



WIYI YANI U THANGANI INSTITUTE FOR FIRST NATIONS GENDER JUSTICE



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2030



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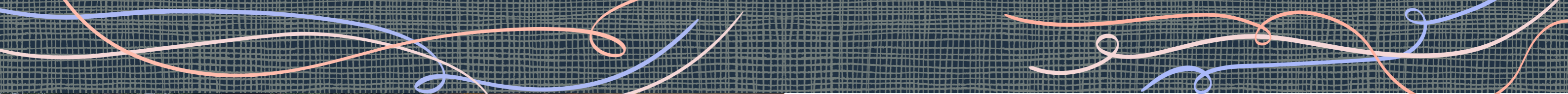
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Acknowledgement and background

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women’s Voices) Project has travelled across the continent and surrounding islands, including the Torres Strait, Tasmania and Tiwi, and has listened to women, girls (inclusive of Sistergirls and trans women) and gender-diverse people from many nations, over many years. The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Institute for First Nations Gender Justice gives special acknowledgement to our Matriarchs—the first mothers of this land—and we pay our respects to them and all our Elders past and present who watch over us, our kin, our Countries, waters and skies. The Institute has found its home at the Australian National University, however it is not bound by walls or place—it is a living, felt space, evolving within the hearts and minds of all First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. It is carried in our voices, our stories and our connections, creating pathways for decision-making and collective action grounded in who we are, and in who we are becoming.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Institute (Institute) was launched in March 2024. After an initial phase of consolidation and establishment, the Institute has developed this Strategic Plan to put in place the foundations of our visionary work, spanning 2026 to 2030.

This Plan draws on the rich knowledges and experiences captured in the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women’s Voices): Securing our Rights, Securing our Future Report* (2020) and all subsequent documents. This Plan and the work of the Institute are held accountable to the generational aspirations determined by First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people, as set out in the *Change Agenda for First Nations Gender Justice* (2024). Specifically, the priorities and commitments of this Plan are directed towards realising the Change Agenda’s outcomes.

The development of this Plan has been guided by June Oscar AO (she/her), the founder and Chair of the Institute, and the Institute’s inaugural Advisory Council: Estelle Clarke (she/her), Katja Henaway (she/her), June Riemer (she/her), Kooncha Brown (she/her) and Shonella Tatipata (she/her). We thank them for their ongoing support and wisdom in bringing the work of the Institute to life.

A note on language

This Plan’s primary focus centres First Nations women and girls in all their diversity. All references made to women and girls are inclusive of Sistergirls and trans women—whose voices, visions and wisdom are central to our work. We also recognise that fostering a truly inclusive movement means embracing all genders, particularly gender-diverse people, who experience distinct harms caused by the marginalising structures we seek to dismantle. The Institute aims to reflect this commitment to inclusivity in our work, while continuing to centre the voices and experiences of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people.



Plan on a Page

Our guiding purpose: The world upholds the rights and lives of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people in all our diversity.

Our mission: To reweave the social fabric and pursue the realisation of First Nations gender justice.

Our conceptual approach and position statement Our approach to First Nations gender justice centres lived experiences and matriarchal knowledges to combat harmful systems and heal from structural injustices and inequalities. We understand this conflict response, healing and repair work to be peacebuilding.

Our functions:

Surfacing and co-defining gender-informed ways of being and doing

Growing First Nations gender justice research

Elevating voices as evidence for change

Uniting diverse actors for dialogue and action

Our strategic priorities:



1

Support and amplify systems change

We will navigate and transform conflict through supporting women-led change processes and peacebuilding on the ground. Our focus includes:

- Co-creating systems practices and methods for change.
- Elevating knowledges from the ground to national and international spaces, guaranteeing space for Sistergirls and trans women.
- Working with decision-makers to shift systems.
- Building connections with broader civic society.

Success looks like: By 2030, the Institute will have strengthened and supported the growth of First Nations gender justice movements and collectives across the continent and surrounding islands, with the national infrastructure in place to sustain them. Spaces and mechanisms will exist across structures—from the ground to the national level—to co-create systems change responsive to real life needs and generational aspirations.



2

Strengthen the social and economic fabric with care and healing

We will centre the holistic work of care and healing led by women and girls as foundational to a healthy existence for people and Country. Our focus includes:

- Expanding care and healing research, resources and tools, including a dedicated approach with Sistergirls and trans women.
- Exploring and documenting how care and healing approaches regenerate the social and economic fabric by elevating care and healing as vital to healthy people and Country for sustainable and climate-just futures.
- Initiating approaches to measure and value healing and care work, within the framework of peacebuilding.



