



WIYI YANI U THANGANI

**CHANGE AGENDA
FOR FIRST NATIONS
GENDER JUSTICE**



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The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda for First Nations Gender Justice

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Acknowledgement

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani project has travelled across the continent and surrounding islands 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 kin, our Countries, waters and skies.

There are many people whose individual and collective efforts continue to bring Wiyi Yani U Thangani to life. The entire project, including this document, has been developed through the inspiring leadership, guidance and wisdom of June Oscar AO, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. This Change Agenda has been drafted by Allyson Campbell, Jane Pedersen, Kimberley Hunter, Niamh Kealy, Nick Devereaux, Sophie Spry, Terri Reid and Chloe Wegener in partnership with Dr Skye Trudgett and Haley Ferguson from Kowa Collaboration.

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- Julie-Ann Guivarra, National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Katie Stublely, Griffith University Centre for Systems Innovation, the Presencing Institute, United in Diversity
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Main visual elements included throughout this Change Agenda, including our Sacred Grandmother Tree, have been designed by Chloe Wegener, with guidance from Wella Thurlow.

Supporting visual elements designed by Carbon Creative and We are 27 Creative.

PART 1

Welcome

'We are flipping the narrative on its head and speaking to the system as the problem that needs to be fixed rather than our women ... Nothing like this has ever existed in Australia and it is a direct response to what our women and girls have called for—a Framework and an Institute owned by us, for us, that elevates our strengths, holds our truths, [and] sets out our actions for nation-wide structural reform to help develop the systems that will work for us and support our lives and rights on the ground.'

—June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

Our Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda for First Nations gender justice (Change Agenda) is grounded in our voices and agency. Since 2018, we have been meeting at the ocean's edge, around footy fields, inner city community halls, at campfires under expansive starlit skies, prisons, aged care homes, at bush meetings, and in Australia's political centre to self-determine the way ahead. We started with 2000 of our voices—with women of all ages and girls from twelve years upwards—and have had hundreds of ongoing conversations to form this Change Agenda through a culturally-secure strengths and human rights-based approach.

It is the culmination of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Project (The Project), a multiyear systemic change project delivered by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and with the support of a variety of sponsors from the public, corporate and philanthropic sectors. Amongst these, the Paul Ramsay Foundation has provided significant support for the development of the Change Agenda.

The accumulated evidence of the project conclusively shows how—despite First Nations women and gender-diverse mobs' absences from significant arenas of decision-making

due to ongoing structural marginalisation and discrimination—we are doing significant work across all areas of life. It brings a well overdue First Nations gender lens to issues from housing to education, environmental protection and economic participation. It describes how our women carry knowledge about sustaining existence, are doing the backbone work of society—caring for children, family, kin and Country—and are at the forefront of driving economic and social change.

This evidence is not repeated here. It can be accessed through the substantial material produced by the project so far. Instead, our Change Agenda has become the wrap-around framework supporting better access and use of this evidence to help translate our strengths, issues and aspirations into a generational agenda for change.

As well as drawing from previous work, the Change Agenda has also been informed by voices and discussions at the Wiyi Yani U Thangani National Summit, *We Are The Change* (2023), post-summit surveys, a series of in-person and online focus groups, and personal and organisational contributions to a submission process. Throughout these engagements, the development of the Change Agenda has been guided by an Advisory Group (named above).

Across all project engagements, there has been a consistent message from women in all their diversity, that the business-as-usual approach to addressing issues is continuously failing to meet our needs. Piecemeal and disjointed governmental decisions that impact our lives are part of broader societal structures that have entrenched and perpetuated intersectional discriminations including racialised sexism, gender and wealth inequalities, intergenerational trauma and harms and violence against women and children.

Our women and girls have called for a paradigm shift to address and overcome these devastating, seemingly intractable issues by working to construct a society that empowers and enhances our health and wellbeing. **That's why our Change Agenda is not fixated on tick-box actions but rather on the process and mechanisms to drive lasting change. In a direct response to our voices, our Change Agenda is constructed on the premise that only systemic change, as process and outcome, can meet our needs and fulfil our rights.**

The intention of the Change Agenda is to make our knowledges, dreams and aspirations visible so we can progress the change we want to see. This Change Agenda is our way of knowing the world, through our lens, without any external imposition of how others define our lives. It is through this knowing, that genuine collaboration is possible with diverse stakeholders to reshape systems—laws, policies, institutions, decision-making processes and societal behaviours—so they reflect our realities and visions for the future.

The systemic nature of this Change Agenda means that it is living and will remain predominantly online where it can be responsive to change. The Sacred Grandmother Tree (below) representing this Change Agenda will be printed, along with other artworks about the Change Agenda, to be distributed to our peoples across the continent, uniting our voices in a movement for First Nations gender justice.

Our Change Agenda is set out in four parts.

Part 1 includes the context setting and introductory material for you to engage with our outcomes.

Part 2 sets out the change we want to see in the world, captured in three layers of outcomes.

Part 3 explores how we want to make change happen and outlines our measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL) approach and what this looks like in practice.

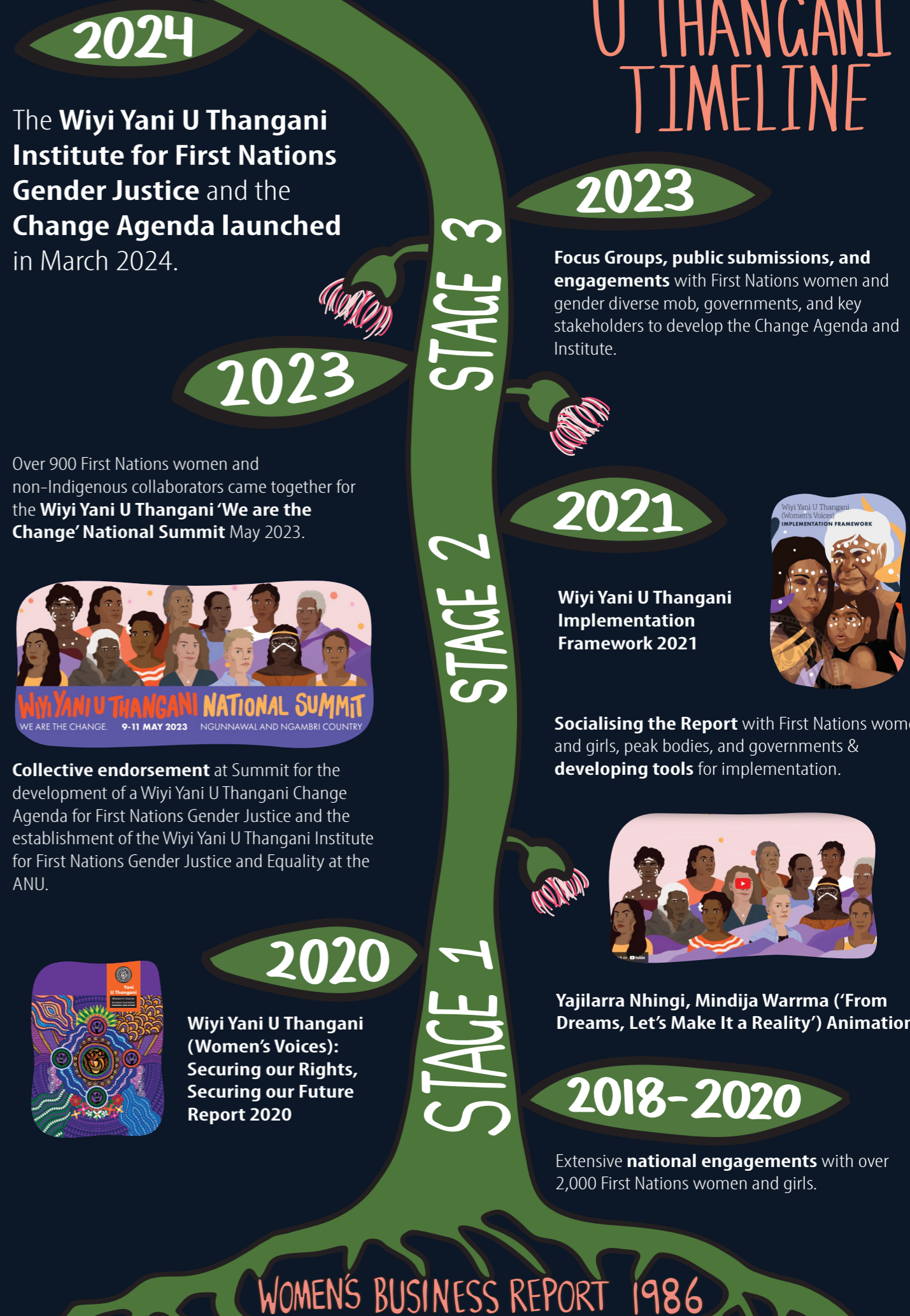
Part 4 describes the work of our Institute and shares our Impact Projects which are focus areas through which our Institute will progress work against all layers of our outcomes.

Engaging with all our Wiyi Yani U Thangani resources

As stated, our Change Agenda is formed from the Project and elevates and refers to all previous findings. As you read through the Change Agenda, we encourage engagement with all previous resources to gain a deep appreciation of First Nations gender justice and the actions you can take to implement the Change Agenda. Resources include: the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report* and *Community Guide* 2020, the Animation *From Dreams, Let's Make it a Reality*, the *Implementation Framework* and accompanying *Dialogue Paper* 2021, the *Women's Safety Policy Forum Outcomes Report* 2022, and the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani, We Are The Change Summit Paper, Communique* and *Youth Statement* 2023.

Throughout the Outcomes section of the Change Agenda there is guidance on accessing the *Implementation Framework* for additional information.

WIYI YANI U THANGANI TIMELINE



A note on language and audience

Our voices have raised the importance of this Change Agenda being intersectional.

An inclusive and respectful movement of all gender identities is critical to achieving gender justice and equality. Our Change Agenda and Institute's primary focus and functions centre First Nations women and girls (inclusive of Sistergirls, trans and cis women). However, we recognise and strive to foster an inclusive and responsive movement for gender-diverse individuals who also experience unique harms caused by the marginalising structures we seek to dismantle.

Our Change Agenda recognises that First Nations women and gender-diverse mob have multiple identities and experiences, including having disabilities (which we frequently refer to as additional abilities), being Elders, living in remote regions, and those who are incarcerated.

Through our additional abilities, unique needs, intelligences and experiences, including our different ways of perceiving, acting, expressing ourselves and navigating existence, our layered identity markers offer rich perspectives that can hold the greatest solutions for dismantling prejudicial systems and constructing more freeing, powerful and enabling ways of living for us all.

Throughout our Change Agenda we speak from this deep well of collective knowing and experiences. We write as 'we', 'us' and 'our', which is our remarkable diversity united, of First Nations women, girls, and gender-diverse mob. From this position we are calling out how we see and want to exist in the world, and the changes we want to happen. We also communicate about 'our families and communities', and 'our Country and kin', referring to all those we love, hold close, are connected to and the places we belong.

From this position, we are communicating to all those who can influence change within systems. As we all live within the broader systems that impact our lives, it means First Nations gender justice is everyone's responsibility, and will benefit everyone. However, in the first instance, given the disproportionate impact governments have on our lives, this Change Agenda asks all those working in government to seriously engage with the outcomes we have presented. More on 'systems actors' can be found in the section 'Systems Actors: seeing yourself in our Change Agenda'.

We know that the 'we' who own this Change Agenda, and those that it communicates out to is always growing, and the voices that join and respond will only grow and strengthen this movement for First Nations gender justice. To have and use this Change Agenda will meet you where you are at, while supporting everyone's journey to fundamentally reimagine how to work and create change.

Guiding Definitions

Throughout our Change Agenda we endeavour to use inclusive terms that people with multiple identities can feel connected to. We are guided by the following definitions:

First Nations Gender Justice is the full self-determination and realisation of equality and rights for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob. Our approach to justice centres the lived experiences and ancestral matriarchal knowledge of First Nations women to combat harmful systems and heal from injustices and inequalities for the benefit of all society. It recognises, honours and embraces the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, genders and abilities.

Intersectionality is a lens used to understand systemic and structural privilege, discrimination and inequality. It refers to how parts of our lives and identities, such as gender, race and abilities, intersect, overlap and compound to shape how we move through the world. The way in which society and our surrounding environments values or is biased by certain characteristics, shapes our wellbeing, wealth and opportunities in life. Societal values and attitudes which are negatively biased can penalise, marginalise or discriminate against those with multiple identities.

Care is woven into the fabric of our societies as a collective value to give and receive love, kindness and support to others. It is taught to us through our cultural practices, laws and kinship responsibilities, teaching us how to share and receive knowledge, how to look after our kin and Country, raise children and look after our old people, and how to maintain peace and good forms of communication throughout communities for our collective wellbeing.

(Re) learning; storying; grounding; connecting; surfacing; shifting: When we refer to actions with '(re)', we are acknowledging that we are surfacing and igniting our ancestral ways of working, knowing, being and doing that draw on our millennial-old knowledge systems. Although

for many of us we are doing these things for the first time, they are within our souls, resting in our chests ready to breathe new air. Through connection and cultural transmission, we recognise how our ancestral knowledges can be applied to life today, strengthening our identities and forming sustainable existences for everyone.

(Re) Matriation is bringing back into being a system and way of living deeply rooted in our ancestral knowledge and the practices of care and reciprocity lived by our grandmothers and ancestors. It centres on the collective wellbeing and nurturing of people and the environment as interdependent, which can be found in our matriarchal ways of being. It recognises this connection as a sacred relationship that has existed for millennia, and can provide insight and solutions for creating more equitable and just social, economic and ecological relationships.

Gender responsiveness provides a lens through which to see, understand, analyse, respond and shift systems through the experiences, values, aspirations and needs of women, girls and gender-diverse peoples. It places these voices and knowledges at the forefront of decision-making, and across all stages of work, enabling systems actors to learn, respond and drive change determined by these lived realities.

Safety is integral to wellbeing and health. We use it as a holistic concept that requires balance, harmony and empowerment to be felt and experienced across all areas of life, beyond a physical feeling, to be sensed in cultural, spiritual, and deeply personal ways.

Systems actors are the stakeholders, collaborators, communities, and individuals who exists within the systems we seek to change. Although the ability of these actors to influence change differs, everyone has a role, big or small, in contributing to enabling, caring and thriving systems for us all to live. More direction on the role of different actors is included in 'Systems Actors: seeing yourself in our Change Agenda'.

Our Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda for First Nations Gender Justice: Our Blakprint for transformation

Our Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda is the first document of its kind to centre our vision for gender justice and equality, and the outcomes we believe must be met to achieve this vision. On our terms, in our words, we have defined the changes we want to see and the world we have a right to occupy for ourselves, our children, families and communities, and our culture and Country.

The Change Agenda, combined with the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Institute for First Nations Gender Justice (the Institute), is our visionary Blakprint for transformation. It has been carefully designed and collectively endorsed by us, to foster a future where all of us—our families and communities—thrive.

Through a visual scribing process, our ideas for the Change Agenda have been translated into a Sacred Grandmother Tree (below).

Our Grandmother Tree is alive, nourished by our millennial-old knowledge systems, cultural practices and protocols. Grandmother's roots pull in water, nutrients and the wisdom of centuries of lived experience and ways of being, continuously contributing to the healthy growth of our peoples and all things. The trunk and branches provide

shelter, sustenance, and support for diverse forms of living to flourish. Grandmother reaches up into a crown of vibrant leaves which are secure and fed by the necessary elements of an expansive galaxy of possibilities. As the seasons cycle with the changing positions of the moon and sun, the Grandmother changes shape and form, shedding bark and leaves, renewing the soil in which the roots of life take hold.

