



Ngaanyatjarra
Pitjantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara
Women's Council

Department of Social Services

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The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) writes a submission in response to the **Second Action Plan under Australia's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (the National Plan)**

Who are we?

NPYWC is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that advocates for Anangu in the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) region and is a major provider of human services for the NPY Lands. The NPY Lands span the tri-state Central Desert region of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, covering 350,000sq km and encompassing 26 remote communities and homelands, with an overall population of around 6,000 Anangu (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people). We hold a strong legacy in advocating for the needs of Anangu and our core purpose is to work with women and their families of the NPY region to increase their capacity to lead safe and healthy, autonomous lives. NPYWC provides health, cultural and community service programs, and are often the only service provider responding to a particular need in these communities. **Annexed and labelled "A"** is a map of the region and **Annexed and labelled "B"** is a painting by M.W (deceased) that tells the story of the first time Anangu women came together to form their own Women's Council – to be seen and heard during the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights movement.

NPYWC's Domestic and Family Violence Service (DFVS) is the only specialised ACCO DFV service on the NPY Lands. The work of DFVS is informed by the [Strengthening Community Capacity to End Violence \(SCCTEV\) framework](#) (2018) which was developed in collaboration with the Australian Childhood Foundation. This document reflects the way that NPYWC engages with communities in acts of reflection, dialogue and resistance to family, domestic and sexual violence (DFSV), its effects and its causes. NPYWC's response to the **Second Action Plan under Australia's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032** (the 'National Plan') draws from this work.

NPYWC is part of peak bodies Embolden (South Australia) and First Nations Advocate Against Domestic Violence (FNAADFV) who have also made submissions for the National Plan.

The following Submission will reference the following priority advocacy areas for NPYWC and recommendations for the National Plan to consider:

- Embedding Aboriginal Governance & ACCO-Led Responses
- Very remote regions and cross-border implications
- Basic unmet needs impacting safety in the NPY Lands
- Tjitji (children) as victim-survivors in their own right
- Anangu knowledge and solutions

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Our Submission

Embedding Aboriginal Governance & ACCO-Led Responses

The DFVS SCCTEV framework states:

“Strategies to end violence will not work if they are imposed in the community. The most effective strategies are those which can amplify, extend and resource acts of resistance to violence that are already being enacted by individuals in the community” (p. 23).

A key mechanism in which the National Plan can meaningfully and structurally centre safety and adopt an evidenced based approach is to prioritise ACCO-led program delivery. This is critical. As the National Plan summary paper states, outcomes are not equal. The summary paper highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and people living in rural and remote areas as groups experiencing unequal outcomes. Anangu women in the NPY Lands fall within both groups, experiencing higher rates of violence alongside greater barriers to accessing support. Long term funding and sustainable investment for ACCO-led services is essential, rather than short-term or project-based funding. Prioritising sustainable ACCO-led program delivery would align with the Closing the Gap (CTG) Priority Reform areas and genuine partnership obligations listed below. These reforms are intended to enfranchise ACCOs and their cultural authority and expertise in meeting the needs of the communities they service:

1. **Priority Reform 1 - Formal partnerships and shared decision-making:**

- Communities have long told governments that culturally safe and community-led services are essential to their healing and safety. A strong National Plan is one that includes a genuine commitment to building and strengthening structures that empower Anangu with shared decision-making authority alongside governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress against CTG.

2. **Priority Reform Two – Building the community-controlled sector:**

- Organisations like NPYWC are best placed to respond to DFSV affecting Anangu. We need strong, long-term, new investment to help build the community-controlled sector which will continue to guarantee trauma-informed and strengths-based service delivery.

3. **Priority Reform 3 - Transforming government organisations:**

- Meaningful investment in workforce capability to recognise and respond to the needs of the community in culturally appropriate ways. This would include funding for cultural guidance and training, recognition of local authority structures as well as the ongoing resourcing of translation and interpreting. **Annexed and labelled “C”** highlights the importance of resourcing language as it depicts the high percentage of Western Desert language speakers in the NPY Lands.