3

Develop research and data approaches for nourishing and applying generational knowledges

We will collaborate to form ethical, culturally informed and gender sensitive data tools for self-determination. Our focus includes:

- Supporting women and girls to gather evidence and evaluate their work and initiatives to dismantle structural barriers and reform systems.
- Elevating the stories of women, girls and gender-diverse people, including Sistergirls and trans women, through multimedia and immersive experiences.
- Enhancing the Institute's impact with Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).
- Developing an Institute approach to supporting First Nations gender justice and peacebuilding research and evidence building.



The Change Agenda: Our foundation and guide

The [Wiyi Yani U Thangani Change Agenda for First Nations Gender Justice](#) (the Change Agenda), published in 2024 alongside the launch of the Institute, is the first document of its kind to exist at a national level—designed by and for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. The Change Agenda embodies a collective vision for gender justice and equality, defining the changes First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people want to see for their children, families, communities, culture and Country. It describes three layers of outcomes focused on the generational work of the Institute, broader systemic shifts and long-term life outcomes, as well as establishing the visionary conditions for a life well lived.

While realising the outcomes of the Change Agenda requires societal-wide commitment, the Institute plays a key role in driving this change. The Change Agenda guides how we design the Institute’s work, measure impact, and uphold our accountability to First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. It outlines a comprehensive systems change approach and Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework to help us track progress and build evidence for change, from the ground up.

This Strategic Plan sets out the Institute’s immediate priorities to support the realisation of the Change Agenda’s broader vision and outcomes. We encourage you to engage with the Change Agenda to understand how this Strategic Plan is nested within a larger vision and to recognise your role as a systems actor in driving meaningful change.

Supporting Government priorities and frameworks

The outcomes and priorities set out across our Strategic Plan and Change Agenda provide a First Nations gender lens for major government frameworks, including, but not limited to, the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036*, and *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*. First Nations people have worked tirelessly to ensure these policies reflect their lived realities, and to bring these plans to life. Our work complements and aims to support progress toward meeting the outcomes, targets and goals of these plans, grounding them in the culturally informed gender-responsive evidence and approaches needed to create meaningful change.



Our Institute

Our guiding purpose

Our Institute is grounded by the following guiding purpose, informed by thousands of conversations through the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project:

“The world upholds and responds in reciprocity to the rights and lives of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people 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.”

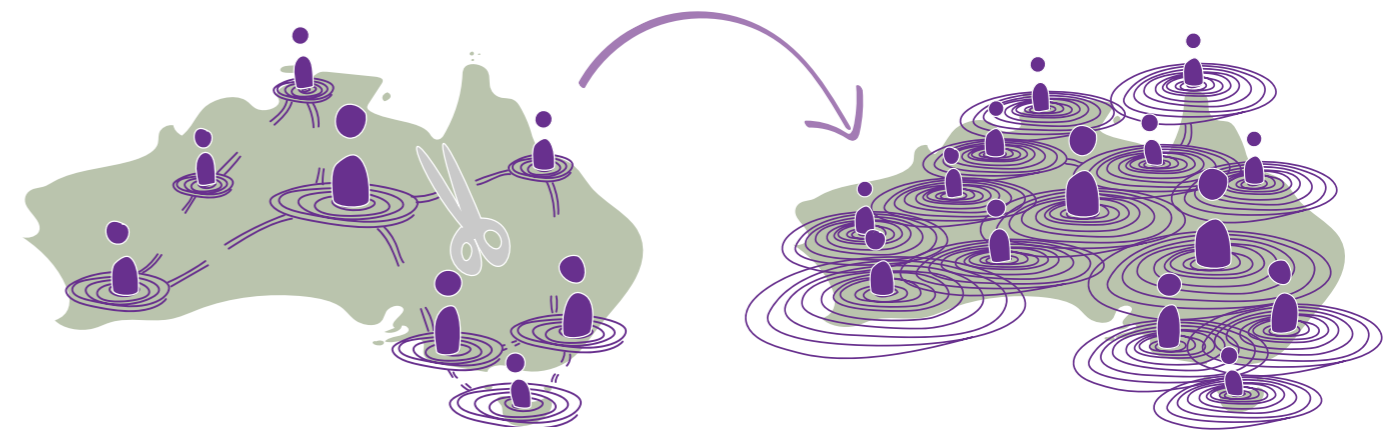
Our mission

Our mission is to reweave the social fabric by elevating the voices, knowledges and lived experiences of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people, and build collaborations with all system actors to collectively heal and regenerate caring, peaceful systems and realise First Nations gender justice.