The Grandmother Tree is our Change Agenda. It combines:

- **the change we want to see in the world**, captured in three layers of action-orientated aspirational outcomes
- **our practice approach for how we want to make change happen**; including
- a continuous **measurement, evaluation and learning** framework to build evidence for change from the ground up.

The outcomes rise through the trunk into the canopy branches, connecting practice and evidence from the ground, with policy-making and large-scale societal changes.



All layers of our Change Agenda are constantly interacting, forming a generational map, guiding the nature and directional flow of our work, so we, and our collaborators, can intentionally construct the future that we want to live within.

• **Vibrant canopy–Guiding purpose:**

In the canopy of the tree where there is an abundance of life, our Change Agenda holds our guiding purpose. The guiding purpose grounds the Change Agenda in our values, principles and matriarchal wisdom, elevating our knowledge systems and ways of living into how the Change Agenda is constructed. The essence of our matriarchal ways of living—of inclusivity, respect, care, nurture, knowledge of survival and sustaining existence, is for everyone.

Our actions are guided by this purpose which highlights the centrality of our knowledges to transforming systems for the benefit of everyone, contributing to a future where we are centred in narratives of cultural, societal and economic prosperity.

• **Expansive canopy branches–Life outcomes:**

The branches that hold up the canopy represent our gender-responsive aspirations for our families and communities to live safe, healthy and engaged lives. Here, we define all aspects of the world we want to occupy, a world transformed by our collective efforts and enriched by our matriarchal wisdom, our lived experiences, cultural practices and knowledges.

Our progress towards these outcomes is a shared journey, supported by a diverse array of systems actors working in collaboration with us. Meeting these long-term life outcomes is dependent on driving systemic change from the roots of the tree upward, and they also provide an important lens for key government strategies such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The entire Change Agenda and each layer of outcomes that follow, relate to and support these life outcomes.

• **First supportive branches–System shifts outcomes:**

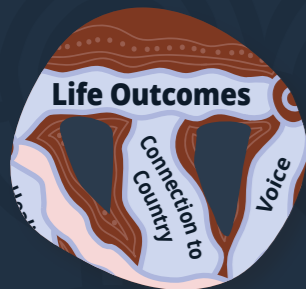
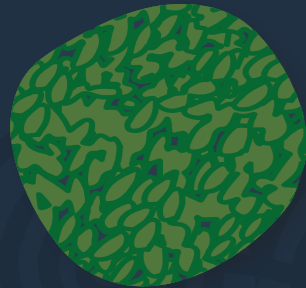
The branches that push up from the trunk represent the system shifts that need to occur when forming structures, policy, resource flows, decision-making spaces, and legislation that can both enable change to happen and support our self-determination.

This layer, between the trunk and the canopy, calls on First Nations and non-First Nations systems actors to realise their position and influence to change systems, particularly those who sit within governments, and other key decision-makers across the private sector and in advocacy bodies. These outcomes serve as indicators of systems being ready to embed enabling conditions for the life outcomes to be met and sustained. This layer, between the trunk and the canopy, calls on First Nations and non-First Nations systems actors to realise their position and influence to change systems, particularly those who sit within governments, and other key decision-makers across the private sector and in advocacy bodies. These outcomes serve as indicators of systems being ready to embed enabling conditions for the life outcomes to be met and sustained. The Institute is also a key vehicle in forming the processes, methodologies and collaborative spaces for us and non-First Nations actors to come together and collaborate in shifting systems.

• **Trunk of the tree–Institute outcomes:**

The trunk is the backbone of the tree, representing the central supporting role of the Institute to guide our Change Agenda. The Institute spearheads processes to enhance collaboration and connection between us and a multitude of systems actors, to develop projects resulting in systemic change. This is the foundational layer of outcomes and is critical to putting the mechanisms in place to progress all other outcome layers. It is particularly important in forming the right conditions for mobilising actors to progress outcomes across the system shifts layer. The Institute outcomes belong to us, but they also speak directly to researchers and other Institute partners, such as philanthropic organisations, think tanks and governments, who will collaborate on the work of the Institute.

Ongoing measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL) is integral to the work of the Institute, focusing on the impacts of projects supported by the Institute. The MEL approach of the Institute is guided by an inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the changes we seek and helps to inform the effectiveness of work to meet outcomes across the entire Change Agenda.





• Anchoring roots–Measurement, evaluation and learning within systems change:

The roots nourish the tree, symbolising how the health of surrounding environments and context is critical to forming healthy and engaged lives, while also providing physical, mental and spiritual stability and security.

At the base of our Change Agenda are the elements of the Institute’s approach to working within complex systems to identify root causes of entrenched socio-economic issues and develop projects and approaches that can drive systemic equality. The Institute will enact this approach, and support systems actors to learn and apply it when working toward the outcomes across the Change Agenda.

The outcomes throughout the Change Agenda cannot be met through a simple linear approach to creating change. The roots remind us that change is made, and society functions, through a complex mix of: societal attitudes and behaviours; relationships of influence and proximity to power; and the laws, policies and resource flows that determine the structures and institutions surrounding us.

Our Change Agenda is founded on the need to take all of these system elements into account when developing projects, while also engaging in continuous measurement, evaluation and learning processes to understand and identify the systemic interventions that have the greatest impact.

• Flowing water–Ways of working:

The water flows in a cycle from the earth and sky constantly replenishing life. In our Change Agenda, deep springs of living water show the gathering spaces where we come together to continuously share our ancestral knowledges, cultural practices and customary Law protocols.

These millennial-old ways of being have been translated into our Change Agenda’s ‘ways of working’, to ground all the outcomes and associated actions in cultural-responsiveness. These ‘ways of working’ guide a reflective evaluation and learning process to identify the types of initiatives to achieve the Change Agenda outcomes. They provide the key practices and strategies for how to approach and do the work of systems change without dictating what the work should be.



Ultimately, the ‘ways of working’ are the Change Agenda’s principles connecting to the guiding purpose and lifeways, always initiating and completing the regenerative flow of water to sustain cycles of existence.

• Starry Sky–Five constellations for a life well lived:

For all our peoples, our Change Agenda tells a greater story of regenerating our knowledge systems and societal structures to form a constellation within the sky of care, love, respect, equality and justice that can and should surround our lives. Fed through the deep wellsprings of knowledge, through the nutrient-rich Grandmother tree and into the air and space that surrounds our world, there are five major constellations forming a navigational map for a life well lived.

Each constellation intersects and connects with each other and every outcome across the Change Agenda, they are:

- ★ **Governance and Decision-Making for Self-Determination**
- ★ **Care for Country, Kin and Community**
- ★ **Language, Land, Water and Cultural Rights**
- ★ **Societal Healing and Intergenerational Wellbeing**
- ★ **Economic Justice and Empowerment**

The constellations reflect and reinforce our human rights as set out within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as a range of intersecting international human rights instruments. This includes but is not limited to, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Together, these five constellations define the enabling conditions for a life well lived and form the cornerstone for our Change Agenda’s continuous MEL approach. Work progressed to meet all the outcomes will be evaluated based on how it is contributing to the full realisation of wellness across these five constellations.



Our Wiyi Yani U Thangani Institute for First Nations Gender Justice

Our Institute, based at the Australian National University (ANU), puts all the layers of our Change Agenda into motion. Our Institute and Change Agenda are fundamentally intertwined—they exist, grow and improve because of each other. The Institute is our own space on the national landscape that makes visible our lives, rights and lived experiences, and validates who we are and our knowledge systems.

Throughout the Change Agenda we refer to the Institute as 'our Institute'. This is to indicate that it has come from, and is held accountable to, our voices (First Nations women and girls and gender-diverse mob). We have also consistently called for a body that can implement the findings of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project, resulting in the formation of this Institute. With the guidance of our Change Agenda, our Institute has focus areas, direction, principles, ways of working and a culturally grounded gender-responsive systems change evaluation and learning approach. It is the responsibility of the Institute's governance and employees to progress the Institutes outcomes, be responsive to the broader Change Agenda, and continuously be informed by our voices as the Institute's work is conducted.

The Institute sits in the trunk of the Grandmother Tree holding this framework of the Change Agenda together. It is also a conduit, a place of intersection at the national level, which connects us and our communities with multidisciplinary systems actors,

such as researchers and governments, to develop, design and implement initiatives that drive systemic change. These initiatives will be responsive to our outcomes and target the root causes of issues, such as intersectional discriminations and financial insecurity to progressively improve our and our families and communities' health, wellbeing and safety, on our terms. Through this approach, the Institute will be gathering living evidence and data to keep the Institute accountable to, and track progress against, the Change Agenda.

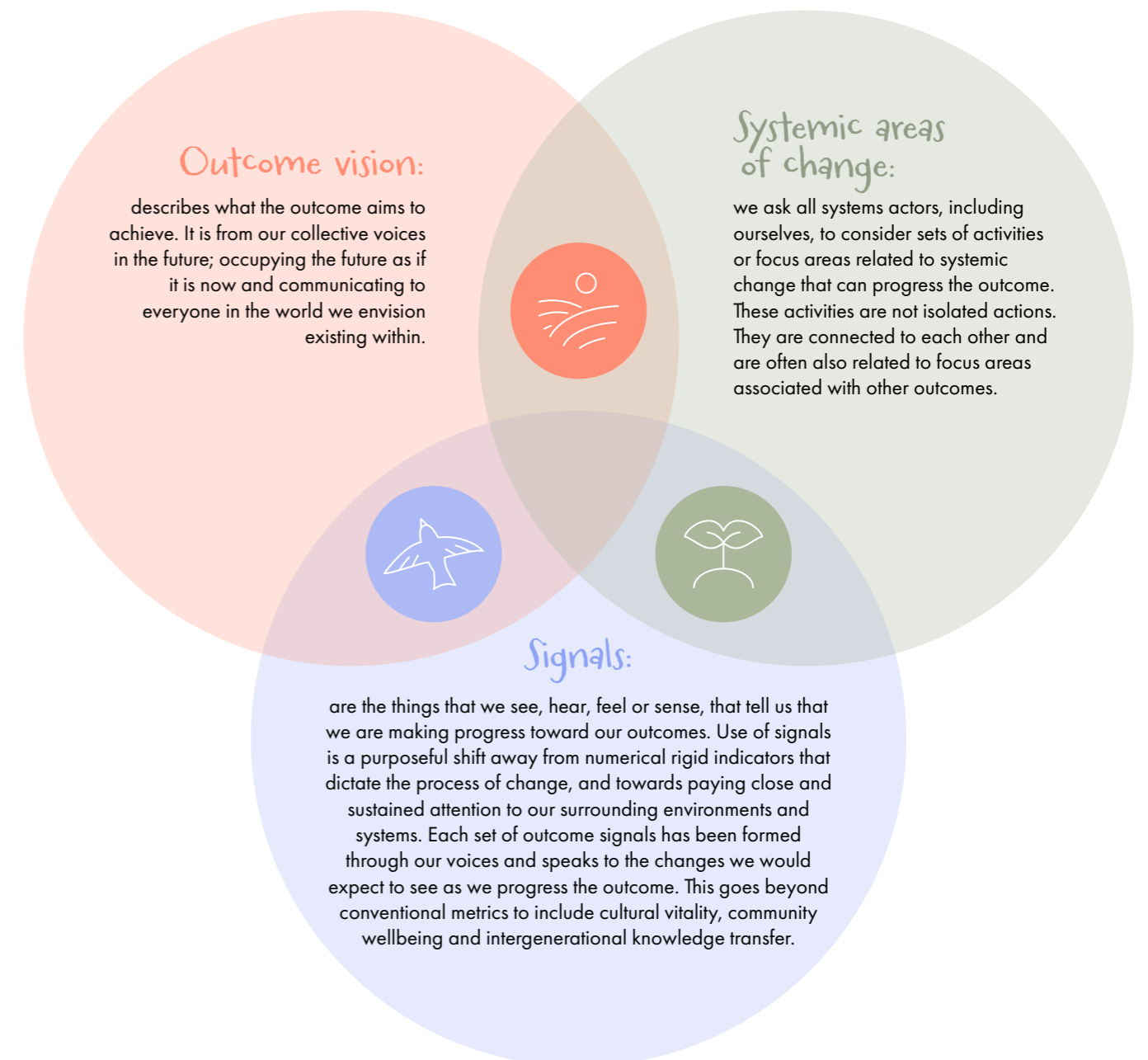
We see the Institute as occupying a middle 'third' space of vibrant co-creation to put the processes and practices in place to drive the long-term change we want to see. Like our Grandmother Tree drawing up the nourishment of our cultures and knowledges into its trunk, the Institute will ensure our voices and ways of knowing and doing infuse the work of many other system actors to form a flourishing ecosystem. In effect, through the Institute's ongoing engagement, evaluation and learning —between communities and other systems actors—our work and life on the ground becomes interconnected with system shifts at a structural level. It is in this third space that policies, legislation and program design interact with community self-determined approaches to change, reinforcing one another and driving ongoing improvement to life outcomes and the realisation of our rights.

Our outcomes driving transformational change: Understanding our Change Agenda

From the trunk through to the canopy of our Grandmother Tree, the outcomes of our Change Agenda set a destination for where we are heading—the future we want to construct.

These layers of outcomes are visionary and will be familiar to many First Nations and non-First Nations people as they are grounded in lived experiences. They define our existence, every aspect of our lives and the spaces we occupy. They come directly

from our voices and are mirrored in our human rights as set out within UNDRIP. They connect our cultural protocols, practices and knowledge systems with our lived realities and basic human rights: to live in dignity and peace; to have access to housing and services that meet our needs; and to be free from poverty, and all forms of violence and discrimination.



Signals also act as a guide for us, all systems actors and governments to design change processes that enable our signals to emerge. They are both measures to work toward, and data that can tell us about the benefits that a functioning holistic system brings.

This approach to setting a course for change, without dictating what the results of change should look like, makes our Change Agenda distinct to standard outcome frameworks and MEL practices.

Across each outcome, our Change Agenda directs your focus to our lives, encouraging you to engage with our lived realities and to carefully consider:

How do we know the change we want in the world is happening?

What processes and practices should we enact to make these changes happen?

What do we learn as we embark on change-making work that can help us as we move forward?

Our Change Agenda frequently refers to ‘outcomes’ and ‘change’, this is how we define them.

Outcomes: these are our aspirations, our overall goals for how we want the world around us to look and function. They provide purpose and intention for the direction we want to head in without dictating the path to get there.

Change: this includes the processes, approaches, interventions or initiatives that form multiple pathways for various things to happen and a chain reaction of events to unfold in unpredictable ways. Our Change Agenda rarely refers to change as an endpoint but rather, as an ongoing process that can have many unpredictable but important results.

This approach is a paradigm shift for the mainstream—particularly for the public sector—with respect to the way policies, programs and approaches that impact our lives are designed. The standard approach of policy-makers—separated from the reality of our lives pre-determining outputs, metrics and accountability milestones—means that services and programs in our communities are detached and unresponsive to our needs and lived realities. Over and over again, processes designed and implemented through this method fail to make a meaningful impact in our lives, regularly reacting and ‘band-aiding’ crises and, at worst, causing further harm due to inadequate and inappropriate services.

Our Change Agenda counteracts the mainstream approach. It looks at achieving our outcomes through an active approach to MEL within the context of systems. This approach is outlined in the section, ‘Measurement, evaluation and learning within systems change’.