For any program to be effective, “it must be grounded in the resources that emanate from cultural ways of living and relating” (SCCTEV framework, p. 15). Existing NPYWC initiatives are examples of community-led, evidence-based programs that directly address both key drivers of DFSV - gender inequality and colonisation (Our Watch, *Changing the Picture*). Anangu-led projects that engage in prevention, recovery and healing include the DFVS Malparara-Malparara Project which works with women who have lived and living experience of DFSV, the Uti Kulintjaku Project works alongside women to increase mental health literacy in language while the Uti Kulintjaku Watiku (Men's) Project works with men to support mental health and encourage healthy interpersonal relationships. Further, the NPYWC's Youth program and Kulintja Palyaringkunyitjaku (KP) Project Officers support young people to understand and respond appropriately to topics such as healthy relationships, substance use, mental health, social media, and other associated harms. More information on these projects are **Annexed and labelled “D”**.

A NPYWC Director (2024) stated:

"[DFSV] is there. We can't push it away, it's too strong...Us in the centre. How are we going to get something to really help us? We go to sleep, the problem still there. Truly help us."

To truly help Anangu, the National Plan needs to amplify, extend and resource community solutions.

Very remote regions and cross-border implications

The National Plan must consider the unique context of remote and very remote regions such as the NPY Lands. Framing solutions by Western-defined state and territory boundaries negatively impacts Anangu living well on Country. Our clients and community members travel between jurisdictions and women frequently travel to other communities and use physical space and specific relationships to increase their safety. Utilising cross-jurisdictional collaboration in the National Plan is critical. Consideration of how programs delivering services in this region can be further supported, expanded and funded should be centred. The very remote communities of the NPY lands experience additional barriers to seeking supports due to distances, travel time, transport availability, cost of fuel, poor weather and roads, among other things.

State-Funded Cross-Border Coordination: Collaboration between networks like the Family Safety Meeting (SA), Family Safety Framework (NT), and Multi-Agency Case Management (WA) is vital to prevent women from falling through jurisdictional gaps. Strengthened cross-border collaboration is needed for a unified police response. Cross-Border Justice challenges should be a national priority, proper and sustained coordination requires investment from the Commonwealth, States and Territories. This includes a need for regular interjurisdictional police meetings, a cross-border family safety meeting, increased training on the Cross-Border Justice Scheme, and funding for initiatives such as the previously defunded Cross Border Intelligence Desk which identified and monitored high risk cross-border DFSV offenders and victims and undertook requests for information from external service providers and police from different jurisdictions. Cross-Border challenges should be a national priority. The **Annexed and labelled "E"** is information pertaining to Cross Border Justice from 2009 when the scheme was initiated. The scheme is not currently working to its full capabilities and the inconsistent application of its use leaves women and children at risk.

National Risk Assessment: In addition to poor cross border coordination, NPYWC Domestic and Family Violence Service currently requires competency across three risk assessments on the tri-state region. The inconsistency of thresholds and absence of shared language across WA (Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (CRARMF), NT (Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT) and SA (Domestic Violence Risk Assessment (DVRA) leads to invisibilising high-risk indicators across state borders for women and children experiencing violence. A National Risk Assessment for Domestic and Family Violence with place-based indicators would improve shared language across jurisdictions and increase visibility of risk across state borders.

Basic unmet needs impacting safety in the NPY Lands

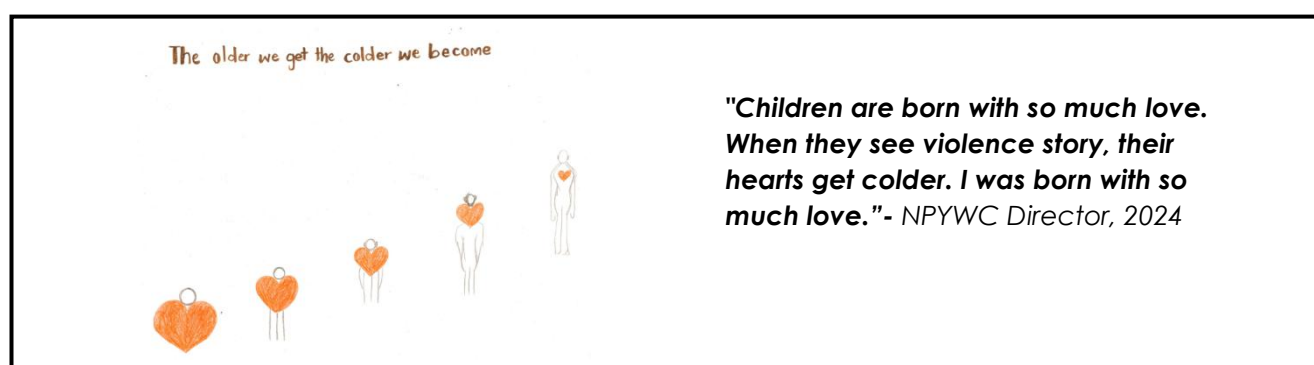
DFSV has compounding structural factors that, left unaddressed, undermine any progress towards reducing and eradicating DFSV in our communities. Anangu families' capacity to curb DFSV and adult incarceration rates linked to DFSV for example, is severely impeded by the experience of entrenched disadvantage. A genuine commitment must be made to address systemic, structural violence such as poverty and homelessness. Efforts in prevention, intervention, and healing are restricted when basic needs remain unmet. Our service has observed how poverty can act as an exacerbating factor to violence and NPYWC often sees women engaging more frequently with our DFVS when they are experiencing food insecurity. The importance of recognising the many, unique intersections with violence in our context will support transformation for women and communities experiencing DFSV.