Our conceptual framing—peacebuilding

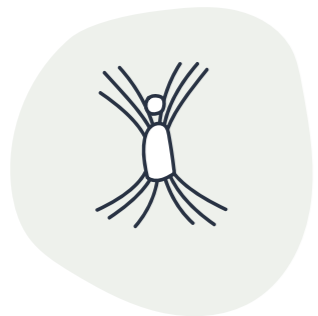
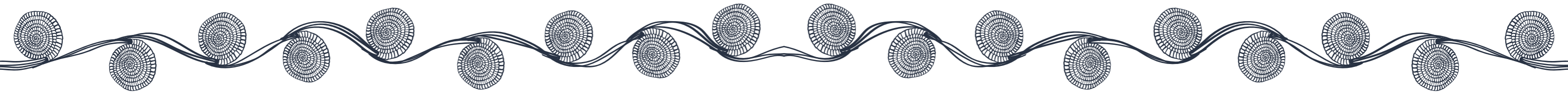
Our conceptual framing is grounded in conflict transformation and forming conditions of peace, which we call peacebuilding, or building peace. It recognises that colonial trauma and structural discriminations have not been adequately addressed or resolved, which has resulted in deep and ongoing impacts on First Nations peoples and communities, perpetuating conflict across community, institutional and societal levels. We understand this externally imposed context must be transformed, knowing that reaching just and equal existences demands more than the absence of destructive conflict. It requires the building of respectful relationships, where diversity and difference are embraced as strengths that shape a shared and equitable future. Through amplifying the collective action and knowledges of women and reinforcing cycles of care, we work to reshape systems from the ground up, encouraging all people to heal divisions and create conditions for both people and the planet to thrive.

First Nations women are, and have always been, peacebuilders—navigating conflict, responding to trauma and crisis, investing in generational health and wellbeing, and leading collective efforts to challenge discriminatory structures and create enabling conditions for our children, families and communities. Our Strategic Priorities are shaped by this understanding, and our approach to implementing them is guided by these practices of peacebuilding at every level. Together we mend and weave, repairing what is torn with colonisation and discrimination, growing vibrant movements, which connect, energise and sustain each other.



Our position statements

The Institute is committed to **First Nations gender justice**: the full self-determination and realisation of all rights for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. Our approach centres the lived experiences and **ancestral matriarchal knowledges** carried and embodied by First Nations women. These knowledges create systems of **care** and **sustainability** to combat and heal from structural injustices and inequalities for the benefit of all society. Our approach embeds an **intersectional** lens, recognising, honouring and upholding the inherent dignity and worth of all people and their multifaceted identities and experiences.



Matriarchal knowledges are understood throughout the Institute’s work as systems of balance and reciprocity that have sustained First Nations societies since time immemorial. While Western patriarchal structures are built on dominance and control, matriarchal ways of being centre on inclusion and care for all beings. Women carry obligations to protect and transfer these knowledges—even as colonial patriarchal structures have marginalised our voices, we continue this vital work, keeping our families, communities and Country connected and safe.

The Institute recognises that these knowledge systems are not exclusive to women, as they can be, and at times are, embraced by people of all genders. These systems offer pathways for transforming current systems into ways of being that benefit everyone, including men.



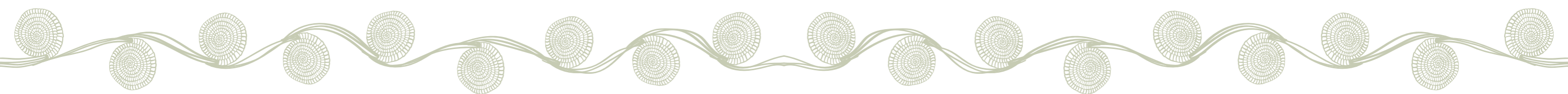
Care is more than a role undertaken by First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people—it is an expression of love and a deep value that permeates all work, maintaining, holding and revitalising systems with and for kin and Country. The Institute embodies this ethos, seeking to transform mindsets so that care is understood as a value and practice that connects people, community and Country, creating cohesive, safe and meaningful ways to live.