Signals—our devices for measuring and tracking change and learning about healthy systems

Across our outcomes, our Change Agenda does not predetermine how change processes should unfold, nor does it dictate a linear set of actions and, as a consequence, does not set in place rigid measures. Only we can experience and identify the changes that have meaning in our lives. It might be that songs are sung, and paintings are painted differently. These are vital artefacts—stories of place—that all system actors can learn from as we move forward together.

Although we do not have a rigid set of actions for change, we still want to stay on track, understand and learn from successes, and remain accountable to our principles, priorities and aspirations.

The signals of our Change Agenda are the feelings and senses that we hold in common across the continent. They are a way of framing at a national level our collective insights and wisdom for how we would experience meaningful change as societal-wide attempts are made to strive toward the realisation of all our outcomes. Importantly these signals are not static, nor complete but a starting point. In each region, community, nation, or for just one women’s group, depending on the initiative, a deeper and richer layer of signals would be formed

fit for the uniqueness of each place and set of experiences.

Our signals help all actors to move away from a narrow gaze of policies and procedures, targets and key performance indicators, to see the system we all function within. They remind us, no matter our role, we all have a place in forming conditions for change that are felt and lived by us and others. Like our Grandmother Tree, our signals spark and ping in an expansive ecosystem. When we spend time on Country, and go hunting, there are lots of things we watch out for, like: weather patterns; positions of the sun; tracks on the ground; shadows across the grass; different flowers budding; and the smell of fruit that tells us what’s good to hunt. All these things are signals. **The more we pay attention to signals, the more they emerge connecting with others and new ones appear giving us knowledge that we can use to help us on our journey as we travel into the future that we are creating.**

Our paths are charted on tracks that live and breathe, just like our stories and songlines. These tracks are not static. They evolve with our learnings, our successes and our challenges, helping us navigate the complex terrain of systemic change.

Systems Actors: seeing yourself in our Change Agenda

Our Change Agenda is about societal-wide change by applying a First Nations gender lens to create more just and equal lives for everyone—inclusive of women, men, children and all gender-diverse people, First Nations and non-First Nations. Systems work involves people seeing systems and witnessing themselves as actors within systems, holding influence in different contexts, and understanding how they can contribute to change. As such, we invite all people—of all genders—to use our Change Agenda and recognise that you are a

significant part of driving change grounded in our voices from wherever you sit, be it from a regional or national level or from whatever sector or place in society you occupy.

In the tapestry of systemic change towards First Nations gender justice, a diverse array of stakeholders play pivotal roles. Across our Change Agenda, we call these stakeholders ‘system actors’ or ‘collaborators’. The circle of collaborators, who will propel our Change Agenda into action includes:

Every collaborator matters in implementing our Change Agenda.

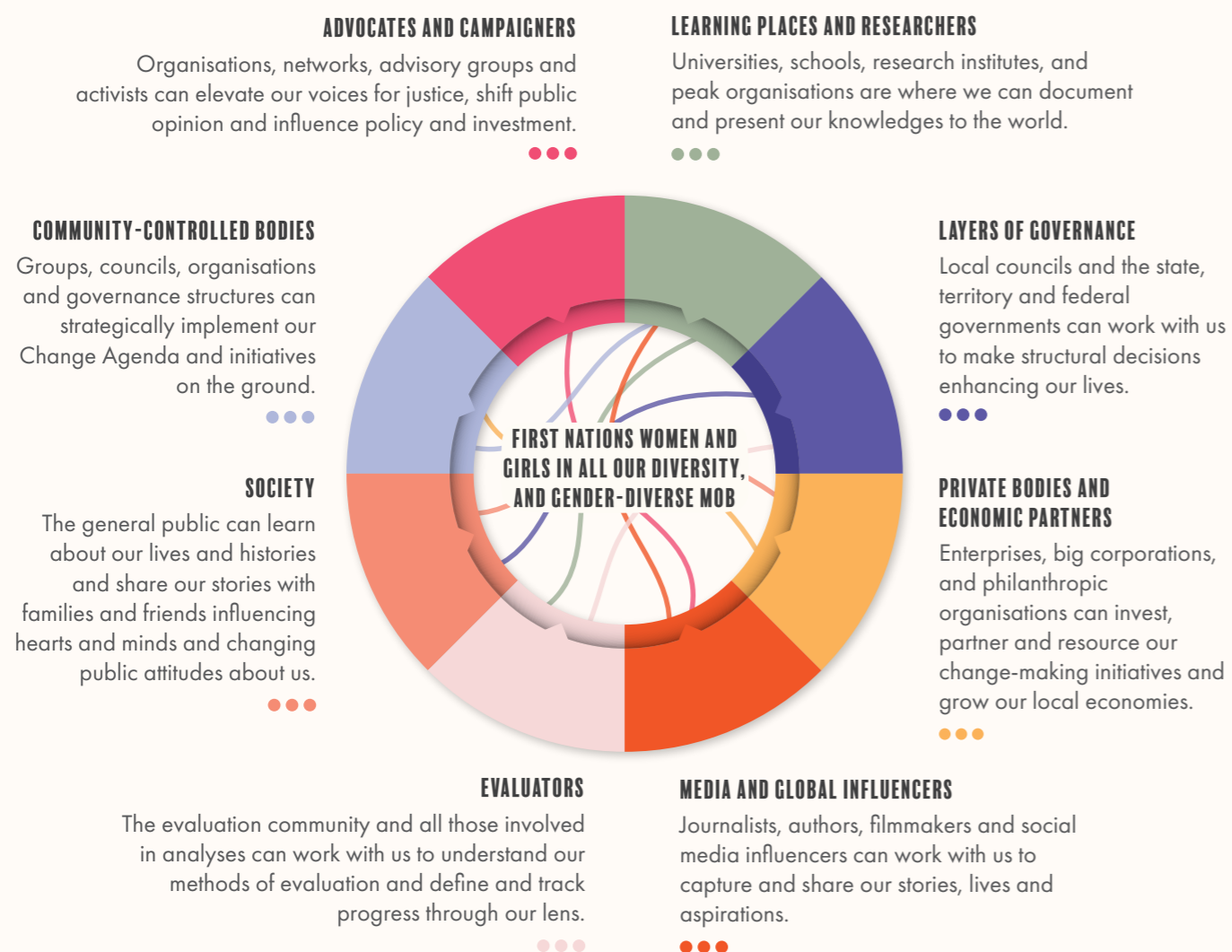
As a starting point, we describe how this Change Agenda is used by us—First Nations women and girls and gender-diverse mob—and how governments and decision-makers can use it.

The interactions and responsiveness between structural reform and community-based initiatives and change approaches are critical to progressing our life outcomes and realising the full spectrum of our rights.

In the first instance, our focus is on those who can influence system changes. At present, governments’ design of policy and legislation have a disproportionate impact on our lives, meaning we have chosen to speak directly to those in positions

across all levels of governments. However, we know there are many collaborators who can influence systems. Whoever you are, we encourage you to read the guidance below to better understand how you can find your place in making change happen in collaboration with us.

We have intentionally not attributed responsibility for each outcome to a single systems actor or group of actors recognising the vital work of collaboration with many actors across layers of systems to progress these holistic outcomes. However, as our Change Agenda is implemented and the Institute progresses its work, systems actors will emerge with defined roles and responsibilities.



Some guidance for engaging with our Change Agenda

First Nations women and girls in all our diversity and gender-diverse mob

This Change Agenda is a document that we can use from the ground in our communities to the positions we might hold in national peak bodies, private corporations and in governments. It is important to remember that our voices sing out from many sectors of society. We often wear multiple hats simultaneously—as the mother, the business owner, policy-maker, local council and community member, for instance.

In essence, the Change Agenda is presented from us and to us as our strategic practice and advocacy document to make societal-wide generational change happen.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani project documents the many holistic culturally-secure and gender-responsive initiatives we deliver on the ground, from integrated women's shelters and early learning centres to youth empowerment programs and language revitalisation. A lack of coordinated structural and resourcing support from states, territories and the Commonwealth, frequently restricts and undermines the capacity of these vital initiatives.

Our Change Agenda gives us the national wrap-around support we need—the security of a coherent framework—to pursue local agendas and change approaches fit for the context of our communities and regions. We know all our communities are different and need to be self-determining and that is why our Change Agenda is about enabling diversity on the ground and not squeezing us into a one-size-fits all approach.

We can use this Change Agenda to:

- advocate for our rights and interests
- plan and implement the initiatives we know can deliver meaningful change
- track and measure progress towards our life outcomes
- hold systems actors to account on supporting and progressing our outcomes.

Governments, policy and decision-makers

Defining the world we want means that our Change Agenda is also exposing the current system. We are speaking out from our lived realities—telling governments, and those who make decisions about our lives, how we want systems to function to improve our lives.

All the outcomes across our Change Agenda provide deep insight for forming First Nations gender-responsive policies and are an essential First Nations gender lens for major Federal Government objectives. This includes providing a lens for how to progress:

- the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap's Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets*, the priorities and outcomes of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*, and the action areas and commitments of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025*, under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, and the standalone First Nations National Plan
- the full realisation of significant Government commitments to close the gender pay gap, reduce gender discrimination, value care work, end violence against women and children, combat disadvantage through place-based approaches and measure and enhance societal-wide wellbeing
- Australia's international commitments, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5: Gender Equality, and align the interests of diverse international stakeholders—for example, connecting Indigenous rights with environmental protections, gender equality, the rights of children and those with other abilities.

Taken together, our Change Agenda outcomes and signals are a guide and accountability measures for governments to consider how policies and

legislation should be developed and implemented to counteract harms and deliver long-term change that actually matters to us. This includes how to:

- design more effective programs
- administer needs-based funding
- direct resource flows to target root causes of issues
- include community in the formation of policies
- create grants and contracts that can meet self-determined community needs and expectations.

There is a dedicated outcomes layer called 'System Shifts', where governments can clearly see their roles and responsibilities in changing structural elements—laws, policies and resource flows—to enable self-determined change on the ground. This layer also speaks broadly to all non-First Nations peoples to help understand their place and role in shifting systems to enhance our lives.

More information on how the System Shifts outcomes relate to Government commitments can be found in the appendix.

At the end of our Change Agenda is a table showing how the core 'impact' projects of the Institute—which correspond with the 'life outcomes' of our Change Agenda—are aligned with a range of national and international commitments. Government readers of our Change Agenda should also appreciate that you have a responsibility to deeply consider our outcomes and find ways to align your strategies with our Change Agenda. This document recognises that doing this will take time and collaborative effort with us, our communities and working with our Institute.





Guiding purpose

Our Change Agenda is grounded by our Guiding purpose, written through thousands of conversations with First Nations women and girls, and gender-diverse mob over the life of Wiyi Yani U Thangani.

We spoke of seeing and believing in a world that upholds our unique cultural, social, economic, and political rights and interests. A world that deeply values, celebrates, and enables all of who we are—our knowledges, identities, ideas, work and aspirations. A world that functions on the understanding that all of humanity is embedded within and dependent upon earth’s ecosystems. A world that ensures we are all free from discrimination, inequalities, traumas and violence, and which guarantees our self-determination in the decisions that form and shape our existence. We know this world because it has existed before and continues to unfold within our First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing. We asked, how does this world become our shared reality, our common humanity?

This led us to our guiding purpose statement:

The world upholds and responds in reciprocity to the rights and lives of First Nations women and girls in all our diversity. We sing our songs, live and care within Country in cycles of time for the wealth and health of generations to come so our children, forever, thrive and prosper. Living free in self-determination and non-discrimination, we are shaping existences for the benefit of all Nations.

Our Outcomes

Through engaging with the layers of outcomes, areas of systemic change and signals below, we invite you to feel and experience what change can look like and align your thinking, work and worldviews with ours. By embracing our approach, you have the opportunity to contribute to collectively track change through a vital First Nations gender lens, and also to implementing change approaches that support the healing, empowerment, and self-determination of our communities over generations.



Life Outcomes

These life outcomes are for us, in all our diversity, from youngsters to Elders, women and girls with trans experience, First Nations gender-diverse and queer mob, and those with many other beautiful perspectives, abilities and additional unique needs. These outcomes are the change we want to experience in the world, the change we can make happen together, in the full embrace and resurgence of our matriarchal wisdom and knowledges. Achieving our life outcomes is the responsibility of all systems actors working together to progress our aspirations and realise our rights in full.

Our babies are born, live and age in safe, healthy and sustainable communities

From preconception to old age, our homes, communities and surrounding infrastructure including roads, services, transport systems and buildings nourish us, supporting our culture, health and wellbeing.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- creating safe, climate-responsive, energy efficient and interlinked homes and infrastructure
- designing built environments that connect us to heritage, Country and ancestral knowledges
- accessibility of culturally-responsive services for all ages on Country and in communities
- guaranteeing access to native and nutritious foods and medicines

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 78–81.

Our Institute commits to: listening and elevating the voices of communities advocating for housing and service needs, strengthening research connections which focus on sustainable living, and engaging in community forums to identify projects focused on creating sustainable places to live, grow, work and age.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our children playing outside and laughing more
- services having less barriers and supporting our interconnected lives
- the broader public respecting how we, in all our diversity, raise our children
- our homes, communities and public spaces are inviting and safe to spend time in
- our old people are more relaxed, happy and often sharing stories and knowledges
- not being worried about getting good food and feeding our families
- our children are eager to learn and are very respectful of their Elders
- we hear people inviting each other to go out to Country to camp, hunt and relax
- we have more opportunity to pursue our interests and passions

Our care work is central to the redefining and functioning of systems

All forms of care work are woven into the fabric of our communities, services, economies, and governance, keeping our society and Country healthy, strong, and maintaining our kinship relationships and responsibilities to look after our human and more-than-human relatives.

A note on more-than-human relatives: *Our plants, animals, waters ways and skies are deeply connected to us, as we are born from its soils and sands, will return in our passing, and be reborn again as the flowers, trees and animals that make us who we are. We see them not as 'non-human' but 'more-than-human', recognising their value, strength and intelligence shaping the world around us.*

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- defining and measuring the full spectrum of care work
- constructing economic models that are informed by, support and remunerate care work
- (re)defining mainstream care services as culturally and gender responsive.

Explore more ideas to take action in the Implementation Framework on pages 96–99.

Our Institute commits to: working with researchers and community partners to develop impact models that support care work on the ground; and work with governments to understand this evidence and translate it into policy and legislation.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- time to do the things we want without feeling guilty or worried about others
- more support and love across our families and less anger and refusal to help out
- we are out bush more with our children and our old people learning about Country
- governments appreciate and invest in the economic and social benefits of our care work
- engaging in care work makes us happy, heals through cultural connection and relieves stress
- workplaces are less judgemental and eager to learn and support our care responsibilities
- accessing aged care and disability supports where we want, on or off Country
- our rights as caregivers are respected and supported
- societal acknowledgement of our care load, recognising our trauma and marginalisation.

We are financially secure, safe, free, living and working within meaningful economies

We thrive with equal opportunities in meaningful and sustainable economies—big and small, from desert to sea—supporting our financial needs and fairly compensating our ways of doing, knowing and creating, including care for kin, Country and community.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

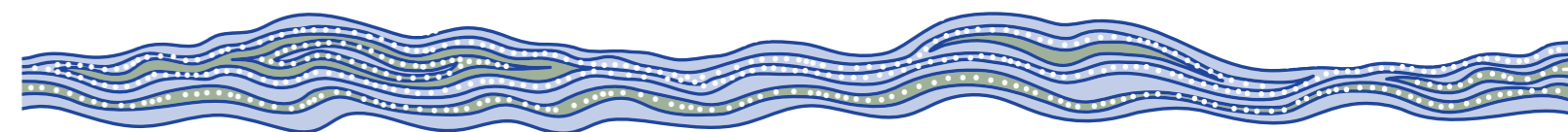
- redesigning financial and social systems that elevate and centre us and our communities
- growing sustainable Country and culture-based economies
- targeting of systemic inequality and poverty
- investing in culturally-appropriate financial literacy education and knowledge sharing.