Annexed and labelled “F” graphs the total personal weekly income on the NPY Lands and **annexed and labelled “G”** depicts comparative grocery process between the APY Lands and Alice Springs to highlight the specific remote and very remote discrepancy in the cost of living.

Tjitji (children) as victim-survivors in their own right

NPYWC support children being recognised as victim-survivors, in their own right. The National Plan should use this as an opportunity to drive investment into services and infrastructures that keep children safe like **NPYWC’s Youth program**, the **Kulintja Palyaringkunyjtjaku (KP) Project Officers**, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, **Ngura Kutju (tri-state child protection hub)**, and DFVS service including the **Specialist Children’s Domestic & Family Violence Worker**.

DFSV is one of the key underlying drivers impacting child removal of Anangu children. Child removal is a traumatic experience for a child, parents, and community, and perpetuates intergenerational trauma that echoes the devastating impacts of the Stolen Generations. It has a severe and longstanding impact on children and young people’s connection to their family, culture and Country, all of which are known to be strong protective factors in their development.



In treating children as victim-survivors, a focus on the child’s safety through connection to their protective parent and community is critical as well as supporting children’s mothers when they are fleeing DFSV and facing difficult choices impacted by fear of the threat of child protection intervention. From our work with children, families and communities across the NPY lands, we know that many of the issues driving child protection involvement are closely connected to DFSV, poverty, remoteness, housing stress, service shortages, intergenerational disadvantage and the ongoing impacts of colonisation, rather than a lack of care or love for children.

“I [...] believe that sending young people away from their families is not a good thing [...] they should be given a chance and provided with support to help them. It’s wrong to send them far away, as they’ll likely feel lonely and sad, making it challenging to support them.” – Young Person, Pukatja.

