and Aboriginal women's groups to guide their engagement with the media, and vice versa.

Media Guidelines (available at this link)

[https://genderinstitute.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2021_docs/Media%20Changing%20the%20Story.%20Media%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20reporting%20of%20DFSV%20i%20the%20Northern%20Territory.%20\(1\).pdf](https://genderinstitute.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2021_docs/Media%20Changing%20the%20Story.%20Media%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20reporting%20of%20DFSV%20i%20the%20Northern%20Territory.%20(1).pdf)

Outcomes

In addition to the development of the media guidelines, several articles have reported on *Media Changing the Story*:

<https://www.caama.com.au/2021/12/08/all-women-in-our-community-matter-their-experiencesmatter-their-stories-matter-they-matter-larissa-ellis/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-12-10/media-changing-the-story-guidelines-nt-domesticfamily-violence/100683834>

<https://www.dka.com.au/stories/lessons-learnt-preventing-violence-against-aboriginal-women-andchildren-in-central-australia>

<https://theconversation.com/she-was-the-most-important-person-to-us-r-rubuntjas-story-shows-society-is-still-failing-first-nations-women-180857>

Beyond Fishing: Torres Strait Islander women's connections to solwata



While the knowledge and practices of Indigenous coastal and marine societies has attracted the attention of many scholars, the focus has tended to be on the contribution of men while the activities of women have either been overlooked or, at best, narrowly described. Drawing on more than twenty years of collaborative research with the eastern Torres Strait Island community of Erub, this presentation explores the nature and extent of Indigenous Torres Strait Islander women's engagement in fishing and other marine activities as well as their related knowledge, practices and motivations. In addition to highlighting the richness of that knowledge and the significance of their contribution to the subsistence economy, the myth of their limited participation in commercial fishing is debunked. Beyond their engagements in fishing, these women are found to hold deeply-felt personal attachments and connections to "solwata". The latter are reflected in the extent to which the rhythms of the sea shape and define their daily routines, life histories, and their personal and collective identities. The presentation concludes with a call for greater attention to the connections Indigenous women have to sea space and for fisheries management to accommodate and support their increased participation in the formulation and implementation of contemporary fisheries policy.

[Monica Mulrennan](#) is an internationally-recognised geographer with expertise in indigenous environmental stewardship. Spanning almost three decades, she has conducted partnered research with Torres Strait Islanders and James Bay Crees (northern Canada) on community-driven strategies for environmental and cultural heritage protection. Her work addresses the following themes: local ecological knowledge, land and sea tenure systems, indigenous stewardship of land-sea environments, protected area creation, small-scale fisheries development, and human adaptations to environmental change. She has also contributed to indigenous land-use planning and policy through her involvement in the documentation of native title claims, the creation of indigenous protected areas, and the development of indigenous strategies for environmental stewardship. A central focus of her work has been to document how state conceptions of jurisdiction, property and boundary-making have resulted in a distortion and fragmentation of indigenous coastal/marine territories, ideas that have contributed to recent progress in resolving indigenous rights and interests in the sea, particularly in Australia. Building on this work (and supported by her membership of the McGill-based

Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives - CICADA), her research explores strategies – such as fisheries co-management, income security programs, protected area creation and regional conservation plans – through which indigenous groups can assert and regain authority over their lives, territories and livelihoods.

Her current work with Indigenous women and their use, knowledge and attachments to sea space highlights the importance of paying attention to the crucial yet often invisible role of women and their particular relationships with their land and sea territories.

Legally Assisted and Culturally Appropriate Dispute Resolution' (LACADR)

Dr Siobhan McDonnell



Associate Professor Siobhan McDonnell

Position: Associate Professor

School and/or Centres: Crawford School , ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Email: siobhan.mcdonnell@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/persons/siobhan-mcdonnell>

Report by a Gender Institute member for Attorney General's Department based on qualitative research in 2019-20 across eight pilot sites with First Nations people and refugees, in urban, rural and remote settings, which led to policy development and further government funding. Siobhan was Chief Investigator of this evaluation of a \$8.25 million project looking at the use of family dispute resolution in the context of family violence in Indigenous and refugee families (2017-2020).