Explore more ideas to take action in the Implementation Framework on pages 83–93.

Our Institute commits to: bringing systems actors together to create transformative financial models for individual and collective dignity and freedom; and working with communities to support financial empowerment.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- confidence with our money, and we have savings and money to spend and share freely
- financial services reaching out to provide support and useful advice
- it is easier for us to access investments to startup and sustain businesses
- collaboration, and less competition for funds to build community-based initiatives
- more of our people employed in Country and culture-based work
- economic models are adopted that reinvest in the health of people and Country
- we have easy access to training and employment in the jobs we want
- we are compensated fairly for the use of our knowledges and care for Country.



Our knowledges, songs, ceremonies and languages are protected and lived

We know our knowledges and languages deep in our chests, shaping our identities across generations, they guide us with each step we take and in every space we occupy.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- making space for us to gather on Country and in community, often in ceremonies
- creating and strengthening infrastructure for learning, sharing, practising and preserving language, song and ceremony
- protecting our knowledges against appropriation and dilution.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 44–47.

Our Institute commits to: elevating and advocating for cultural practice and revitalisation initiatives; partnering with communities and First Nations researchers to capture data that supports the protection and prosperity of our knowledge systems; and informing ways of working across Australia and beyond.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- sitting around campfires listening to Elders pass on stories to younger ones
- Country feeling happy to hear us speak to it in the language it knows
- our children practising languages, songs and dancing in public spaces
- everything in community slows and everyone works together to support ceremony time
- our languages used in shops, on the streets, in casual conversation and playgrounds
- our spirits feeling strong and healed spending time on Country and in ceremony
- we are hunting and catching fresh food and sharing it with family and kin
- there are more family and community events which lots of people go to for fun
- our ancestors are protected, remain on, and are repatriated to Country, where they belong.

We occupy, access and feel connected to Country

We learn and share our knowledges, Law and relationship with Country by spending time on our lands and waters, which we are free to visit, live, occupy, and work on as we please. This maintains our sacred connection and guarantees holistic care, health and wealth for our people and Country.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- creating financial mechanisms to establish strong on-Country economies
- forming land use agreements to live, work on, and care for Country
- supporting the growth and sustained practice of customary governance
- investing in learning that centres our relationship and responsibilities to Country.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 48–55.

Our Institute commits to: elevating our knowledge systems for caring for Country by recording our ways of caring; making space for us to gather and learn about Country; and advocating for a right to occupy and make decisions for Country in policy and legislation.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- building family blocks and permanent camps on Country
- visiting, talking to, and caring for our important cultural sites
- lots of language signs and information about our culture feature in urban areas
- we are busy using our knowledges and practices to govern our Country
- our children regularly spend time with Elders on Country as part of education
- more of us involved in making decisions for Country
- we are not worried so much for Country because it is being cared for
- more jobs to care for Country and practice and teach culture
- systems actors support economic models that reinvest in the health of people and Country
- housing and surrounding infrastructure are safe, comfortable and climate-responsive.

We are at the heart of Country and climate justice

We advocate for, protect and honour Country, ensuring its vitality and safety from destruction, and the knowledges we carry about caring for and managing Country are central to sustainability and climate policy.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe, as a first step, that there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- building climate-responsive infrastructure informed by our knowledges and values
- creating space for us to be centred in decisions about managing lands and waters
- integrating Country knowledges into Western science and land management education.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 56–61.

Our Institute commits to: working with researchers and communities through impact projects to understand what sustainability means to us and how our knowledges can combat climate change; and advocating for our right to occupy national and international climate dialogue and decision-making spaces.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our streets have more birds, animals, insects and bush foods
- regularly burning and firestick farming our Country
- partners support our economic models that reinvest in the health of people and Country
- food being sustainably grown and affordably sold by our people near our homes
- we are always representing Australia in international climate change forums
- working directly with governments to embed our knowledges in climate policy
- waterways are clean, have good flow and we are always fishing in them
- Country is teaching us as we listen to what it needs
- housing and surrounding infrastructure are safe, comfortable and climate-responsive.

We are strong and powerful in all of who we are

Our identities, in all our diversity, are celebrated and valued, and we express our whole selves, feeling confident in our culture and the knowledges and stories we carry, which keep us mentally, physically and spiritually well and engaged in the world around us.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- challenging and overcoming patriarchal and racist structures and stereotypes
- ensuring culturally-responsive leadership training, education and mentoring for all ages
- investing in cultural camps and events for intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 28–33.

Our Institute commits to: regularly creating spaces to bring us together, in all our diversity to learn, share and thrive together; identifying our priorities, and developing work that can address those priorities; as well as creating opportunities for us to engage in our interests and grow and reinforce our strengths.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- building each other up and no one tearing anyone down
- children practising languages, songs and dancing in public spaces
- our languages used in shops, on the streets, in conversation and playgrounds
- young trans and gender-diverse mob feel safe and confident in their identity
- positive representations of us, in all our diversity, feature in mainstream and social media
- occupying many leadership positions and not worrying about fitting Western norms
- loving the way we look and feeling confident
- our diverse identities and experiences are respected in all system interactions.

We have voice in the decisions that impact our lives

From our early years, we are governed in systems of collective leadership and care which give us the skills to voice our individual and societal needs and visions within the many decision-making spaces we occupy, reinvigorating customary governance and decision-making practices.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- developing pathways and targets increasing our representation in leadership positions
- creating opportunities to influence domestic and international decision-making forums
- sustained resourcing of young people's engagement in politics and policy-making.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 27–39.

Our Institute commits to: working with us to develop pathways, training and mechanisms for us to occupy leadership and decision-making positions to influence the policies that impact our lives; and establishing pathways for us to occupy and influence international decision-making spaces.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- occupying and seeing us, in all our diversity, in mainstream leadership roles
- not worrying about fitting Western norms
- being fully informed before we make any decisions with governments and systems actors
- invited by governments into policy-making spaces
- not feeling pushed or rushed into decisions we are not ready to make
- knowing our customary governance and using it in decision-making
- excitement about participating in decision-making for our people and future
- decisions lead to action and change without external resistance.

Our healing practices on Country and in Community are transforming systems

Our healing practices, which are connected to Country and community, are recognised, respected, and integrated into broader systems, offering alternatives to Western interventions—particularly related to trauma therapies—and complement mainstream medical practices.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

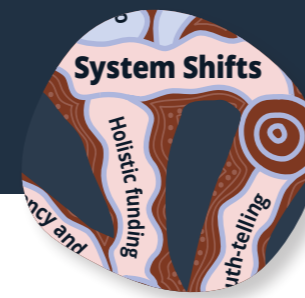
- incorporating holistic knowledges and cultural practices throughout approaches to health
- developing healing models to reduce trauma-inducing interventions, such as incarceration
- establishing healing-oriented addiction recovery, and addressing violent behaviours
- strengthening bush economies to collect, use, and trade our healing medicines.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 63–73.

Our Institute commits to: working with communities and diverse systems actors to embed our healing approaches and models within mainstream services and systems; and supporting communities to deliver healing practices on Country.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- hospitals and health services make us feel safe and offer our ways of healing
- we frequently access traditional healers and medicines
- researchers and lawyers work with us to patent our native medicines
- more of our young ones in our healing programs than going to detention
- going with our old people to collect, make and share medicines
- hunting and catching fresh food and sharing it with family and kin
- those with trauma accessing our healing supports and services
- our spirits feel strong and healed spending time on Country and in ceremony
- our diverse identities and experiences are respected in all system interactions.



We have control and choice over our bodies which are safe and respected

From the moment we are born, as we age, and into the afterlife, our bodies are celebrated and loved, treated with respect, safe from harm; and we choose, through informed consent, the care our bodies need for a thriving life.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- culturally safe and supportive health care for gender-diverse mob and mob with diverse abilities
- actioning national establishment of birthing on country and in community approaches
- a multipronged education approach about consent, bodily autonomy and respect
- sustained programs and resourcing to repatriate ancestors, and commemorate on return.

Our Institute commits to: advocating for our right to make informed, consensual and free decisions over our bodies; create spaces and engage in research to explore and transform patriarchal and colonial conceptions of gender; and investing in research and data collection regarding health equity, and the care and wellbeing of our bodies.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- gender-diverse mob and mob with diverse abilities feel safe to be who they are
- confidence in our bodies and the way we express ourselves
- having loving, safe, fulfilling and respectful relationships with anyone we choose
- being respected, in control of, safe and empowered in sexual interactions
- accessing medical advice and procedures that are right for our bodies
- opening up about past issues, and healing through sharing, without feeling shame
- confidence and trust in maternal care provided by cultural and Western practitioners
- safe in public and private spaces, where we know our bodies are respected
- returning to Country and staying in our communities to birth our children
- informed and have access to holistic health care, making us empowered about our bodies
- our ancestors are protected, remain on, and are repatriated to Country, where they belong
- not feeling pushed or rushed into decisions we are not ready to make.

System Shifts Outcomes

We have identified a number of outcomes that define our vision for systems shifts that are critical to progressing First Nations gender justice. There is a role for all First Nations and non-First Nations people who operate in decision-making and policy creation roles, in particular governments, to make these outcomes happen. We ask all people to find where you can have an influential role within progressing this layer of outcomes.

Systems actors are creating space to learn, listen and act

Systems actors are engaged in acts that centre our voices and lived experiences through processes which challenge current ways of working, knowing, being and doing, generating enabling, gender-transformative and responsive systems.

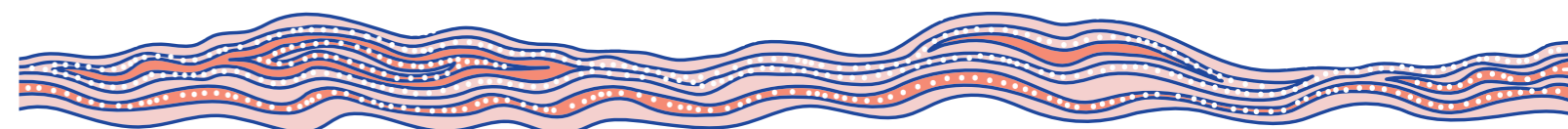
What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- developing and engaging in truth-telling and societal healing processes
- initiating organisational and institutional cultural change to decolonise ways of working
- forming processes to work with us in designing policies that meet our needs
- reflecting on personal and collective responsibilities to change systems.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 16–17 and 36–37.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- cultural safety in our workplaces when gender justice is embedded
- genuine collaborations are supporting us to be strong change makers
- cultural competency and safety is not treated as a box ticking exercise
- systems actors are proactively learning and enacting cultural-responsiveness
- organisations are forming relationships with local communities and Elders
- reflective practices are being integrated into workplaces.



Decision-making is relational, collaborative and self-determining

Systems respect and make space for our voices, perspectives and lived experiences across all decision-making that impacts our lives, where we are partners in co-design processes and governance, and our knowledges inform systems shifts for the benefit of broader Australian society.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- creating mechanisms to bring our voices into national policy and legislation processes
- forming spaces to design policies in community, which work on the ground
- strengthening our capacity through cultural and customary governance programs.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 20 and 32–37.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- being in leadership roles across various sectors
- being invited into and participating in decision-making spaces as the norm
- policies and programs being relevant to our lives
- our cultural identities being celebrated and recognised as strengths
- improved access to resources and opportunities that are specifically designed by and for us
- systems and spaces becoming more culturally safe and nurturing
- services becoming more attuned to our needs
- not feeling pushed or rushed into decisions we are not ready to make
- feeling confident to ask questions and make informed decisions.

Systems are caring, safe and enabling across all Countries

Systems support enabling conditions in our communities for us to live thriving lives, free from harm, poverty and discrimination, where we can access the services, education and employment opportunities of our choosing and pursue and maintain our cultural obligations and practices.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- reforming social security to ensure economic, social and cultural wellbeing
- supporting infrastructure and investment for on Country and culture-based economies
- developing alternative approaches to punitive interventions
- sustainably fund models of healing and care work.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on page 20–21, 78–81, 83–87, 96–99.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- less energy spent responding to crisis and more time on long-term community initiatives
- an increase in accessible care supports
- being financially secure when doing care work
- satisfaction and fulfilment through increased engagement with our healing practices
- easy access to essential services without barriers
- our children accessing cultural and healing programs rather than being held in detention
- there is less violence in our communities
- affordable fresh food is available and we are able to feed our families without stress
- we feel safe in our homes and public spaces
- our children have safe and fun places to be and are not roaming the streets
- opportunities are available to us, and we have freedom to access all that we need
- services, workplaces and schools embrace and are safe for our diverse identities.

First Nations gender data sovereignty, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is respected and upheld

Systems are responsive to the data we generate and own on the ground and to our knowledges which are respected as belonging to us. We decide how our data and knowledge is used to significantly contribute to the design of plans, programs, policy and legislation impacting our lives.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- adhering to internationally agreed definitions of Indigenous data sovereignty and governance
- investing in First Nations employment and training for data and knowledge governance
- upholding First Nations gender data sovereignty, ICIP and IK processes across all systems
- investing in community research and data collection.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on page 46–47.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- pride and recognition that our knowledges are being documented
- using our data to design programs that work for us
- using our data to collaborate with systems actors to make funding decisions
- we have many community-based researchers talking about what our data means
- our knowledges are influencing and informing policy and legislation
- safe knowing our data is protected, secured and accessible only by those we choose
- there are more ICIP agreements being made between us and non-First Nations groups
- researchers and lawyers work with us to patent our cultural rights and knowledges.

Funding and financial models are long-term, secure and holistic

Funding arrangements are being determined through innovative, transparent and accessible processes which support initiatives that target root causes of harm, drive systemic equality and generate social, economic, ecological and cultural benefits.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- guaranteeing gender parity in funding initiatives
- designing gender-responsive funding to invest in women and gender-diverse initiatives
- increasing transparency and accountability of funding allocation and coordination
- redesigning funding models to include self-determined measures of success.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on page 21.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our successful programs receive ongoing funding
- investments are being made that meet community needs
- no longer designing programs only to meet external funding requirements
- no longer worried that funding to our essential services will be cut
- community decision-making in where funding goes
- doing exciting collaborative work in our communities without financial stress
- emergence of more entrepreneurship as sustainable financial models become accessible
- less competition and greater sharing of funding opportunities across communities
- confidence to engage in financial discussions and business opportunities.

Systems are transparent and accountable to us and our communities

The way systems are designed reflects genuine care about our lives and self-determination. There are measures in place for systems to be accountable to us, so they are responsive and adaptive to community needs and aspirations, and system impacts are continuously evaluated, ensuring they do no harm and enhance our lives.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- co-designing accountability frameworks with communities to respond to needs
- ensuring decision-making processes happen with free, prior and informed consent
- engaging with community owned-data to determine program and funding arrangements.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 36–37 and 68–69.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- hopefulness for lasting change as funding is directed at needs and root issues
- increased transparency about funding decisions
- empowered to contribute to decision-making with all available information
- data is presented accessibly and shows our stories and experiences
- decisions, processes and policies clearly show and respond to our intersectional needs
- not feeling pushed or rushed into decisions we are not ready to make
- when systems are not working, we know our concerns will be responded to
- gender-responsive and healing informed practices are being integrated into workplaces.

Australia is engaged in truth-telling, recognition and recovery

Australia learns and understands our shared history, engaging in processes of decolonisation and acknowledging past and present violence and systemic inequality, so we all engage in healing and delivering justice through agreement-making and nation-building processes.