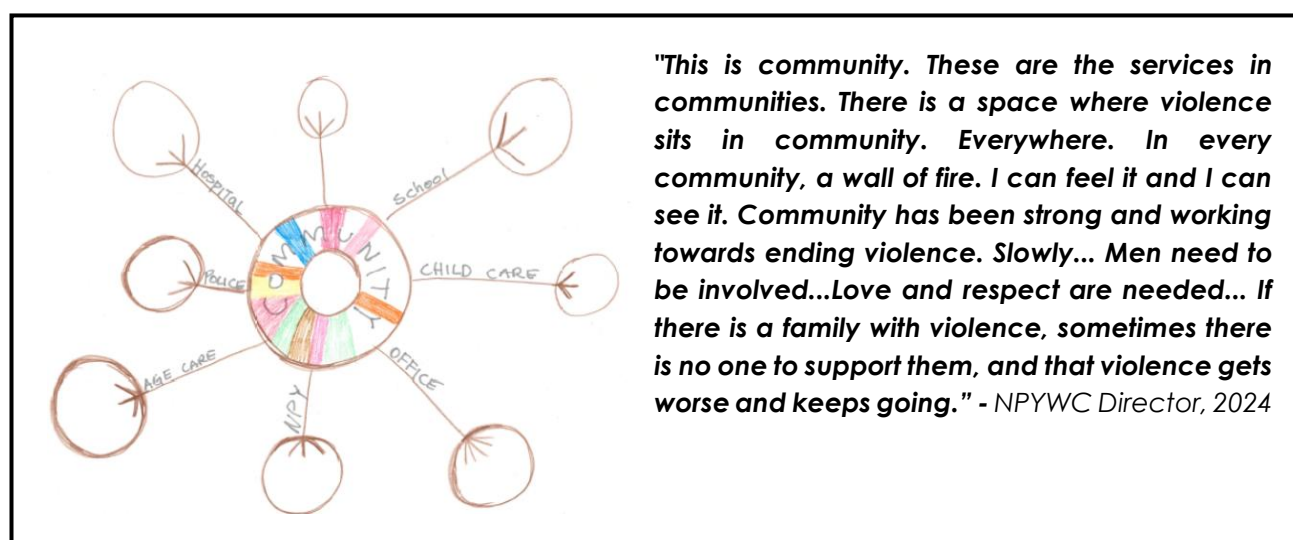
We would like to highlight the importance of intrinsic safety. In our communities, Anangu provide specific forms of safety (physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural) that cannot be replaced by a Piranpa (whitefella) or mitigated through statutory regulation. This type of safety is intersectional with connection to culture, Country and kinship networks, and underpins community relationships, spaces and wellbeing inherent to Anangu ways of life. This is partiality associated with Western definitions of ‘safety’ linked to physical safety. As important as this may be, we urge the Department to consider any inherent bias when thinking about who can provide safety for an Anangu child and the risks to child wellbeing when other forms of critical safety, such as intrinsic safety in community, are compromised or obstructed from demonstrating strength. The inability for a child to communicate with an adult in their first language is perhaps one of the most significant barriers to accessing multiple forms of safety.

A National Plan that treats children as victim-survivor needs to support a trauma-informed and culturally safe response to domestic and family violence experiences, separate from child protection which exposes children to further types of harm and trauma. Services that keep children safe with their mothers in their culture and community should be prioritised.

Anangu knowledge and solutions

Community members in consultations, bush picnics and through receiving assistance from the DFVS during crisis responses and safety planning often raise consistently the need for remote safe houses, women and men violence programs available on the Lands, early education programs, women police officers and alternatives to custody as critical to ending DFSV and providing a protective windbreak against violence.

In relation to safe houses, women escaping violence are forced to travel long distances to the nearest regional town, such as Alice Springs, Adelaide, Kalgoorlie, or Coober Pedy to access safety. Women often express the sadness at having to leave their community to find safety, as their community is integral to their identity and cultural connection. Anangu have communicated to NPYWC that a more effective approach would involve supporting women to relocate to nearby communities and advocating for remote safe houses. This approach reduces the risk of women facing issues related to alcohol, homelessness, or family violence, which may arise when they are forced to temporarily relocate to metropolitan areas for safety.



The Yuu (Windbreak) Group is a special project led by four Anangu women who have been working together for years, creating innovative ways to use the strength of Anangu culture to resist this wall of fire of domestic and family violence. Below is a collaborative tjarnpi artwork they created which tells the story of how Anangu lived in the past, when the women were children, with families sleeping in a windbreak – a yuu. The scene illustrates that, without a yuu, a fire can grow out of control. The work that the Yuu Group does calls community to act like a windbreak, to keep the fire under control and protect families.

"We created a scene from traditional times, the times when people had strong protection in the form of windbreak. These two people are strong and looking after their children really well and they have the right size fire. These two in the past, they lived without violence. With that small fire they lived well and they looked after their children well. Now-days we are all surrounded by violence. The fire has become huge. When the fire burns too high, the protective windbreak is burnt. That is what violence is. This is what we made to express our thinking and feeling about

this. If you have the right size small fire, that's the right way to live when you are looking after all the members of the family and it is a good life. That small, low burning fire is the right help that young people need. So if you have the right thinking, strong, good thinking, you understand things and you keep that fire the right small size then there will be no violence and you'll live together looking after those children and all the other extended family members." - Yuu Group member, 2025



Conclusion

For NPYWC, particularly in a remote and very remote context, we need a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to addressing violence against women and children as experienced by Anangu - one that prioritises prevention and healing, recognises and addresses intergenerational trauma and is rooted in the priorities and self-determination of Anangu. By acknowledging colonisation as a key driver of DFSV, privileging ACCO-led responses and governance and committing to co-designed monitoring and evaluation practices, the National Plan will be in a stronger position to genuinely keep Anangu women and their families safe.