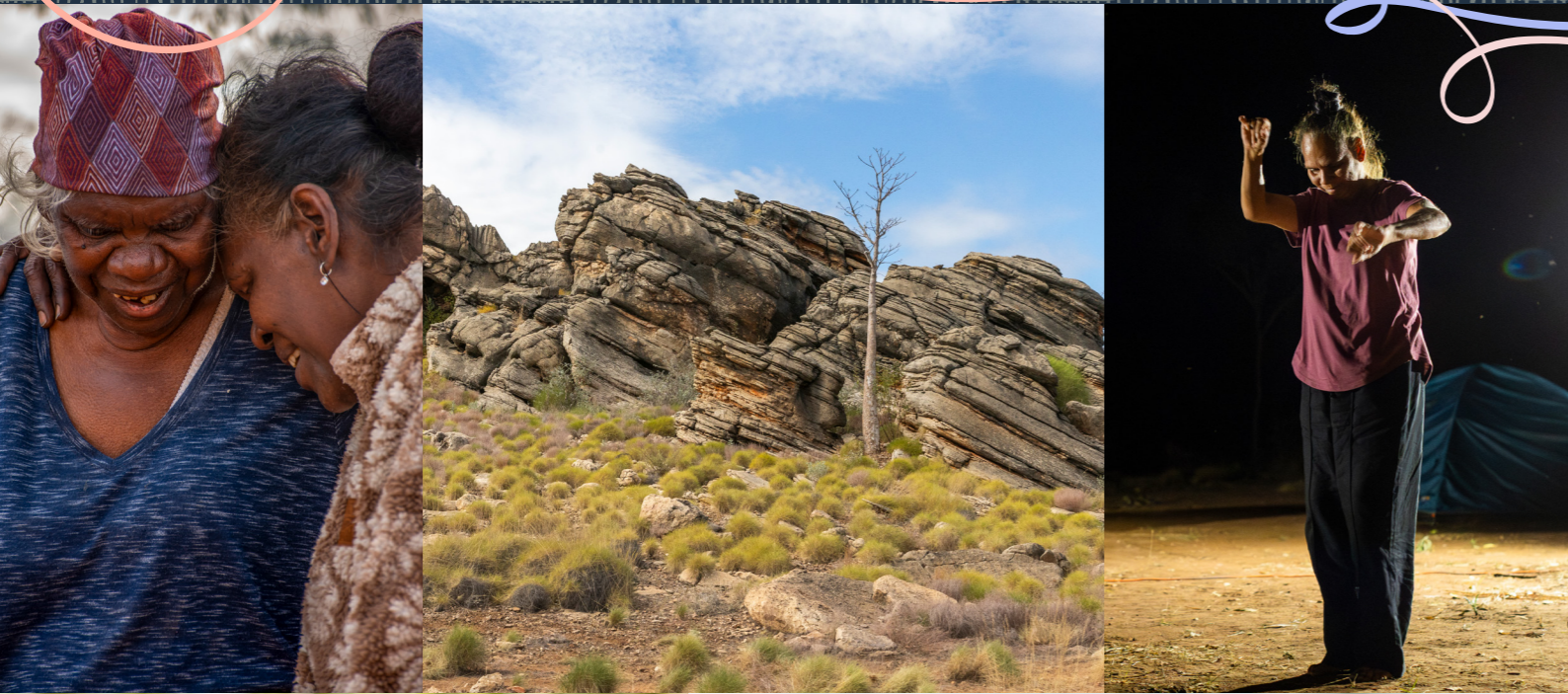


Sustainability has been witnessed and practised by First Nations peoples since time immemorial. Shared through stories across generations, it is understood not as an end state, but as a continual process—one that centres all human and more-than-human beings in reciprocal relationships. Moving beyond Western definitions that focus on individual rights and creating ‘sustainable development’, the Institute explores sustainability through a holistic, interconnected and intergenerational perspective. The Institute is focused on shifting structures and forming processes to create thriving environments now and into the future.



Intersectionality is a lens the Institute applies to understand how diverse identity markers, forms of intelligences, perceptions and knowledges shape and enhance both individual and collective ways of being in the world. Through these intersecting strengths, we analyse and advocate for the transformation of systems formed by colonial, racist and patriarchal beliefs—systems that currently compound marginalisation, harm and undermine First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people’s identities and lived experiences. The Institute strives to create systems that reflect and support strengths and lived realities.





Our functions

The Institute carries out the following interconnected functions to support First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people and to achieve our Strategic Priorities:

- **Surfacing and co-defining gender-informed ways of being and doing** that drive systemic change, responding to multiple and intersecting realities to improve life outcomes.
- **Growing First Nations gender justice research** with interdisciplinary researchers and practitioners to build the resources and tools that witness and transform lives and work.
- **Elevating voices from the ground as evidence for change** by amplifying knowledges and stories to form culturally informed gender-just policies that target root causes and support systemic drivers of change.
- **Uniting diverse actors for dialogue and action** including government, researchers, private sector, civic society groups and individuals to pursue First Nations gender justice.

Our strategic priorities

Our Strategic Priorities are the key areas through which the Institute will drive change against all layers of the Change Agenda outcomes, with a specific focus on achieving the Institute outcomes. The Institute will design and implement projects across these priorities in collaboration with, and always grounded in, the voices of First Nations women, girls (inclusive of Sistergirls and trans women) and gender-diverse people.

These Strategic Priorities form the tools, relationships and infrastructure for peacebuilding. Together, they create an integrated framework for witnessing and elevating the work and lives of those at the centre of First Nations gender justice, bringing diverse stakeholders into collaboration and cultivating the conditions for healthier, more caring and less harmful futures. This, in its entirety, is peacebuilding. Our focus is on recognising and investing in the processes and conditions that make this change possible and sustained.

Support and amplify systems change

Why: Matriarchal knowledges and practices weave together the foundations for systemic change, creating the conditions of peace for human and more-than-human flourishing.