What systems actors can do: To broadly realise this outcome, we believe that, as a first step, there needs to be a collective and sustained focus on these systemic areas of change:

- elevating our cultural practices and knowledges in public spaces and forums
- making space for us to share our lived experiences and be seen on multiple media platforms
- undertaking national and state-based processes of truth-telling and agreement making
- developing educational resources and learning approaches about our histories.

Explore more ideas to take action in the [Implementation Framework](#) on pages 70–73.

Signals showing change: We will know that change is happening when the system starts to sing and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our languages are used broadly in (re)claiming places, law, policy, and multimedia
- non-First Nations people practising curiosity generates feelings of humility and solidarity
- diversity of culture, stories and histories represented in festivals, exhibitions and shows
- hearing more truthful conversations about Australia's history from non-First Nations peoples
- there are more formal truth-telling processes and forums taking place
- our cultural heritage items and ancestral remains are coming home to Country
- our peak bodies and land organisations have sustainable funding
- sites of memorialisation and heritage are being marked and commemorated
- places, roads, towns and national parks are being renamed in local languages
- stronger laws enacted to protect significant and sacred cultural sites.



Institute Outcomes

Our Institute outcomes guide the work of our institute and are grounded in our voices, in all our diversity, from youngsters to Elders, women and girls with trans experience, First Nations gender-diverse and queer mob, and those with many other beautiful perspectives, abilities and additional and unique needs.

Our Institute is committed to driving systemic change through the realisation of gender justice and equality. The outcomes of our Institute lay the foundations for collaboration with diverse systems actors to help with the progression of all outcomes across the Change Agenda.

Our movement for First Nations gender justice is supported at a local community level

Our Institute is deeply engaged with our communities on the ground who are defining and driving a movement that comes directly from our needs, lived experiences and visions, and who are creating gender-responsive initiatives which are driving broader structural reforms.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- working with and connecting our local women-led and gender-diverse movements
- connecting communities and researchers to support initiatives on the ground
- supporting our local priorities and community-based evidence and evaluation.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is working toward this outcome when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- dialogues happening in communities about driving systemic shifts
- using Wiyi Yani U Thangani in our communities to plan, drive and advocate for change
- we are driving and remunerated for producing useful action-based research
- stories shared of community collectives describing the success of gender justice movements
- designing local evaluations supporting us to make local and meaningful change
- contributing evidence of what works to our national gender justice evidence platform
- young people and Elders speak to what gender justice means to them and their communities.

Our Institute mobilises and brings us together to explore and act for First Nations gender justice

Our Institute is facilitating yarning spaces, gatherings, workshops, collective celebrations and big picture conversations from the local to the national level so, with our collaborators, we can set out our priorities and determine how we create our vibrant futures.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- creating collectives for us to come together in our diversity to advocate for change
- hosting gatherings and mobilising movements and campaigns at all levels for our rights
- opening space for us to co-create with influential decision-makers
- connecting partners, allies and others to our movements for change.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is working toward this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- knowing our lives and knowledges are visible to the nation
- collective excitement about coming together and collaborating
- using Wiyi Yani U Thangani in our communities to plan, drive and advocate for change
- driving and being remunerated for producing useful action-based research
- stories of community collectives describing the success of gender justice movements
- contributing evidence of what works to our national gender justice evidence platform
- barriers breaking down as the nation engages and supports our intersectional identities
- different spaces to connect, learn, share with others are forming.

Our Institute takes a human-rights based approach, influencing current and emerging work practices and technologies

Our Institute is always working to realise our human rights in full and is guided by the four key underpinning principles of UNDRIP. The right to: **participation in decision-making; self-determination, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and non-discrimination.**

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- embedding human rights in the Institute's governance and operations model
- developing research methods grounded in a human rights based approach
- integrating our human rights into the use of emerging technologies.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our rights informing how our Institute operates
- having all the information we need to make the right decisions
- technology is safe and is benefiting us
- We feel safe online and can use social media without there being bullying
- technology feels useful and helps to drive the change we want to see
- community-based research is happening and we see benefits from it
- we understand our rights and are advocating for them on the ground.

We own, contribute and are informed by a living First Nations gender justice Evidence Platform and Change Agenda

Our Institute is home to our continuously evolving Change Agenda and evidence platform, reflecting our collective voice and wisdom, and providing an evidence-based tool for realising our economic, social and political empowerment, maintaining our cultures and driving systemic change.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- monitoring and implementing our Change Agenda
- creating ICIP and Indigenous Data Governance arrangements for the evidence platform
- working with communities to develop their own evidence gathering and evaluation tools
- facilitating collective spaces of evaluation and reviewing and resetting priorities.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- using our Change Agenda and evidence platform to plan and implement our local initiatives
- using our Change Agenda and evidence platform to advocate for our priorities
- evidence from our platform influencing better policies that impact our lives
- our evidence platform helps to direct funding towards local community initiatives
- using our evidence platform to record and protect our knowledges and cultural practices
- our communities having strong ownership of the evidence platform and Change Agenda.

Our Institute exemplifies a model for First Nations gender justice within workplaces

Our Institute embodies First Nations gender justice principles in our workplace culture, employment conditions and policies and practices, supporting other organisations to become safe, non-discriminatory, inclusive, creative and meaningful working environments which enhance wellbeing.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- establishing pathways for our employment, training and learning
- integrating our knowing and doing into workplace practices and research methodologies
- creating culturally and gender-responsive governance aligned with community needs
- forming gender-responsive and disability-inclusive employment conditions and entitlements.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- more of us working in research that benefits our communities
- our Institute being a safe and nurturing space for all employees and visitors
- working feels good and not depleting
- we are developing projects that meet our aspirations
- being inspired and nurtured to engage in our interests and passions
- our Institute is invited by other workplaces to train them in our ways of working
- Institute employment conditions set national standards for gender just workplaces.

Our Institute is a safe space for us to realise, witness and bring our strengths to the fore

Our Institute is a warm, empowering and embracing space governed by customary ways of knowing and cultural integrity, where personal and professional growth is nurtured through the resurgence of ancestral knowledges combined with innovative practices in research and evidence building.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- celebrating our knowledges, and stories and achievements, in all our diversity
- actively inviting community to learn, collaborate and work with our Institute
- showing our evidence through multimedia, such as art and film.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- wanting to spend time at the Institute to imagine and create projects
- feeling relaxed and safe to express our full selves without reservations
- gender-diverse mob feeling that the Institute is a safe space
- the work of our Institute being formed by our knowledges and stories
- our stories communicated in a range of accessible forms for mob with additional abilities
- using our ancestral knowledges and customary practices to make change happen
- confidence to be visionary and aiming for realising our rights in full
- our areas of strengths and interests are connecting us to other like-minded mob.

Our Institute grows, equips and unites First Nations gender justice researchers

Our Institute is where we, along with non-First Nations collaborators, are working from local to international spaces, supporting a vast network of community-based researchers producing ground-breaking gender justice evidence informing how to sustain healthy and happy societies.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- designing research projects dedicated to training community-based researchers
- forming tools connecting community gender justice researchers and projects
- establishing research pathways, partnerships, mentorships and fellowships for our people.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- knowledge sharing across communities building momentum for change
- we are driving and remunerated for producing useful action-based research
- we see ourselves in prominent research positions
- evidence is making visible our lived experiences and informing policies
- a shift in policies is supporting our work on the ground
- we feel supported in pursuing our research interests
- excitement to be working at the Institute and collaborating on projects
- gender-diverse and disability experience being captured in data and research.

Our Institute is building strong collaborators for us in all our diversity

Our Institute is co-creating systemic change. We deliver transformative dialogues, workshops and training, to collaborate with diverse systems actors and engage people in truth-telling and learning processes, embedding our knowledges into Australia's broader social, political and economic fabric.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these areas systemic areas of change:

- delivering training and dialogue processes to learn and enact gender justice
- supporting the application of our data in policy and legislation
- creating space for systemic change workshops with diverse systems actors.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- diverse systems actors taking time to learn about our gender justice
- systems actors believe in and are excited about making change with us
- governments showing genuine desire to work with us and in making decisions
- feeling fulfilled as conversations result in action with non-First Nations people
- completing processes of dialogue which result in action and change
- broader society understanding our history and wanting to rectify injustices
- diverse system actors wanting to collaborate on Institute impact projects
- non-First Nations people having greater curiosity and self-reflection about our lives.

Our Institute and Change Agenda drives structural shifts influencing policy and legislation at home and abroad

Our Institute is actively working with policy and decision-makers to incorporate the principles of First Nations gender justice into state-based and international frameworks to support shifts toward more sustainable, equitable and just societies everywhere.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- establishing pathways to advocate for our rights in international forums
- engaging in community knowledge translation to inform policy settings
- uniting our communities in global spaces exploring First Nations gender justice and equality.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is achieving this outcome when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds, and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our First Nations gender justice evidence platform being used to develop policies
- stories of community collectives describing the success of gender justice movements
- our knowledges of Country used to inform sustainability and climate policy
- seeing our voices reflected in foreign policy decisions
- delegations from our communities invited into rights-based discussions
- our healing practices and stories informing national design of truth-telling processes.

Our stories of First Nations gender justice are woven and embedded into Australian consciousness

Our Institute elevates, shares and celebrates our diverse stories of gender justice, informing gender equality in Australia, driving a transformative shift in societal understanding of our experiences and values, and how they contribute to systemic reforms that benefit everyone.

What our Institute will be doing: To broadly realise this outcome, our Institute alongside others, will be taking action across these systemic areas of change:

- displaying and elevating our stories across multimedia, social media platforms and through interactive and emerging technologies
- ensuring others hear our stories through Institute campaigns and advocacy
- exploring gender diversity, intersectionality and how to develop gender-responsive projects
- developing impact projects for systems change that centre our stories and lived experiences.

Signals showing change: We will know our Institute is working toward this outcome, when its work combines with the action of others, momentum and excitement builds and these signals appear. They might look, sound, feel, or be sensed by us like:

- our stories being celebrated across the nation
- racialised sexism and intersectional discriminations being condemned by the public
- increased respect for us in public spaces and everyday interactions
- policies incorporating our knowledges and lived experiences
- curiosity and self-reflection among non-First Nations peoples to learn from us
- positive representations of us, in all our diversity, featured in mainstream and social media.



Measurement, evaluation and learning within systems change

‘Measurement and data does not need to be all about numbers—it is about our heart and spirits, it is about voice, story, emotion—it is about truth. Numbers can tell us all sorts of lies. Wiyi Yani U Thangani is and always has been about voice—your voice—what you are saying about your lives, how you see your future and what matters to you.’

—June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

As you have just read, our direction and outcomes are strong but how we get there—the exact actions and outputs—are purposefully undefined. Like our Grandmother’s embrace, the branches of our Change Agenda tree hold and guide us, but how change happens in communities, language and nation groups, and how it influences broader structures, will be different everywhere.

We know that the outcomes we seek are long-term and society-wide. They can only be realised by appreciating that we live, work and engage within complex systems, where all aspects of our lives, from the food we eat to the houses we live in, the languages we learn, the jobs we have and our physical and mental health, are all interdependent. Thinking in this way, and striving for the world we want to live in, is also critical to combatting the most entrenched issues we face—such as poverty, trauma and intersectional discriminations.

That is why our Change Agenda is focused on outcomes that force us to consider systemic change. To do this, our Change Agenda embeds measurement, learning and evaluation (MEL) into the design and implementation of initiatives that can shift systems for the better. Throughout this section we refer to ‘systemic change initiatives’ interchangeably with ‘systemic interventions’ and ‘change approaches’, all of which are grounded in respect for culture, our lived realities, boundless strengths and knowledges.

Our approach is purposefully distinct from Western methodologies of linear change and of MEL approaches that are added to the end of an initiative’s life cycle often as an afterthought.

Standard outcomes framework approach	Our approach to meeting our outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflexible milestones to track expenditure on set activities to deliver linear outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous process of engagement and sense-checking to rapidly integrate new learnings and improve the design of initiatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of initiative and activities designed to respond to crises’ and issues symptomatic of structural problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions are systemic and designed to address and resolve the root causes of multiple issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives are designed on preconceived ideas of linear development, which often do not account for local knowledges and context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives are culturally-grounded, formed in context and grow from our millennial-old knowledges and evidence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predetermined activities designed in silos to respond to a singular issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and processes are developed in response to holistic community needs and priorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data measures are established from the outset, often determining the purpose and scope of a project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data and measures showing change emerge as the initiative takes shape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability is held by external authorities focused on tracking project funding, milestones and outputs, such as number of meetings and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability is determined by us and sits with those delivering the initiative. It is responsive to both community and Country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines are short-term and consider initiatives as part of a linear, cause and effect process with an endpoint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of initiatives are a part of cycles that build on one another, are holistic and connected to context.

Our Grandmother Tree represents this approach as a living being that adapts and grows through changing conditions. Up and down, from the roots to the stars, our Change Agenda embeds a cyclical feedback process of: **community engagement, practice, evaluation, learning and evidence-building for change.**

As stated, this approach is very different to the majority of MEL approaches. There are few effective examples of MEL within systems change, and

almost no examples of MEL methodologies solely focused on First Nations gender-responsive systems change. A paradigm shift to deliver a change in life outcomes is not possible without a paradigm shift in the way we evaluate and make decisions on what needs to be invested in and supported.

Our MEL approach is unique in scale and is about initiating this shift. It is formed from our voices, which means aspects of this MEL approach are taking place all over our Countries, just in ways that

either struggle to be recognised or are undefined and not yet formalised. If you are a decision-maker or investor we encourage you to engage and align your priorities and strategies with our MEL approach and adapt your investments to this evaluation method, so as to support place-based systemic initiatives that can lead to a multitude of socio-economic and ecological benefits. We know methods like this are taking hold such as social impact models. These approaches need to become the rule rather than the exception.

Of course, as with anything that may seem new and different, many questions arise. We have begun to explore some of these questions about measurement, evaluation and learning within systems change, below.

Why take a systems change approach?

We know that the issues that impact our lives are symptoms that stem from deeply-embedded systemic problems. We also know that the current approach that responds to these symptoms in silos, can only bring about minimal and short-term changes, leaving the root causes unchanged and perpetuating symptomatic issues.