This concludes NPYWC's submission in response to the **Second Action Plan under Australia's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032**. Thank you for providing NPYWC the opportunity to make comment and please do not hesitate to contact us if there are any further questions about what we have raised in this submission.

Kind Regards,

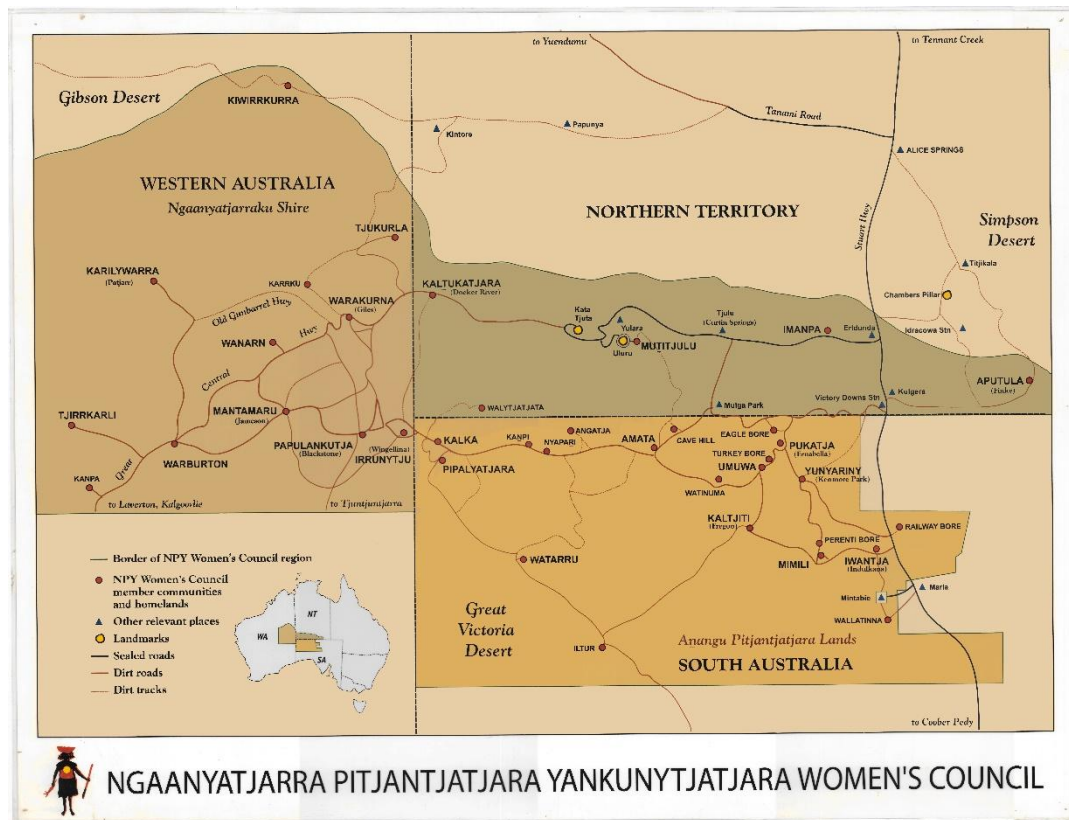


NPY Women's Council

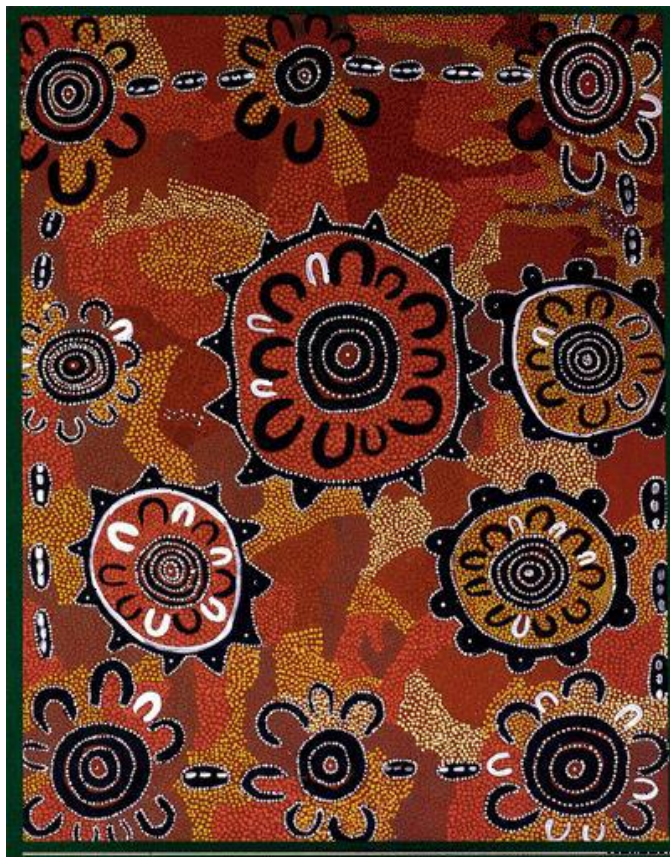
[NPYWC Annual Report 2024-25](#)

