



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

Submission by

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SECTION ONE – Measuring Change Outcomes

1. What change do you want to see for First Nations women and girls, in all their diversity, with their families and communities, to live their lives in the way they want? What would you feel, see, hear, sense or collectively understand if this change was happening?

- Safety – Women would be safe from violence. This would mean women being free of all forms of violence including institutional and structural racism. This would also include:
 - better education for service providers of the laws to protect women (example: training police to understand how the term *family* within the *Restraining Orders Act 1997* (WA) includes extended family members within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship context; and
 - a reduction in teenage pregnancy, more specifically those under the age of legal consent.
- Success – First Nations women and girls will have the same opportunities as non-Aboriginal women.
- Culture – First Nations women and girls have access to their culture, are strong in their sense of culture, participation in culture and pride in their culture.
- Education – Women and girls have fair and equitable access to education including simpler pathways, more women within the STEM and Arts fields. Early intervention and assessments are accessible to ensure children with varied learning needs are properly supported to thrive. Children are educated in the way they know with a focus on cultural and different learning styles.
- Healthcare – Fair and equitable access to healthcare including: those in remote communities having proper care, access to interpreters and assessments for mental health and disability; adequate pregnancy and post-partum care with supports for birthing on Country. We would also see lower statistics for drug and alcohol abuse.
- Individualised funding – Communities are seen as the individual Countries they are, and funding is provided on this basis rather than taking a one size fits all approach to service delivery. Consultation will also happen with the right people to ensure those funded to deliver services are the right people to do so.
- Pride – More strength-based discourse would be shared.
- Reduction in contact with justice services – People would engage less with places like Legal Aid WA, Department of Communities and Corrective Services because they didn't need their assistance or interventions.
- Geographical distance – People in the remote and regional areas will have the same outcomes as those in metropolitan areas and major cities.
- Social equality – First Nations people thriving and having the same level and percentages of privilege as the rest of the Australian population.

2. In your experience, what practices and approaches are most effective in collecting data, measuring, and evaluating change?

- Yarning – It is important to have conversations in proper ways and ensure people have the space to share their experiences without being rushed or restricted. This is especially important to remote and regional communities.

- Surveys – Where they are self-paced, and people are allowed time to think through their answers. Also, people require different types of survey access including paper, electronic and verbal.
- Longitudinal data – data collection over a longer timeframe to properly see and measure effective outcomes (example: Target 120 program in Western Australia has been funded only since 2017 and we will not know the full value of the program until the participants originally aged 10-14 have participated for at least a decade. If this program does not continue during that time, we may not be able to accurately measure its success).

3. How do you want to see local change practices and data collection inform national priorities and achieve systemic outcomes, and how could this relate to the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality?

- Funding – Improved implementation of national priorities such as Closing the Gap. Funding to also be extended for meaningful periods of time (example: often programs are funded for 2-3 years and then the people utilising them are left without services while they are evaluated).
- Replication – Where culturally suitable and appropriate programs and procedures that work are duplicated into other communities to assist them in a similar way.
- Less revolving doors – If it is identified the same people are accessing the same services it is important to evaluate what barriers might be preventing them from resolving those needs (example: Aboriginal Justice Open Days: If we see the same clients with the same problems every time, are the systems in place to help resolve issues or are they just a band aid?).

4. Do you have any additional thoughts, views or experiences about gender-specific data and outcomes that could be included in the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality and the First Nations Gender Justice Institute's work?

- Active listening – It is important any data collection involves right way practices of yarning and actively listening to ensure the right voices are heard when collecting data.
- Regional and Remote – It is important that regional and remote women's voices are properly heard. This means all voices, especially those where English is not their first language.
- Positive Discourse – It is important to record the positive stories and move away from a deficit narrative when working with First Nations peoples.

SECTION TWO - Ensuring a strong accountability and evaluation approach

1. Should government (and other stakeholders) be accountable to community determined outcomes? How can this be included in the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality?

Yes, especially where Government funding has been provided to ensure it is going where it is needed and is delivering positive outcomes. Example: If funding is provided to deliver a service to a remote community those agencies funded needs to be accountable to ensure actual services are being delivered rather than funding covering predominantly travel time and limited in community assistance.

Basic necessities requested by communities should be provided and the government held accountable. These include basic infrastructure, healthcare, and access to food. It is not acceptable that people outside of major cities do not have these things and this should be consistently reported on for accountability and improvement.

2. What does the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality and First Nations Gender Justice Institute need to do to incorporate diverse lived experiences and to ensure that no one misses out on opportunities to contribute to and hear this work?