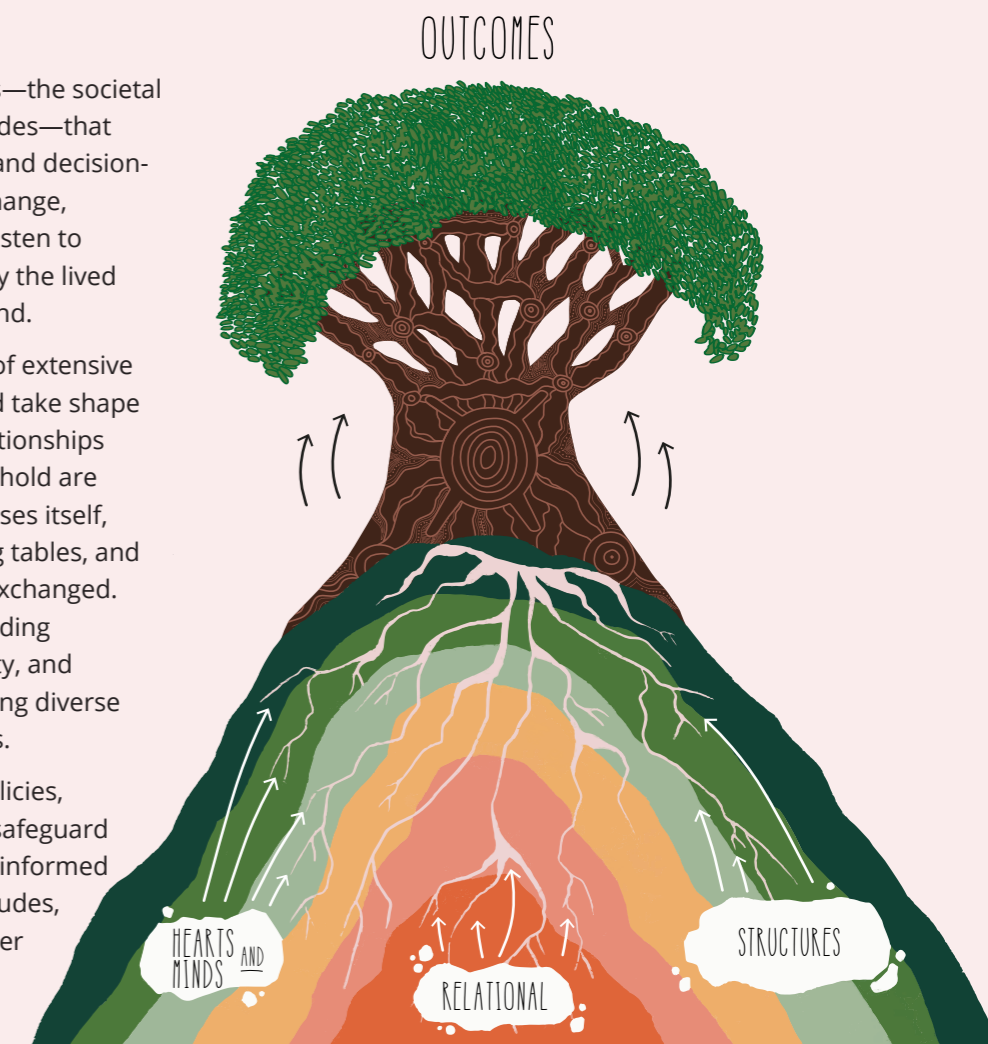
Our Change Agenda requires us to move away from operating at the surface level, to operating from the ground, to target the root causes—the relational, structural and the hearts and minds. These are the elements of broader systems that can either entrench the current issues we face or can form environments and societal conditions that enable us to live self-determining, healthy and well lives.

The system elements are:

Hearts and minds: The worldviews—the societal narratives, assumptions and attitudes—that influence our behaviours, actions and decision-making. To bring about systems change, we must expand our worldviews, listen to diverse stories, and be informed by the lived experiences that exist on the ground.

Relational: Systems are made up of extensive connections and relationships, and take shape through power dynamics. The relationships that exist and the power that they hold are key factors in how a system organises itself, who gets a seat at decision-making tables, and how resources are accessed and exchanged. Changing a system requires expanding relationships, embedding inclusivity, and creating more equal settings to bring diverse voices into decision-making spaces.

Structures: These are the laws, policies, practices and resource flows that safeguard or undermine our rights. They are informed by, and reinforce, our societal attitudes, behaviours, relationships and power dynamics.



To change the system, we must work within the roots of the system to identify the entrenched structural problems—and design interventions and initiatives that target these and drive systemic change. **When the roots are nourished by the right nutrients, our tree will grow and create a thriving environment for us all, helping to achieve our life outcomes.**

In focusing on systemic change, our Change Agenda considers the drivers of justice and equality so as to target root causes of inequalities and structural discrimination—including racism and sexism. Although there is an absolute need for crisis response work, only systemic change work can robustly address and overcome the seemingly intractable issues of family violence, poverty, trauma, drug and alcohol use, and high rates of incarceration, detention and child removals. The outcomes of our Change Agenda are designed simultaneously to reduce harms and violence through systemically enhancing empowerment, self-determination and health and wellbeing.

What does evaluating within systems change really mean?

Evaluating within systems change is about embedding a continuous process of measurement, evaluation and learning to understand what change is needed, what this change should look like, and if change is happening. It is a practice approach to doing the complex work of systems change.

This approach builds on our ancestral knowledges and practices of evaluating, combining it with contemporary tools and practices. Our people are natural evaluators and the oldest and most experienced systems thinkers. Since time immemorial, we have mapped extensive interconnected systems, understanding patterns, needs and changes across Country, waterways, plants, animals and people.

The Principles and Practices outlined below describe this approach in more depth.

This approach is fundamentally about gathering and building evidence for change. It not only guides us as we do the work in the immediate, but also contributes to understanding if long-term change is happening and if there is progress against our outcomes. Over time, across the many places where our Change Agenda work is underway, we will grow evidence and see a fuller picture of how reshaping systems from the ground up impacts our lives. As we build this picture, we will reflect and adapt our Change Agenda so it is responsive to our evidence on the ground.

What kind of data helps us to measure change in systems?

Quantitative data measures should add to the story of change but not dictate the process. Numbers alone can often be inaccurate and tell us little about how we live our lives. Our Change Agenda, and all of Wiyi Yani U Thangani, privileges our voices, experiences, actions and the stories we tell today, as well as our songs, dances, stories and Law transferred across generations, as rich, nuanced and vibrant data sources. This qualitative data provides deeper insights and a more holistic picture of our lives.

There is little meaningful population data in existence that can be connected to our outcomes. We do not have numerical data that speaks to the richness of our lives and how different activities and movements can connect within systems creating multiple societal benefits. We are currently missing important nuanced and interconnected data on things like:

- birthing on Country models improving childhood outcomes and employment
- parents' and children's healing and rehabilitation centres and reduction in family violence and child removal
- regular access to native foods and lifetime health of parents and children

- the extensive care work of mothers and grandmothers lessening the effects of childhood trauma, reducing incarceration rates, and supporting educational engagement.

How does data and measurement emerge within systems change?

As we initiate activities designed in collaboration and within our communities in areas of systemic change, new or previously unrecognised information and evidence will come to light. This is our data, which we refer to as 'signals'. They help us to measure progress against our outcomes.

Our signals are rich and interconnected, illuminating our grounded lived realities. They tell us when change is happening and what is or is not working. This helps us (re)direct our paths towards action where we can form and (re)generate healthy and secure lives.

Ultimately, signals are the things we already see, feel, do or sense. They are our knowledges and cultural practices in action and how we organise and make decisions about what our families and communities need everyday and into the future. Deep engagement with these signals is fundamental to systems change evaluation. Signals tell us things as diverse and vital as:

- the conditions that create safety
- the environments that form loving and connected communities and relationships
- the type of access to supports and food that enable our health and wellness
- the factors that give our children confidence and strength in identity.

Knowing this is data, owned by us, helps us to define and measure the type of change we expect to see in our lives. It is also critical to informing the creation of policy, legislation, program, contract settings and resource flows, which form the structural conditions surrounding our lives.



Putting MEL into practice

To progress the change we want to see, the aspects of MEL we have outlined above need to be understood and supported at a structural level, so it can be adapted and enacted by us and our communities on the ground.

A starting point is to realise that measurement and evaluation is not something that has to be carried out by defined experts, who are often not connected to our lived realities. As described above, through the very process of making decisions daily, we are measuring, evaluating and learning. Through a seamless combination of forethought, judgement, and assessment of previous experiences (which is our data), we juggle multiple considerations—like taking our kids to school, managing projects, supporting Elders to go to the shops, working out conditions for fishing, caring for family members who are struggling, and putting dinner on the table. We are constantly assessing how to manage our time, what needs to be done when, and how we can meet the needs of multiple people with different demands, within environmental constraints.

We know that this practice, so familiar to us, needs to happen at a broader, more organised scale if we are to address and overcome the systemic issues we experience collectively.

Principles of Data Sovereignty

To do this, our Change Agenda puts forward a practice approach for MEL founded on the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty. Data sovereignty is key to ensuring that we are forming systemic-change approaches that are responsive to our needs and self-determining.

Working from a position of data sovereignty for us, means that:

we recognise that our lives, stories, knowledges, paintings, and artefacts are our living data

we own, control and can use our data for purposes determined by us

we use our methods of evaluation to analyse our data, to decide the change we want to see in our lives

we determine collective priorities based on our data and collaborate with others to make change happen

The principles to protect and elevate data sovereignty as we enact MEL are as follows:

Engagement and reciprocity:

All measurement and evaluation about our lives has to be done through deep engagement and continuous involvement of our peoples in the collection, analysis, interpretation, management and re-use of data, and all evaluation results should be effectively shared with us and done for our benefit.

Our ways of knowing, doing and being:

Data about us and for us is recognised as deeply rooted in the rich tapestries of our stories, knowledges, lived experiences, and understandings of change and growth.

Genuine and safe engagement:

We must ensure safeguards that embed self-determination, enable us to speak freely in our own languages, and guarantee genuine engagement that ensures our stories are interpreted appropriately and inform systemic change against our outcomes. When we feel safe to be ourselves in all of who we are, and we know our data is protected, we can feel confident sharing insights that are deep and expansive.

Understanding change:

Processes and programs to deliver change have to be analysed and evaluated as they unfold to understand what works and what does not work in our approach, to show us what it really takes to make change happen.

Truth-telling: Our stories, lives and various artefacts are a means of conveying complex truths, learnings, and insights. Stories become a tool for both sharing knowledge and evaluating the impact of initiatives in a way that is deeply meaningful and resonant for us and our partners.

Our communities are researchers and evaluators:

The knowledge we have of our families, communities and Country is vital to designing and implementing the initiatives needed to shift systems, and for knowing if change is happening. Our communities should be resourced and supported to conduct evaluations, which support our self-determined initiatives.

Our MEL process and activities

The following are the essential elements to enact our MEL process. Each element includes examples of activities. These elements are a part of a continuous cycle of MEL. Although they are in a general order, each one can take place multiple times or simultaneously, depending on the nature of the work.

Engaging with this process of MEL and adopting these activities, whether you sit in community or in a policy-making position, sets in motion a cyclical learning and evaluation process. Through this process, work and life on the ground can become interconnected with systems shifts, both reinforcing each other to constantly improve life outcomes and realise our constellations—our rights.

The process elements are as follows:

Knowledge gathering: Embarking on systemic change work starts with an openness to learn through action, while also exploring the insights and knowledge which already exist about the needs we have identified, and our understanding of current systemic issues. Within our lived experiences and ancestral knowledges we hold a wealth of evidence about how to form, support and sustain healthy, safe and nurturing existences for all. This evidence is an incredible resource to develop system-change approaches, and can be engaged with through:

- community-informed reports such as [Wiyi Yani U Thangani](#)
- engaging with and understanding cultural practices
- knowledge sharing forums and workshops
- witnessing the application of knowledge in context.

Sense-making: Before determining a systems-change approach or project, it is important to spend time connecting within our communities—to see, feel and sense the reality of the worlds we occupy, the challenges we face and how they impact us, and our myriad of strengths. This helps to test whether previous evidence is accurate or how it can be applied and understood within a local context, as well as how to ground initiatives in our unique ways of knowing, being and doing. A sense-making process can look like:

- learning about local histories
- focus groups based on inquiry and curiosity
- deep listening
- exploring ideas through art and multimedia.

In addition to being a MEL process and activity, sense-making is also one of our 'ways of working'. As a 'way of working', you can engage in sense-making as a deeply personal, self-reflective and grounded practice.

Participatory methods: Systems-change work requires us and our communities to be leading in the design of interventions and initiatives that impact our lives. We hold many vital perspectives and knowledges for how to drive change that can make a real difference to our lives. Our participation is central to evaluating what does and does not work, and to forming interventions that are genuinely co-created through the involvement of our families and communities. Embedding our participation in the design of systems change work involves:

- our leadership determining initiatives
- community evaluation of projects
- regular workshops and town hall/bush meetings
- sharing of accessible multimedia information.

Systems actor diversity: When a systems-change approach or project is determined, it is important to bring together the diversity of systems actors who will need to be involved in addressing issues that are meaningful to us, changing current systems, and co-creating a new approach. Aligning and working with the varied viewpoints and unique perspectives of systems actors involves:

- systems actor mapping and interviews
- coordination and design workshops
- work shadowing key systems actors.

Mixed methods of evaluating: It is important to combine quantitative data (easily measurable and comparable) and qualitative data (richer in insight and complexity) to provide a holistic view of the current state of systems and to show where change needs to happen. Evaluating within systems change requires deep engagement with qualitative methods of seeing, hearing, feeling and understanding surrounding environments. These methods include engaging with:

- conversations and stories
- song, dance and art
- time in community and on Country
- reports, audio recordings, books, films and social media

Culturally-responsive signals: Before initiating a systems-change approach, we will consider the type of change we want to experience and what will start to happen as that change progresses i.e. the signals in our surrounding environments. Signals, instead of indicators, are dynamic, interconnected and experienced by actors across systems. They are often grounded in feeling and sensing, such as feeling less stress about going to work or seeing more people fishing regularly at the river. Identifying signals is a way to track progress and measure the impact of initiatives from multiple perspectives, as they are being implemented. Signals can be designed and witnessed by:

- deeply listening to our lived experiences
- paying attention to signs of improved happiness and wellbeing
- experiencing services from a user perspective.

Reflection and adaption: Throughout the design and implementation of initiatives or interventions, there is a continuous need to listen and reflect on our experiences and feedback, to continuously adapt and improve. Experiencing and recording signals is a part of this process of determining what works, what should be altered, and identifying unexpected connections that can reinforce the effectiveness of the change approach. Responding to the complexities of systems and evolving needs and contexts of our communities, takes:

- purposeful solo and group reflection sessions
- practising how to witness and respond to signals
- continuously evaluating progress with key evaluation questions
- preparedness and ease of adapting initiatives based on feedback.

Documenting and sharing our journey:

Recording how we do the work of systems change will create a living archive of our journey towards progressing the Change Agenda outcomes. This documentation will serve as a crucial learning resource and collective pool of knowledge for us, our communities, and all systems actors engaged in systems change work to progress First Nations gender justice and equality. Documenting our journey involves:

- recording and digitising our stories
- developing community toolkits
- actively journaling reflections and insights
- filming our work in action

Evaluation and confidence acceleration: By accelerating the confidence of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob involved in systemic change work, we ensure the sustainability of evaluative efforts. This acceleration is about empowering us to stand tall in our truth, to evaluate the world around us with the wisdom of our ancestors, and to embrace the future with the skills and technologies of today. This is more than capacity building; it's a profound act of self-determination and empowerment, through:

- learning to collect our stories and analysing through our cultural lenses
- gaining skills to lead evaluations in ways that respect our traditions
- mentorship and peer learning, where experienced community evaluators guide us
- growing a community of First Nations evaluators.

Our ways of working

Our ways of working are informed by ancestral knowledges and cultural practices and protocols, and have been used and elevated by us throughout Wiyi Yani U Thangani engagements. These ways of working build on those that are presented in the *Implementation Framework* on pages 16–17, which relate more strongly to workplace cultures and practices.

The ways of working here are the embodied practices that should be used when pursuing systemic change work, engaging with our communities and implementing the MEL process and activities described above. The ways of working are interrelated and all influenced by curiosity, openness and being connected to our more-than-human kin. We ask you to read these ways of working in whatever your context may be, and deeply consider the questions below to help affirm or challenge your thoughts, behaviours and actions.



(re)Learning

When we connect to our ancestral knowledges and ways of doing and being, we free our minds from colonial and patriarchal thinking, embracing other perspectives, ideas and ways of living to dismantle inequalities, prejudice and individualism, and work towards collective, societal and ecological wellbeing.