Issue: With minimal or no supports, women and gender-diverse people do all they can to repair the fabric torn at colonisation, while navigating trauma and conflict enforced by structural discriminations.

Response: Our Institute will support gender-justice change processes, connecting women in all their diversity, while engaging with non-Indigenous institutions and people to build their capacity for conflict and systems transformation.

The Institute commits to:

- Co-creating intersectional practices and methods for driving change and transforming conflict.
- Elevating knowledge to scale impact from the ground to national and international spaces, guaranteeing space for Sistergirls, trans women and gender-diverse people.
- Working with researchers, policy-designers and decision-makers to build capacity for and lead in systems change and peacebuilding.
- Establishing conflict resolution, truth and justice approaches that engage broader civic society.



Strengthen the social and economic fabric with care and healing

Why: Care and healing are at the heart of healthy lives.

They support recovery and transformation through nurturing and binding kin, culture and Country to ensure that every being has the learning and confidence to engage in the world and pursue their dreams.

Issue: Despite being vital to the healthy functioning of social, cultural and environmental systems, women's extensive healing and care practices remain invisible, undervalued, and are continuously undermined by Western structures.

Response: Our Institute will shift systems and structures to promote care and healing work as holistic and vital to supporting healthy people and Country by establishing initiatives, frameworks and measures that form caring and healing orientated systems.

The Institute commits to:

- Expanding research and resources on First Nations healing and care knowledges and practices, including a dedicated approach to doing relevant research with Sistergirls, trans women and gender-diverse people.
- Exploring and documenting how care and healing approaches regenerate the social and economic fabric, ensuring specific work is undertaken with Sistergirls and trans women.
- Elevating care and healing as vital to healthy people and Country for sustainable and climate-just futures, by influencing domestic and global platforms such as the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Initiating approaches to measure and value healing and care work, within the framework of peacebuilding, and exploring its benefits for society, the economy and Country.



Develop research and data approaches for nourishing and applying generational knowledges

Why: Inherited matriarchal knowledges and lived experiences hold a wealth of collective learnings and ways of being, offering guidance on how to honour diversity, navigate conflict, reconstruct healthy ways of existing and sustain caring, reciprocal relationships with each other, with Country, and with the more-than-human world.

Issue: Matriarchal knowledges are not being captured in mainstream research and data systems that influence decision-making. New technologies also pose a risk of erasing these knowledges, treating them as inferior to Western data, which hold generalised information about First Nations communities, without our ownership or access.

Response: We will co-design ethical, culturally informed and gender sensitive research and data approaches for women, girls and gender-diverse people to record knowledges, enabling self-determination. These approaches will support the development of frameworks to track and create change, grounded in a growing evidence base of First Nations gender justice and peacebuilding work.

The Institute commits to:

- Supporting women, girls and gender-diverse people to gather evidence and evaluate their work and initiatives showing the conditions that make change happen, while dismantling structural barriers.
- Elevating the stories of women, girls and gender-diverse people, including Sistergirls and trans women, through multimedia and immersive experiences.
- Enhancing the impact of First Nations gender justice and peacebuilding approaches with Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).
- Developing an Institute approach to supporting First Nations gender justice and peacebuilding research, through training, guidance and building an evidence base using the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty.



What does success look like by 2030?