Second, we suggest some publications which may prove relevant for developing the Framework for Action.

Selected Publications involving GI member Dr Mandy Yap on methodology and data sovereignty



Dr Mandy Yap

Position: Fellow

School and/or Centres: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Email: mandy.yap@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/yap-ml>

- [Wright, A, Thurber, K, Yap, M et al. 2020, 'Who responds? An examination of response rates to a national postal survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, 2018-2019', *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. -.](#)
- [Moodie, N, Ward, J, Dudgeon, P, McDonnell, S et al. 2020, 'Roadmap to Recovery: Reporting on a research taskforce supporting Indigenous responses to COVID-19 in Australia', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, p. 13.](#)
- [Yap, M & Yu, E 2019, 'Mabu liyan: the Yawuru way', in Christopher Fleming & Matthew Manning \(ed.\), *Routledge Handbook of Indigenous Wellbeing*, Routledge, London, pp. 261-280.](#)
- [Yap, M & Yu, E 2016, 'Data sovereignty for the Yawuru in Western Australia', in Tahu Kukutai, John Taylor \(ed.\), *Indigenous data sovereignty: toward an agenda*, ANU Press, Australia, pp. 233-251.](#)
- [Yap, M & Yu, E 2016, *Community Wellbeing From the Ground Up: A Yawuru Example*.](#)
- [Yap, M & Yu, E 2016, 'Operationalising the capability approach: developing culturally relevant indicators of indigenous wellbeing - an Australian example', *Oxford Development Studies*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 315-331pp.](#)
- [Watene, K & Yap, M 2015, 'Culture and sustainable development: Indigenous contributions', *Journal of Global Ethics*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 51-55.](#)
- [Hunter, B & Yap, M 2014, Income, work and education: Insights for closing the gap in urban Australia.](#)
- [Biddle, N, Taylor, J & Yap, M 2014, 'Closing Which Gap? Demographic and Geographic Dilemmas for Indigenous Policy in Australia', in Frank Trovato and Anatole Romaniuk \(ed.\), *Aboriginal populations: social, demographic, and epidemiological perspectives*, The University of Alberta Press, Alberta, Canada, pp. 415-440.](#)

Finally, we offer the exemplary work of a project which was conducted in countries overseas, Nepal, Indonesia and Fiji, but which may prove interesting and relevant for the Framework for Action in terms of methodology, measurement and policy impact.

The Individual Deprivation Measure

Professors Sharon Bessell and Janet Hunt



Professor Sharon Bessell

Position: Professor

School and/or Centres: Crawford School , ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Email: sharon.bessell@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/persons/sharon-bessell>



Associate Professor Janet Hunt

Position: Associate Professor

School and/or Centres: ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

Email: janet.hunt@anu.edu.au

Website: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/hunt-je>

Funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015-2020. The Australian Government partnered with the Australian National University and the International Women's Development Agency, to deliver the Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM). This

gender-sensitive and multidimensional measure assessed deprivation at the individual level, in relation to 15 dimensions of life, making it possible to see who is poor, in what way and to what extent. The IDM is helping to overcome the current limitations of poverty data by getting below the household level to provide individual-level assessment of deprivation. By enabling disaggregation of data and measuring what poor women and men say defines poverty, using an approach that can reveal the relationship between gender and poverty, including within the household, the IDM can provide a gender-sensitive, nuanced, intersectional picture of deprivation. This can help governments and organisations to tackle poverty more effectively through better targeting of policy and programming. Individual level, gender-sensitive, multidimensional measurement is critical to tracking global progress towards the SDGs, and understanding how development efforts are contributing to 'leaving no one behind'.

Reports on the IDM are available at

https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/IDM_CSJW_6Pager.pdf

<https://sdgs.org.au/project/the-individual-deprivation-measure-global-program/>

These are a selection of past projects by members of the Gender Institute which may be of relevance and interest. We look forward greatly to collaborating with you and your team as the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action and First Nations Gender Justice Institute is launched in March 2024 and develops into the future. Our best wishes for that important work.