Do you spend time exploring what has shaped your worldview? How do you challenge your learnt behaviours? Do you consider how your thoughts and actions would be different if you had someone else's experiences?



Lateral love

When we practise lateral love our spirits grow, we are open and not threatened by challenging conversations, instead we embrace one another, forming connections, healing from division, and thriving in a society of care, trust and respect.

Have you considered what makes you strong and what the strength, resilience and experiences of others are? Do you take action to step away when you feel frustrated? How do you practise curiosity?



Respect and relationality

When we recognise the interdependence between all human and the more-than-human, we are able to leave our egos at the door and tap into our heart space, creating relationships of mutual respect and trust, and where we act in an exchange of care and support.

Have you considered what your roles and responsibilities are to creating healthy relationships and surrounding environments? What differences do you notice when you lead with your heart space versus your head space? What everyday activities help you to feel a part of something bigger than yourself?



Embracing all our identities

When we embrace, celebrate and are responsive to our multiple and vibrant identities and abilities, we appreciate different perspectives and ways of expressing ideas and knowledge. There is strength in our diversity which brings benefits to the collective whole.

In what ways do you celebrate and express each aspect of your identity? How do you learn, appreciate and respond to the needs and perspectives of individuals with diverse identities and abilities? How do you respond when confronted with biases or stereotypes of individuals' identities and abilities?



Deep listening

When we practise deep listening, empathy and connection grows. Our whole selves are present in the moment immersed in deeply experiencing others' words, feelings, energies and other non-verbal cues. This fosters genuine communication and learning, challenging us to explore new, old and transformative ways of knowing and understanding.

Are you able to come to conversations with an open heart and mind, without forming judgement? What steps can you take to create a sense of caring, authenticity and patience in your communication with others? How can you reduce distractions and be present when engaged in deep listening?



Self-reflective and aware

When we consider the environments and interactions that have formed our past and present thoughts and behaviours and those of others, we are gifted the opportunity to practise curiosity, healing and mindfulness. We become more accepting of our own lived experiences and expressions and those of others, so we can engage in more trusting and meaningful relationships.

What acts do you do to connect with yourself and your surroundings? How do your actions and behaviours align with the person you want to be? Do you see the good in others and yourself and use your words and actions in an empowering way? Are you open to growth and change?



Intergenerational action

When we sow seeds of care, we lovingly act with an intergenerational mindset. What we do today, as our ancestors have done since time gone by, will sprout and bloom for a new tomorrow. We plant

knowledges and practices for our young ones, share stories across generations, and contribute to a healthy and safe world.

How do you build meaningful relationships across generations? In what areas of your life do you provide mentorship and guidance? How do your actions support the collective wellbeing of future generations beyond your immediate benefit?



Shaping and keeping balance

When we see and understand the roles and responsibilities of others, in all diversity, including our more-than-human kin, we act to nurture and balance wellbeing. We see the role everyone has in shaping our world, maintaining and growing the strength of our knowledges, practices and ways of being. This is transformative, helping to break down hierarchy, discrimination and inequality.

How do you include and elevate diverse experiences and identities? Can you open space for others to step into, and do others make space for you? Do you step back and take a birds-eye view of the systems you are operating in and how they impact you and others?



Sense-making

When we engage our whole being in connecting with the world around us, we lead not only with our gut feelings, but with our hearts and minds, drawing on the energies of all that surrounds us and listening to the voices of our ancestors, the trees, waterways, animals and the wind. We do this to make sense of who and what we are engaging with and what we need to do next.

Are you aware of how your body feels when you step into spaces, make decisions and take action? How do you listen to your subconscious feelings and thoughts? How do you feel connected to the world around you?

Our Five Constellations for a life well lived

Our constellations grouped together form the conditions for a healthy and engaged life. They are our foundational rights and create a world where our lives, in all our diversity, are not only recognised but also reciprocated with respect and dignity. Our Change Agenda outcomes all contribute to the formation of each constellation, and our constellations are interconnected, reinforcing one another to form a broader societal structure where our guiding purpose becomes reality.

Our constellations are our guides in the starry night, enabling our navigation as we enact the Change Agenda. They serve as the cornerstone of our evaluative thinking and approach—guiding all aspects of change-making, knowledge gathering and measurement and learning. They frame the ‘big evaluative questions’ as a form of accountability for us and others to respond to as we progress our outcomes and engage in systems-change work.

As these constellations define the enabling conditions for a life well lived for our Change Agenda, all actions, initiatives, change processes, and anything contributing to the progression of our outcomes can be evaluated against them.

The following describes each constellation and key evaluation questions that are the cornerstone of our MEL practice. As we use and enact the Change Agenda we will deeply reflect on these questions and as more nuanced evidence is gathered, these questions may change in nature and grow in number.

Governance and decision-making for self-determination

Our self-determination is foundational to forming just and responsive systems that enable us to be all of who we are. We have a right for our voices and knowledges to shape decisions across all social, economic, cultural, political and environmental spaces.

In evaluating how our Change Agenda outcomes are progressing against our governance and decision-making for self-determination constellation, we will ask:

- ★ How are we represented and actively participating in leadership, governance and decision-making roles across various sectors?
- ★ In what ways are our voices and choices being recognised and incorporated into the journey towards our self-determination?
- ★ What progress and changes have been observed in our influence and participation in policy-making, community leadership, and structural reforms to address systemic challenges?
- ★ In what ways are we advocating for our rights as a collective, and how are we being supported to do this?

- ★ In what ways are initiatives and policies inclusive of our diverse voices and experiences, ensuring no one is left out from contributing to and benefiting from these efforts?

Language, land, water and cultural rights

Our knowledges and Laws enable us to live within, care for and adapt to dynamic ecosystems. They contain the lessons, values, and principles of relationality, collaboration, intergenerational responsibility, and reciprocity. We have a right to protect the Countries and waterways and reinvigorate the languages, songlines and ceremonies that hold this knowledge for our people today and far into the future.

In evaluating how our Change Agenda outcomes are progressing against our language, land, water and cultural rights constellation, we will ask:

- ★ How have our cultural rights practices, and connections to language and Country been recognised, strengthened, and integrated into community and policy frameworks?
- ★ In what ways are our knowledges and cultural practices being valued by broader Australian society?

- ★ How have our knowledges, languages and practices been valued and incorporated into different business models and economies?
- ★ Are our knowledges and cultural practices contributing to scientific research and related policy, land management and climate change mitigation work?
- ★ Are our Laws and cultural protocols being practiced by First Nations communities and embedded into our governance models?

Societal healing and intergenerational wellbeing

Everyone has a right to live in healthy, safe and connected societies. Our knowledges, which have sustained healthy ways of being since time immemorial, must lead the way forward in forming responsive, healing-informed and trauma-aware systems from education to health, maternal services, and housing.

In evaluating how our Change Agenda outcomes are progressing against our societal healing and intergenerational wellbeing constellation, we will ask:

- ★ How do initiatives aimed at reducing violence and promoting community safety impact our health and wellbeing and that of our children?
- ★ How have community-led initiatives contributed to the societal healing, intergenerational wellbeing, and the fostering of community cohesion?
- ★ How have healing-informed models of care impacted the use of drugs and alcohol within our families and communities?
- ★ Are healing approaches supporting grandmothers, mothers and parents to care for children and keep families healthy, safe and together?

Economic justice and empowerment

Our knowledge, skills and work must be recognised as central to the functioning of Australia's economy, and must be met with adequate support and infrastructure so we can grow economies on Country and in community, create meaningful jobs and businesses that are culturally informed and grounded, and form conditions for meaningful

training and employment. Our economic justice benefits us and entire communities.

In evaluating how our Change Agenda outcomes are progressing against our economic justice and empowerment constellation, we will ask:

- ★ What progress has been made towards our economic empowerment and financial independence through models that prioritise a First Nations gender lens?
- ★ How effective are the strategies for financial reinvestment and economic justice in uplifting us and our life outcomes?
- ★ Is there a noticeable reduction in the number of our families and communities living in poverty or some degree of financial hardship and stress?
- ★ Is economic empowerment equally felt in remote, regional and urban areas?
- ★ Is there a diversification of economic models and access to job opportunities that are related to culture and our knowledge systems?

Care for Country, kin and community

Our Country, kin and community are the threads of our society and how it functions. Care is at the centre of ensuring Country, extended family and kinship relations, and the places in which we live, including our communities, townships or regional areas, are healthy and thriving.

In evaluating how our Change Agenda outcomes are progressing against our care for Country, kin and community constellation, we will ask:

- ★ How are policies and programs integrating our knowledges and practices in caring for Country, kin, and community?
- ★ Are those of us in informal care roles being recognised and valued for our work and adequately remunerated?
- ★ Are our families and community members spending more time engaging in cultural practices and knowledge transmission on Country?
- ★ As First Nations care work is supported, is there a reduction in feeling the burden of care?
- ★ How has centring care responses over punitive interventions impacted how trauma is felt and experienced within our families and communities?

Our Institute's work: Bringing our Change Agenda to life

Our Institute is aligned to our Change Agenda outcomes. Its primary focus will be to design systemic-change initiatives grounded in our knowledges and lived experiences, that will respond to our multiple and intersecting needs and target root causes of issues, such as: intersectional gender discrimination; family violence; financial insecurity and poverty; child removal and detention; and, drug and alcohol addictions, amongst other areas. Research and practice will be the major mechanisms in which to design these initiatives, and to inform legislation, structures and policies.

Through our 'ways of working' and cyclical MEL approach, our Institute will carry out the following functions to achieve our outcomes across all levels:

- **Co-design gender-informed models and initiatives** that are responsive to our multiple and intersecting needs, to improve life outcomes on the ground.
- **Analyse, elevate and advocate for grounded evidence** that helps form policies target root causes and support systemic drivers of equality.
- **Develop research responsive to our lives** to support innovative and effective change on the ground and to increase First Nations gendered data.
- **Create spaces for gathering and dialogue** for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob, and with collaborators including governments, researchers and private sectors to participate in agenda setting and engage in innovative approaches to First Nations gender justice and equality.
- **Build and maintain an evidence platform** which gathers and stores stories and knowledges from the ground, to show effective change processes and socio-economic impact through the lens of First Nations gender justice and equality.

As stated previously, we refer to the Institute as 'our Institute' to indicate that it has come from, and is held accountable to, our voices. But it is the Institute's governance and employees which have

carriage of our priorities and the responsibility to enact the Institutes functions, be responsive to the broader Change Agenda, and continuously be informed by our voices (First Nations women and girls and gender-diverse mob) as the Institute's work is conducted.

Our evidence platform

Storytelling and knowledge-sharing is a significant approach to documenting our lives, learning from our experiences, and connecting with our communities and the wider world. Wiyi Yani U Thangani has engaged in this approach since 2017: collecting and analysing thousands of conversations and voices of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob; and describing our issues, rights, strengths and aspirations. All this 'living data' holds vital information, insights and ideas about the change we want to see in the world.

This data has guided our work at every stage of Wiyi Yani U Thangani. Our Institute's approach will be no different—the evidence we will gather will be the foundation of our work. The Institute will put our MEL approach outlined above into practice. To support this approach, our Institute will build what we are calling an 'evidence platform'—a digital tool to hold and analyse our data. This

platform will be developed in partnership with First Nations MEL experts Kowa Collaboration. As it's developed we will learn from and elevate culturally-secure MEL methodologies which are grounded in Indigenous data sovereignty principles, such as that of Children's Ground and Maïam Nayri Wingara, among other Indigenous evaluators, groups and bodies.

Our evidence platform will allow us to gather, store and share our lived experiences, and to contribute to the ever-growing and expansive picture of our lives. It will be a platform for digital storytelling and knowledge sharing, enabling our voices to be visible and to influence systemic change. Our evidence platform will be our living Change Agenda—tracking signals against our outcomes and documenting the change-making work that is happening on the ground. It will shine the light on where data is lacking, on the root causes that need addressing, what is and is not working, and will inform national and international strategies and commitments.

Importantly, our evidence platform will not only safeguard our cultural heritage, but will position our narratives at the forefront of national and global discourse. It presents an innovative way for all systems actors to be part of a movement that paves the way for systemic change through the power of storytelling.

Ultimately, our evidence platform will serve as a living archive, documenting our journey towards gender justice and equality. Each story, each piece of knowledge shared, becomes a part of our collective memory, accessible to future generations seeking to understand their roots and wings.

We own, contribute and are informed by our evidence platform

As one of our Institute outcomes states, 'we will own and control our evidence platform'. First and foremost, our data is for us. It is our stories and our lived experiences, and we will have control of how it is used, accessed and interpreted, guided by the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty.

Once established, the Institute will develop a range of tools to support community interaction with the platform, including ICIP approaches and membership.

The Institute will also put in place appropriate and necessary safeguards to enable various systems actors, including governments, to engage with our data, as determined by us. Embedded within this will be a capacity building approach for all systems actors engaging with our evidence, to drive change through a First Nations gender lens.

Our Impact Projects

Our Impact Projects will be the **focus areas** through which our Institute will progress work against all layers of outcomes. These Impact Projects will take place across time-horizons. The time horizons do not build on each other in a chronological order. They overlap and interweave, informing each other, and their beginning and end being determined on need and value.

Our Institute has already identified a number of Impact Projects to begin our journey towards our outcomes. These have been informed by years of knowledge gathering through the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project to develop our Change Agenda and Institute.

Some of the long-term projects need to begin immediately and will gain momentum overtime and relate most strongly to our life outcomes, while some of the short-term projects are critical to establishing strong foundations for the Institute and will have long-term impact.

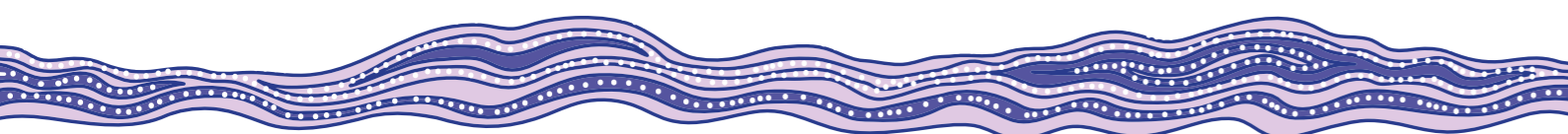
Our Impact Projects also intersect with current national government frameworks, plans and strategies regarding our lives, and are aligned to Australia's international human rights commitments.

The Impact Projects will enhance many incredible initiatives that are already established and being progressed on the ground but lack structural recognition and support. They will also bring momentum to ideas we have for change that have not been adequately invested in or valued for the worth they could bring to our societies. These Projects will add value and not be duplicative of what already exists, and will work in collaboration with us and others already operating in similar fields of interest, support and advocacy. Importantly, in line with this Change Agenda the outcomes are designed to bring about multiple benefits and progress our intersecting outcomes simultaneously rather than focus on a singular objective and outcome.

The table below outlines our Impact Projects across time-horizons and their objectives, and the interconnections with key national frameworks and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). It also shows the intersection of the impact projects with our Change Agenda Outcomes. Only the outcomes with key linkages are listed although impact projects may correspond to multiple outcomes in varying ways.

Our foundational and short-term projects will lay the groundwork for our Institute to function effectively and sustainably to do the work of systemic change.