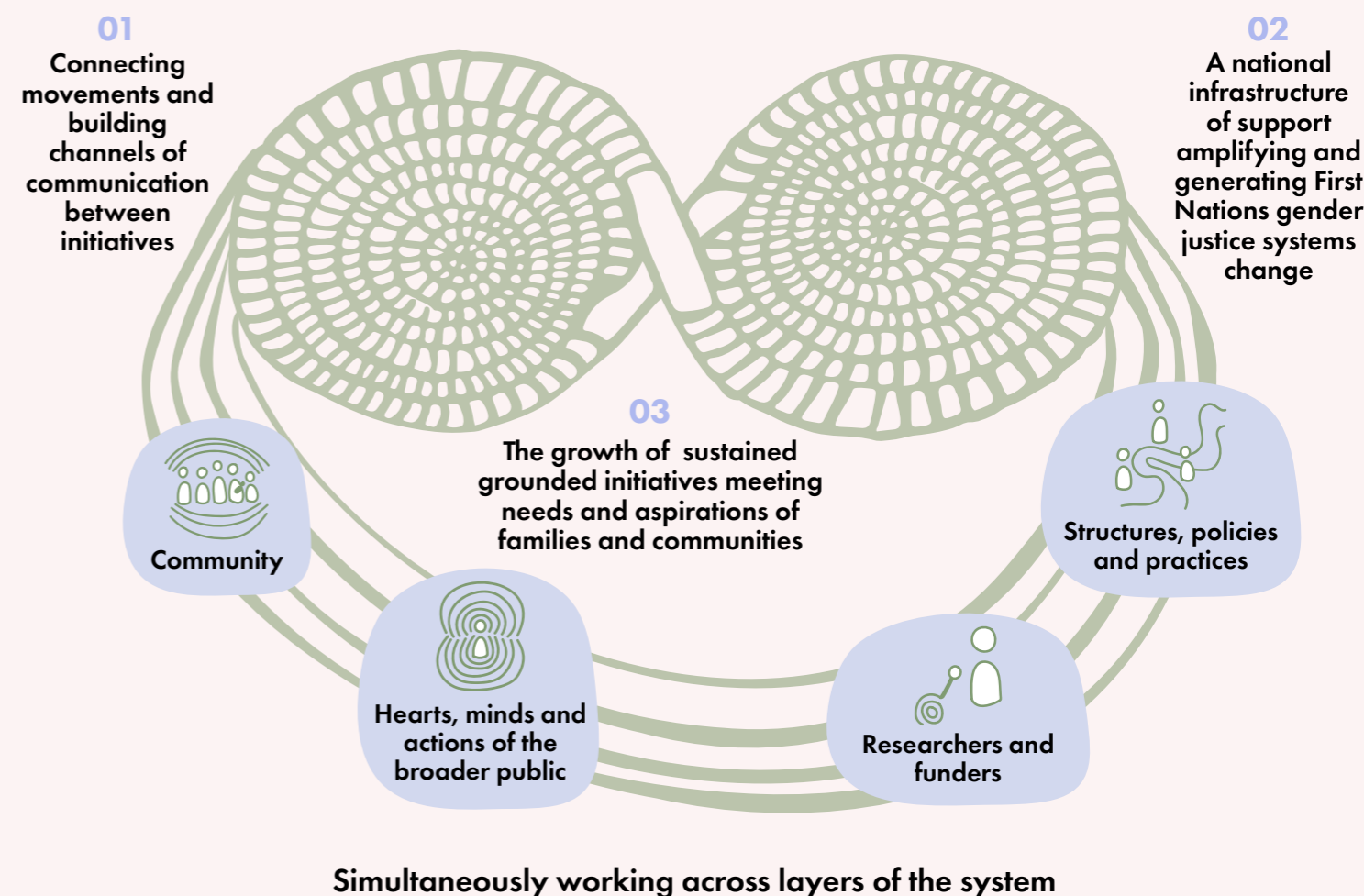
Advancing the priorities of this Strategic Plan will establish strong foundations for the Institute to support women to gather in the places they live and work, grow movements for advocacy and change, and collaborate with diverse decision-makers and influencers to shift systems in response to needs and aspirations. It will produce grounded research—flowing from community to influence funders, policy-makers, and civic society—enhancing the impact of First Nations gender responsive change processes and initiatives. Ultimately, from these foundations, this Strategy will create the national infrastructure for peacebuilding and systems change, driven by the wisdom and foresight of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. Our focus is on creating and investing in the conditions that make change possible and sustained.

Currently, no national infrastructure exists to connect, support and sustain the movements and initiatives led by First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people. Their work remains largely invisible to the systems and decision-makers that need to respond. Visibility, and the belief and knowing that your life and dreams matter, are the preconditions for change.

By 2030, the Institute will have actively supported the following:

- Self-sustaining collectives and movements of women, girls and gender-diverse people in regions across every state and territory.
- A nation-wide web of support, knowledge sharing and resource flows between these movements.
- Pathways for localised priorities to be elevated within national and international arenas.
- A practice hub on Bunuba Country for peaceful respite, to train and apply the Wiyi Yani U Thangani peacebuilding and systems change methodology, with the infrastructure in place to ensure it functions and grows.
- Communities on the ground to regularly produce their own evidence for change, led by women, girls and gender-diverse people, building a growing evidence base of First Nations gender justice and peacebuilding work that is shaping policy and practice.
- Mechanisms for First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people to work and collaborate with government and other decision-makers, creating sustained spaces for dialogue and shared decision-making that shape systems responsive to First Nations gender justice.

The successful implementation of this Plan's priorities will result in a self-reinforcing cycle of movement building and systems change:



Our commitment to organisational sustainability

To deliver on our Strategic Priorities and achieve long-term impact, the Institute must have strong foundations, with effective functions, governance and partnerships. To ensure a healthy and sustainable organisation, the Institute commits to:

- **First Nations gender-justice governance:** In collaboration with our inaugural Advisory Council, the Institute will design a comprehensive organisational and operating framework, grounded in matriarchal knowledges and Law, ensuring transparency and accountability to the voices of First Nations women and gender-diverse people.
- **Sustainable funding:** The Institute will establish partnerships and design funding approaches to enable long-term organisational sustainability, and to maintain a secure First Nations women-led workforce that is safe and inclusive of gender diversity.
- **Leading practice:** The Institute will design and implement workplace policies and practices that embody First Nations gender justice principles and our Ways of Working, to be a leading model for safe, non-discriminatory, inclusive, creative and meaningful working environments that nurture personal and professional growth.

