

15 December 2023

Commissioner June Oscar AO
C/- Aboriginal Social Justice Team
Australian Human Rights Commission

By email: wiyiyaniuthangani@humanrights.gov.au

Dear Commissioner Oscar

Re: Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality

Djirra welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality (the Framework) and the establishment of a First Nations Gender Justice Institute at the Australian National University (the Institute).

Djirra is a specialist Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (**ACCO**) with 21 years' experience accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and their children, on their individual journeys. We find solutions through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women sharing their stories, journeys, and experiences. Djirra celebrates women's strength and resilience. We are committed to a future without family violence.

Djirra delivers holistic, culturally safe, specialist family violence support, legal services and case management, alongside cultural and wellbeing workshops and programs. Our services have state-wide reach, touching every part of Victoria to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Self-determination is the foundation of everything we do. Djirra amplifies the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. We advocate for system-wide change to improve access to justice, eliminate systemic violence, and strengthen women's resilience.

Djirra is an active member of the National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services (**NFVPLS**) Forum, the peak body for our people who are experiencing or at risk of family violence.

Djirra endorses the NFVPLS submission on the Framework. We also refer the Commission to the NFVPLS' 2019 submission to the Productivity Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues paper.¹

Djirra welcomes the 'First Nations gendered systems lens' that guides the Framework and the emphasis on 'systems thinking' and 'systems practice' to drive progress to gender justice and equality.

¹ See: [Submission 66 - National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum \(NFVPLS\) - Indigenous Evaluation Strategy - Project \(pc.gov.au\)](#)

We reiterate the necessity of a 'ground up', self-determined approach to defining Aboriginal led outcomes, success measures and to the building of an Aboriginal evidence base. To achieve this, we must have community-led accountability mechanisms and whole of government funding reform that radically transforms structures and processes to a self-determined agenda.

Djirra, like many other ACCOs, continues to experience 'evaluation' as 'top-down', extractive and through a Western lens. For evaluations to truly benefit Aboriginal women and children, Aboriginal women must lead and inform all stages of the evaluation process.

Djirra also asks that the Framework considers:

- **Creating significantly more timely and accessible national data about violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.** This is crucial to measuring progress on Closing the Gap Outcome 13. **Djirra has a persistent concern about the lack of new data since 2018/19 about Outcome 13.** Closing the Gap uses NATSIHS data to report on family violence; a survey conducted every 6 years and relies on individual reporting of family violence, rather than police or justice data.
- **Aboriginal data sovereignty is a key tenet of respecting First Peoples' cultural rights and right to self-determination.** Djirra - and other specialist ACCOs - have insufficient funding to collect the data needed to inform systemic change. Trends, statistics and stories about our women's experiences and the solutions that make a difference for our women are incomplete because:
 - ACCOs are told by funders what we must report on; and
 - ACCOs have insufficient resources to record, assess and report on our women's experiences and the solutions that make a difference for our women.
- **Governments must invest in ACCO monitoring and evaluation capacity to ensure Aboriginal data sovereignty and more comprehensive datasets.** In particular:
 - Funders transforming systems and practices to support self-determination and Aboriginal led design, delivery, reporting, evaluation.
 - Investment in Aboriginal led design and development of outcomes and evaluation frameworks and research agendas driven by ACCOs.
 - Investment in data systems which operationalise principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and which can be used to guide service design, improvement and delivery – not only reporting.
 - Investment in the resources (internal dedicated roles) and capability required for implementation of these frameworks and systems.
 - Investment in capacity and resources to develop approaches which rely on multiple sources of evidence and culturally safe methodologies (i.e. service data, external and internal research and evaluation, staff on the ground practice experience, and clients and lived experience perspectives).

Aboriginal Community Controlled
Culturally Safe
Prevention of Family Violence
Legal Services and Holistic Support
Cultural and Wellbeing Workshops
Policy and Advocacy



- **Better access to disaggregated data.** Many sources do not disaggregate data by both Indigeneity and gender, which increases the invisibility of Aboriginal women.
- **Consideration of the ANROWS Australian National Research Agenda.**

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antoinette Braybrook'.

Antoinette Braybrook AM
CEO, Djirra