IMPACT PROJECT	OBJECTIVES	CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS & UN SDGs
<p>Sustainable funding model</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute is building strong collaborators for us in all our diversity' and System Shifts outcome: 'Funding and financial models are long-term, secure and holistic'.</i></p>	<p>To establish partnerships and design innovative funding approaches to enable our Institute's longevity, progress our Change Agenda outcomes and maintain a secure First Nations women-led workforce.</p>	<p>The long-term sustainability of the Institute will mean First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people will have a dedicated mechanism to make their lives and rights visible, contributing to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG) Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making, and Working for Women Priority Area 5: Leadership, representation and decision-making.</p>
<p>Best practice model</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute exemplifies a model for First Nations gender justice within workplaces' and System Shifts outcome: 'Systems actors are creating space to learn, listen and act'.</i></p>	<p>To design policies, practices and a First Nations gender-informed systems-change methodology to be a best practice model for First Nations gender justice and equality and deliver training packages tailored to different sectors to implement the approach.</p>	<p>The best practice model and training for governments and other systems actors will contribute to CTG Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations. It will also contribute to CTG Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector to apply a gender lens and respond to the needs of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people.</p>
<p>Research pathways, partnerships and networks</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our movement for First Nations gender justice is supported at a local community level', 'Our Institute grows, equips and unites First Nations gender justice researchers' and 'Our Institute is building strong collaborators for us in all our diversity'; and System shift outcome: 'First Nations gender data sovereignty, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is respected and upheld'.</i></p>	<p>To establish a research strategy to increase the production and innovation of First Nations gender justice research, including through establishing networks, affiliates and PhD fellowship programs, connecting researchers with community-led initiatives, and supporting systemic change research projects and innovative models for research, data collection and evidence building.</p>	<p>Establishing research projects to pursue the outcomes of the Change Agenda will assist in applying a First Nations gender lens across all the CTG socio-economic targets, particularly those related to women, babies and young people's health, reducing violence, the removal of children into out-of-home care and reducing young people in detention. It also provides a First Nations gender lens to meeting the priorities and outcomes of Working for Women, including outcomes related to care work and leadership and participation in decision-making, and all areas under UN SDG 5 Gender Equality.</p>



Our **medium-term projects** will create the spaces for us to gather, share, learn and grow, and will build the tools and practices for our MEL approach.

IMPACT PROJECT	OBJECTIVES	CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS & UN SDGs
<p>Evidence platform</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute takes a human-rights based approach, influencing current and emerging work practices and technologies' and 'We own, contribute and are informed by a living First Nations gender justice Evidence Platform and Change Agenda'; and life outcome: 'Our knowledges, songs, ceremonies and languages are protected and lived'.</i></p>	<p>To design and build an evidence platform to learn, understand and evaluate progress towards the Change Agenda outcomes. The evidence platform will be owned and contributed to by First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse peoples, to build evidence through research and practice, to inform the development of work on the ground and effective policy.</p>	<p>The evidence platform is foundational to CTG Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level, to enable First Nations women and girls to contribute to, and obtain critical data to support the design of women-led solutions and initiatives, and to contribute to decision-making under CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making. It will also significantly build the capacity of community-controlled organisations under CTG Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector. The evidence platform will be a critical mechanism for governments to learn and understand progress towards their commitments from a First Nations gender lens, and to create informed and evidence-based policies, in support of all CTG socio-economic targets. It will also be key to providing the data necessary to develop and evaluate solutions and policies across national plans including Working for Women, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, the standalone First Nations National Plan, and the National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy.</p>

Our **medium-term projects** will create the spaces for us to gather, share, learn and grow, and will build the tools and practices for our MEL approach.

IMPACT PROJECT	OBJECTIVES	CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS & UN SDGs
<p>Local and regional engagement</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcomes: 'Our movement for First Nations gender justice is supported at a local community level' and 'Our Institute mobilises and brings us together to explore and act for First Nations gender justice'; and life outcome: 'We have voice in the decisions that impact our lives'.</i></p>	<p>To unite and strengthen our local and regional groups and organisations, to support one another, collectively advocate on key priorities and share knowledge and approaches that drive change on the ground. This will include supporting local and regional gatherings, establishing pathways to participate in national and international decision-making and advocacy forums, delivering systems change workshops and tools, and partnering with groups to drive systemic change initiatives on the ground.</p>	<p>The National Network will contribute to CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making, and the National Strategy for Gender Equality Priority Area 3: Leadership, representation & decision-making, through enabling local and regional voices to contribute to shared decision-making at the national level. The National Network will also enable the collective design and development of grounded solutions to complex problems across key focus areas including CTG, Working for Women, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, the standalone First Nations National Plan, and the National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy. The National Network will also be a platform to advocate for the rights of First Nations women and girls at international levels, relevant to a range of human rights mechanisms and to UN SDG 5: Gender Equality.</p>
<p>A place for the Institute</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our movement for First Nations gender justice is supported at a local community level' and 'Our Institute is a safe space for us to realise, witness and bring our strengths to the fore'.</i></p>	<p>To identify physical places or spaces that the Institute can call home where we can visit and work from, while also ensuring that virtual spaces are established and maintained for us to gather safely to connect, share and celebrate.</p>	<p>Enabling culturally-safe and gender-responsive spaces for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob will support CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making and Working for Women as diverse voices will be elevated and collective rights can be advocated for.</p>

Our medium to long-term projects will be those which continuously evolve, have multiple levers and are progressed through all areas of work and the spaces we create, and that speak to our life outcomes.

IMPACT PROJECT	OBJECTIVES	CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS & UN SDGs
<p>Intergenerational healing</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our stories of First Nations gender justice are woven and embedded into Australian consciousness'; and life outcomes: 'Our healing practices on Country and in Community are transforming systems' and 'We are strong and powerful in all of who we are'.</i></p>	<p>To co-create culturally and gender-responsive healing, rehabilitative and trauma support models to minimise harms and break cycles of intergenerational trauma and create healthy and healed conditions. The models will have a focus on diverting from contact with punitive interventions, such as child protection and the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>This Impact Project will contribute significantly to CTG socio-economic targets, particularly those related to women, babies and young peoples health, reducing violence, the removal of children into out-of-home care and reducing young people in detention. It will also contribute to the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, particularly Reform Area 2, and Working for Women, Priority Area 1: Gender-based violence.</p>
<p>Law and culture</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute exemplifies a model for First Nations gender justice within workplaces' and 'Our Institute is a safe space for us to realise, witness and bring our strengths to the fore'; and life outcomes: 'Our knowledges, songs, ceremonies and languages are protected and lived' and 'We occupy, access and feel connected to Country'.</i></p>	<p>To design strategies and models to enable us to be immersed in language, ceremonies and knowledges, and for the intergenerational transference of Law and culture as foundational to our wellbeing.</p>	<p>This Impact Project will contribute to all CTG socio-economic targets because of the foundational importance of culture. In particular, it will support Target 15 and 16, and targets associated with culturally appropriate education, social and emotional wellbeing.</p>

Our medium to long-term projects will be those which continuously evolve, have multiple levers and are progressed through all areas of work and the spaces we create, and that speak to our life outcomes.

IMPACT PROJECT	OBJECTIVES	CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS & UN SDGs
<p>Care at the heart of policy design</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute and Change Agenda drives structural shifts influencing policy and legislation at home and abroad'; system shifts outcome: 'Systems are caring, safe and enabling across all Countries'; and life outcome 'Our care work is central to the redefining and functioning of systems'.</i></p>	<p>To build research and evidence to co-design innovative approaches that centre our conceptions of care within structures, laws and policies to form healthy, safe and more just societies.</p>	<p>This Impact Project will contribute to all CTG socio-economic targets as it will support the design of enabling systems that acknowledge the vital roles of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people in caring for families, culture and Country. Particularly, it will support targets associated with economic participation, healing, reducing violence, the removal of children into out-of-home care and reducing young people in detention. It will also connect with the priorities of Working for Women.</p>
<p>Advocating for our human rights</p> <p><i>This project links to our Institute outcome: 'Our Institute takes a human-rights based approach, influencing current and emerging work practices and technologies'; life outcome: 'We have voice in the decisions that impact our lives' and 'Decision-making is relational, collaborative and self-determining'.</i></p>	<p>To create pathways for us to engage within human rights frameworks and forums, and for our voices to be heard within national and international arenas of advocacy, influence and decision-making.</p>	<p>This Impact Project will contribute to CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making and Working for Women, by enabling grounded voices to share in decision-making at national levels on our rights. It will also support UN SDG 5 Gender Equality and enable our voices to be heard at international forums.</p>

Some of this work has started taking shape as we are having conversations, making connections and putting down roots as to how all these impact projects can evolve. One project that has substantive work underway is research elevating our care work. In collaboration with researchers at the ANU and the University of Queensland, the ['Caring about Care' report](#) examines what care means to us, how we engage in care work and how it might be formally recognised and valued. It highlights the need for a new approach to centring and celebrating our care which will be fundamental to safeguarding our rights under the UNDRIP, and the United Nations CRC.

How does the 'System Shift' layer of outcomes support Government priorities and goals?

Systems shifts outcomes	Supporting Government priorities and goals
Systems actors are creating spaces to learn, listen and act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing collaboration and reforming how governments respond to First Nations peoples' needs and aspirations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG) Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making and Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025, under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan) Reform Area 3: Reform institutions and systems
Decision-making is relational, collaborative and self-determining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing informed decision-making and shifting decision-making responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making and Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector Strengthening the voices of First Nations women in decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality Priority Area 5: Leadership, representation and decision-making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 1: Voice, self-determination and agency
Systems are caring, safe and enabling across all Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming how government and systems actors respond and work with First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 3: Reform institutions and systems Recognising, valuing and being responsive to First Nations women's knowledges and practices, including care roles and responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working for Women Priority Area 2: Unpaid and paid care National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy Goal 1: Quality care and support Transforming systems to alleviate poverty, violence and harms for thriving and empowered lives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working for Women Priority Area 1: Gender-based violence, Priority Area 3: Economic equality and security and Priority Area 4: Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 2: Strength, resilience and therapeutic healing

Systems shifts outcomes	Supporting Government priorities and goals
Systems are caring, safe and enabling across all Countries <i>(continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevating women in leadership, governance and decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 1: Voice, self-determination and agency
First Nations gender data sovereignty, ICIP rights and IK is respected and upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting collection, analysis and storing of First Nations data and information, such as data related to care work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 3: Reform institutions and systems Working for Women Priority Area 2: Unpaid and paid care Shifting access to, accountability, transparency and ownership of First Nations data and information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 4: Evidence and data eco-systems
Funding and financial models are long-term, secure and holistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainably funding decision-making, projects and activities at a community level, thereby strengthening economic security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector Working for Women Priority Area 3: Economic equality and security Reforming ways of working with and investing in First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 3: Reform institutions and systems
Systems are transparent and accountable to us and our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reforming ways of working with First Nations communities, including by supporting community decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making and Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 1: Voice, self-determination and agency Strengthening access to data and information for informed decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTG Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 4: Evidence and data eco-systems

Systems shifts outcomes	Supporting Government priorities and goals
Australia engaged in truth-telling, recognition and recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming ways of working with First Nations communities centring First Nations knowledges and practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CTG Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisation – CTG Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 3: Reform institutions and systems • Having transparent data and shifting ownership of data and information to First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 4: Evidence and data eco-systems • Recognising, valuing and being responsive to First Nations women’s care roles and responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Working for Women Priority Area 2: Unpaid and paid care – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan Reform Area 2: Strength, resilience and therapeutic healing – National Strategy for Care and Support Economy Goal 1: Quality care and support.

A human rights-based approach

A core element of Wiyi Yani U Thangani is recognising, upholding and safeguarding human rights through a First Nations gender justice lens. Human rights acknowledge that we have the right to be safe, healthy and strong in our culture and identity, have equal access and opportunity to services, supports and activities we choose, and live a fulfilling and thriving life. In addition, human rights provide language to the discrimination, marginalisation and inequalities that are uniquely experienced by groups, including First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse mob that are often not adequately responded to or understood within policy or legislation.

Recognising and implementing basic human rights is critical towards making justice and equality a reality for everyone. Australia is yet to formalise national processes of reconciliation, introduce federal human rights legislation, or put in place other key mechanisms to safeguard human rights for all peoples within Australia.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), designed by Indigenous peoples globally, is an articulation of the seven core human rights treaties as it applies to us. Through this lens, human rights are described as collectively belonging to Indigenous peoples, as opposed to being individual rights alone, recognising and respecting Indigenous values and principles of collective wellbeing and empowerment. UNDRIP is underpinned by four key principles, these are:

- **Self-determination:** We have the right to shape our own lives, including our economic,

social, cultural and political futures. This includes leading, contributing to and having a role in shaping systems and structures across Australia (and the world) to enable us to pursue opportunities and interests, be strong in our identity, and live thriving lives connected to kin and Country. Without pursuing self-determination, it is difficult to realise other foundational rights as it is not only about recognition and having a voice, but also creating change across systems.

- **Participation in decision-making:** We have the right to participate in decision-making that affects our rights and through representatives we choose. Participation must be consistent with principles of free, prior and informed consent, be built on respect and reciprocity, and take place where we are treated as equal stakeholders in decision-making spaces. This ensures our meaningful engagement, where our lived experience, knowledge and practices can inform, and provide strength and language to the policy, practices and processes that influence our lives.
- **Respect for and protection of culture:** We have a right to maintain, protect and practise our cultural traditions and heritage. This includes our knowledges, languages, practices, and our deep ancestral connection to the lands, skies and waters of this vast continent. This principle is a core to the right to self-determination as it plays an important role in promoting health and wellbeing, and being strong in identity.
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** We should be able to live our lives and enjoy our rights equal to that of anyone else. Regardless of our identities, where we live, what we speak, who we are, or any other diversities and abilities that set us apart from others should be treated respectfully and without discrimination.

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

In conjunction with UNDRIP in supporting the rights of First Nations women and girls, Australia is accountable to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the most comprehensive rights-based framework for women and girls. It acknowledges the historic denial of basic rights for women and girls, including lack of bodily autonomy in many spaces, and the continued marginalisation, discrimination and violence that takes place across the globe undermining gender equality. As a mechanism to support the rights in CEDAW, the Australian Government implemented the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). This legislation responds to the rights of women and girls, as well as responding to discriminations faced by gender-diverse mob.

Other human rights instruments

Additionally, the Change Agenda draws from the full range of human rights-based frameworks and mechanisms, recognising that First Nations gender justice and equality comes from the advancement of rights across all areas of life. These instruments provide different articulations of what equality, empowerment and sustainability look like and how we can achieve it. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity:** The Expert brings awareness, engages in dialogue with systems actors, and assesses the implementation of human rights to address violence and discrimination experienced on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform to Action:** A comprehensive blueprint for gender equality,

across 12 key themes: Poverty; Education and Training; Health; Violence; Armed Conflict; the Economy; Power and decision-making; Institutional Mechanisms; Human Rights; Media; the Environment; and Children.

- **Women's Empowerment Principles:** A framework with seven principles for advancing women's empowerment and gender equality through an economic lens. These principles are: High-level Corporate Leadership; Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work Without Discrimination; Employee Health; Wellbeing and Safety; Education and Training for Career Advancement; Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices; Community Initiatives and Advocacy; and Measurement and Reporting.
- **Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030:** An action plan for 'people, planet and prosperity'. It sets out seventeen goals, indicators and targets responding to social, cultural, economic, political and environmental rights.
- **Paris Agreement:** An Agreement by countries across the globe responding to the impacts of climate change, including the distinct impacts it has on Indigenous peoples, and sets goals for economic and social transformation to stop damaging and heal the environment.

Together, these instruments recognise how our lives are shaped by interconnected systems and structures that have the potential to support or undermine our rights. In this way, each human right is also like a star in our night sky. It is through learning the songlines, and connecting constellations together that we gain understanding and value that no right can exist alone. Rights must be viewed and actioned in the context of others. The stars make sure no one is made invisible, lost in the night-time darkness.

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