Our movement for systems change

The work of the Institute is underpinned by a movement for changing systems. This movement that orientates our work is grounded in a cyclical Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) process, which includes the use of our Ways of Working. Being directed by the need to change systems supports the Institute to envision and create processes that are holistic, intersectional and move beyond mainstream ways of knowing, doing and being, which typically focus on symptoms, behaviours, or constant reactions to crisis. Rather, First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people envision systemic transformation occurring like the growth of seeds into trees and forests. Always striving to change systems ensures we work in ways that nurture the conditions for the trees and forests to grow—as an Institute we are interested in understanding and nurturing the conditions and processes that make change happen.

Key to our systems approach is the development of systems practices with First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people, to develop practices that affirm their strengths and are most useful in creating positive change in their lives and for future generations.

READ MORE IN THE CHANGE AGENDA (PAGES 64-65)

Ways of Working



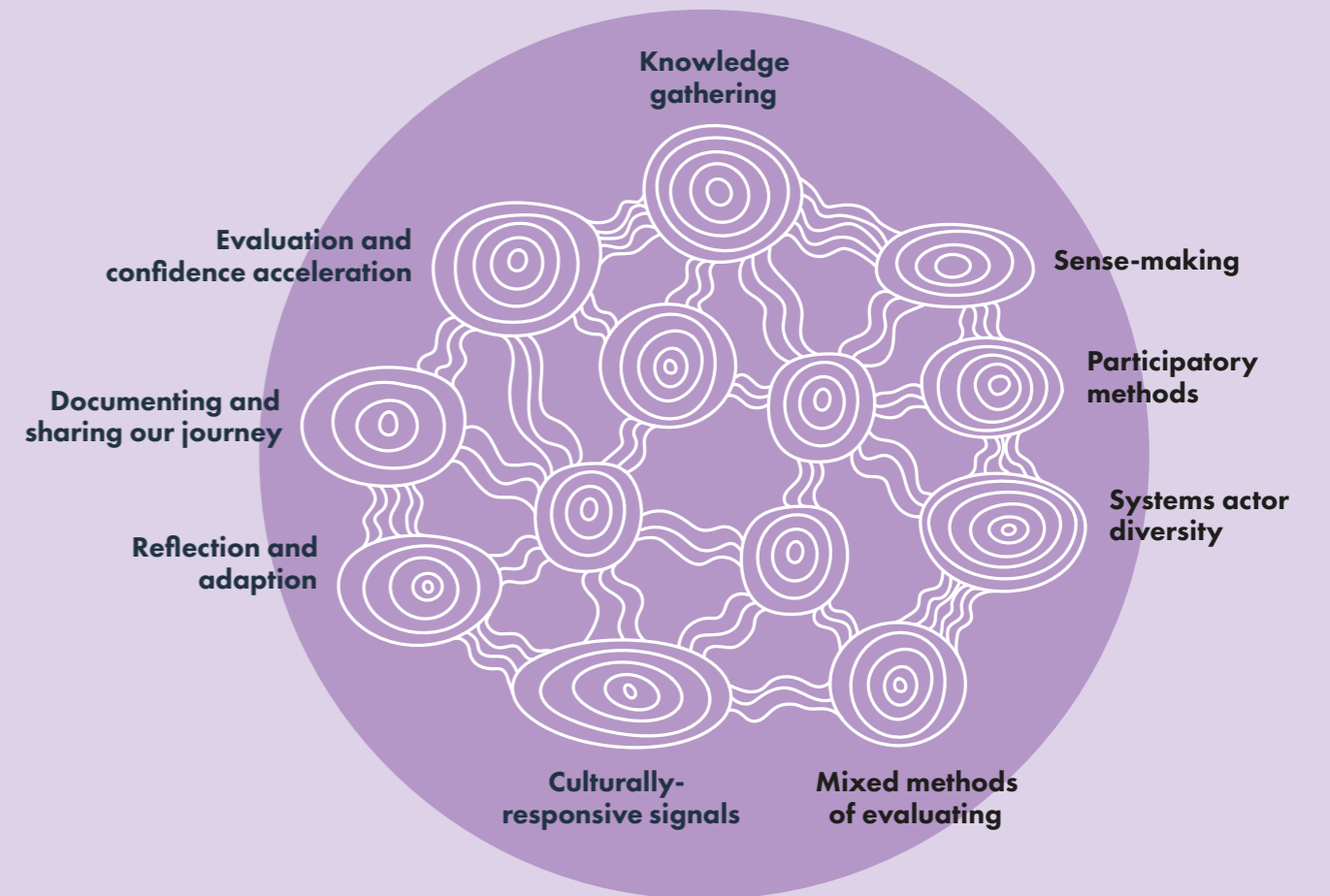
Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework

READ MORE IN THE CHANGE AGENDA (PAGES 45-53)

To work in a way that changes systems we must embed a cyclical feedback process of community engagement, practice, evaluation, learning and evidence-building into our work. Our MEL framework enables us to enact systems change. It is distinct from Western measurement frameworks, which are often added only at the end of an initiative's lifecycle. Our MEL framework instead embeds a continuous process of engagement and sense-making to integrate new learnings and improve design of initiatives.