- Inclusivity of all regions, languages – ensure remote and regional communities are properly consulted and given adequate time to respond.
- Adequate provision of interpreters.
- Inclusivity of ability – ensure multiple modes of delivery to include all people with physical, intellectual, and psychological disabilities.
- Inclusivity of those with social barriers – contact with people in hospitals, residential facilities and rough sleepers and those suffering homelessness who may not have access to emergency shelters etc.
- Time - a lengthy consultation period which respects cultural practise and time for thinking and yarning. People should also be provided with multiple opportunities for feedback.

3. We recognise that the process to implement change is just as important as achieving outcomes. How would you want to see implementation processes evaluated over time.

- Ongoing evaluation and adaptation - ensuring the actions around implementation are continuously evaluated so they can be open to constant improvement and change. This is especially important because each Aboriginal Country has different practices and so what works well in one will not always translate to the same success in another. Meaning, change and adaptation is paramount.
- Active reviewing to ensure accountability and funds for evaluation are not predominantly used on travel time or other things that could be managed better.
- Evaluation through pictures, snapshots, and yarning.

4. Do you have any additional thoughts, views or experiences about accountability practices that could be included in the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality and the Institute's work?

- It is important that people are consulted on where funding goes before it is allocated. Too frequently funding for specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs is given to the wrong organisations who may not have a positive relationship with a community and so the service is not utilised by the people that need it and is instead

wasted. Engaging with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations is fundamental in ensuring success in this area.

- Realistic timeframes of outcomes are needed for proper evaluation eg: By 2030 what would you like to see occur and is this a realistic or wishful goal?
- Specialists who understand resource use and can minimise wastage are important as often program resources are spent justifying funding instead of delivering services and this may not always be the most efficient way.
- Creation of sustainable programs independent of government funding is the ideal goal to deliver autonomy to First Nations women and girls.

SECTION THREE - Protecting and strengthening data sovereignty and governance

1. What are your hopes and aspirations for what the First Nations Gender Justice Institute's database on First Nations women's and girl's lived experience and voices could look like? How can we ensure safe and considered access and use of the database?

- Women and Girls would be provided with a safe space to record their lived experiences such as a caravan or bus that travels to all regions and communities.
- The project would provide interconnectedness allowing women and girls to share and strengthen culture. For example: a young person in metropolitan Sydney can connect to family in a remote community and share experiences and culture.
- Creation of a 'blakfella' Tiktok where content can be created and shared safely away from mainstream society.
- Increased involvement in education, mentoring, lore and cultural connectedness.
- The creator of each piece of living history should have control over how they are identified and how their story is shared as well as to whom.
- Tying internet usage to empowerment.
- Education for users about energy frameworks and internet safety. Using a positive and negative energy framework approach to educate people on safe use of the internet. Safety for young people around their own appearance, self-esteem and healing because if people are secure in themselves, they are less likely to attack others.
- Addressing intersectionality – there are limited sexual health resources for the LGBTQIA+ community in metropolitan areas and less in regional and remote areas. An education and networking/support resource like in this area could assist with people feeling connected and supported when they are part of more than one minority group.

2. How do we ensure that this living database is used and owned by First Nations women and girls?

This could be achieved in several ways:

- Storing the information within a secure central point and controlling the access.
- Treating the content as a large yarning circle where people are safe to be themselves and their freedom of expression is protected.
- Creating appropriate pathways for data access approval creating a chain of command in communities that allows access requests.

Protection from destruction, access by unsafe people (including non-Aboriginal anthropologists).

- An individualised approach to data access- Content creators owning their intellectual property, controlling outcomes and safeguarding themselves.

Proprietary interest needs balanced with personal safety.

3. How can the First Nations Gender Justice Institute support First Nations women and girls to access, contribute to and use the database? How can this help women and girls to make decisions about their own local priorities to measure what works on the ground?

- Address digital poverty to ensure access is equitable to all First Nations women and girls regardless of socio-economic status and geographical location. Piggyback off existing infrastructure to reduce costs eg: utilising school internet connections in remote communities.
- Build knowledge bases on how to utilise the database and content centred around mentorship.
- Create different format options for different people.

4. Do you have any additional thoughts, views or experiences about strengthening data sovereignty and government that could be included in the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Framework for Action for First Nations Gender Justice and Equality and First Nations Gender Justice Institute's work?

The data could be used to create an electronic museum would assist with its ongoing protection and integrity as well as access.

Data could even be managed in a similar way to social media platforms like Facebook where the content creator can decide who the content is shared with via connection filters and groupings to provide freedom of choice.

Appropriate consultation is needed along with individualised feedback to ensure whoever is viewing personal stories understands their significance and they aren't used for research purposes or otherwise. Also, publication of any information should be approved by the people it is about.