Over the life of this Strategic Plan, we will assess the impact of the Strategic Priorities and our organisational sustainability commitments against the outcomes set out within the Change Agenda. This Plan's priorities largely align with the first layer of outcomes that direct the long-term work of the Institute. We will record signals, which are our indicators helping us to understand and make change happen. This will be the data for tracking how the priorities contribute to realising the outcomes.

Further, we will connect progress against this first layer of outcomes with the systems shift outcomes and the visionary life outcomes, which is the final layer in the Change Agenda describing a healthy system supporting thriving existences. This will help us understand some of the key factors that contribute to long-term sustained change that enhances the lives of women, girls, gender-diverse people and communities across the continent and surrounding islands.



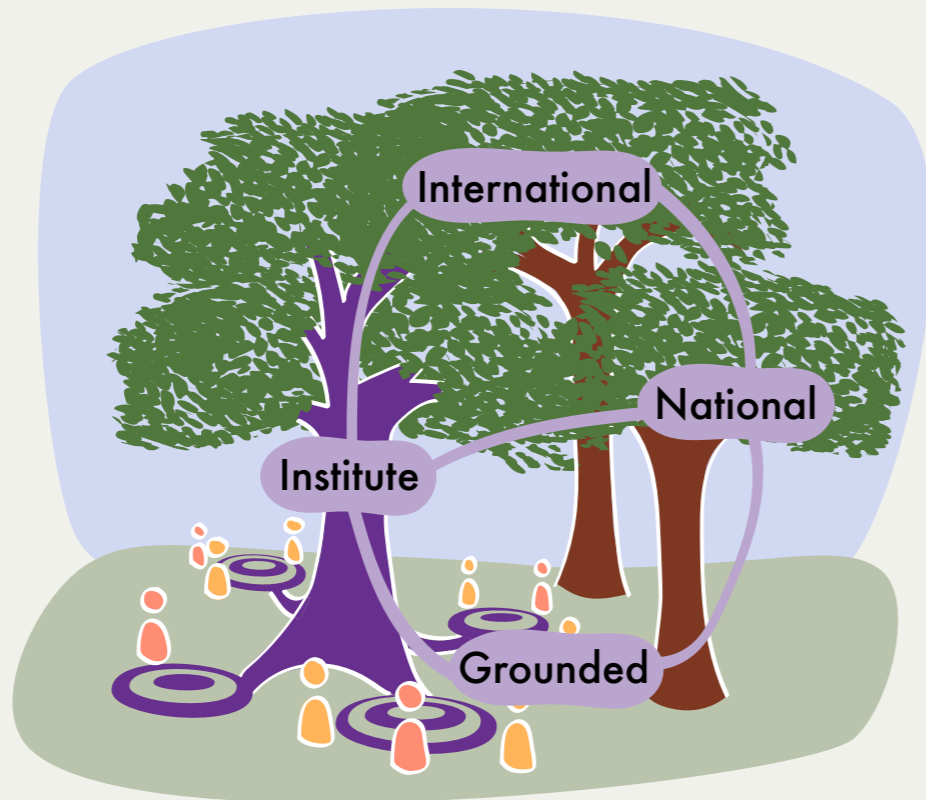
Governance enabling the Institute to work across multiple levels

Effective systems change requires deep connection across all layers. The Institute sits at a national level, enhancing and enabling initiatives on the ground, while

supporting the upward flow of voices and knowledges into national and international spaces. The Institute can also be seen as an intermediary, or what we call a third space, where systems actors come together to form vibrant spaces of co-creation, joining community-led approaches with broader structural change to transform systems.

By acting as both conduit and catalyst, the Institute aims to ensure that the voices and knowledge systems of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people influence policy and program design. To do this, the Institute creates spaces where communities, researchers and decision-makers can work together to design lasting solutions.

This interconnected approach enables us to support the creation of living evidence and to track progress against our broader Change Agenda, while supporting communities to drive change on their own terms. The Institute will approach each Strategic Priority with an understanding of where we sit at a national level, and with a commitment to systemically analyse all our projects to create lasting impact.





**WIYI YANIU
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**FOR FIRST NATIONS
GENDER JUSTICE**



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