[NPYWC Strategic Plan 2024-2029](#)

Annexure A:



Annexure B:



"This painting tells the story of how the NPY Women's Council was started in 1980. I made a cassette tape and sent it around to all the communities for women to listen to. The black line going around the painting with the white marks is the cassette travelling around to all the women in communities.

All the women listened to that cassette about the idea of starting up a Women's Council. They sat down and talked together. Then we all came together at Kanpi to have our first meeting together. That is the big circle in the middle with all us women sitting around. This was the first time we came together, all us Pitjantjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Yankunytjatjara women." - Mantatjara Wilson (deceased)

Annexure C:

Western Desert Languages NPY Lands

2,172 (or 5 out of 10 people) speak **Pitjantjatjara**



990 (or 2 out of 10 people) speak **Ngaanyatjarra**



383 (or 1 out of 10 people) speak **Yankunytjatjara**



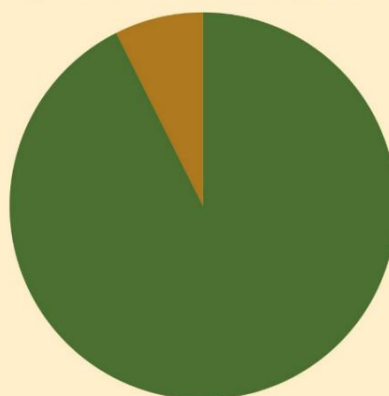
Additionally:

- 149 (or 3.4 per cent) speak **Pintupi**
- 45 (or 1.0 per cent) speak **Luritja**
- 12 (or 0.3 per cent) speak **Wangkatha**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021)

93 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on **NPY Lands** speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home. Other than North East Arnhem Land, this is the greatest proportion of all Empowered Communities.

- Speaks a First Nations language at home
- Does not speak a First Nations language at home



Annexure D:

Malparara-Malparara Project

This group began in 2020 and is a multigenerational, Anangu women-led initiative with women who have lived experience of DFSV. Project activity is focussed on the interrelated domains of learning work, healing work, action work, practical work and supportive work. The group is supported by project staff, an interpreter and an evaluator. Central to the Project's activities are the multi-day workshops where the members come together in a safe, supported place to share stories, learn from each other and DFVS staff, engage in healing and teach the DFVS staff about Anangu ways to work safely. The women see the Project as embodying Anangu voice and an Anangu way of working, drawing on Anangu culture and knowledge and exemplifying the Malparara way of working: that is, Anangu and non-Aboriginal staff working side by side and drawing on each other's knowledge. A significant development in the Project is the shift and increase in workshops and camps on Country led by the Anangu team members that engage women experiencing violence in their communities.

The below quotes from members of Malparara-Malparara are demonstrative of way the group operates and how Anangu knowledge is centred:

"I think if I wasn't going for [Malparara-Malparara] training, I'd be scared to share it because there's a bigger story when it comes to domestic violence. But I came for this training all the time [and] I feel a lot more comfortable sharing it with teenagers and doing the workshops [on Country]. I feel excited to share what I learned in the workshops... I get that nervous feeling out and put the brave feeling into it" (Malparara-Malparara team member, 2023).

"Malparara-Malparara, it's like all the Anangu from lands we come together... and... it's our tjukurpa [story/Law], ...how we see, how we feel, how we can do it, it's all about us Anangu women supporting [others]... it's helpful Anangu way... we have our university too in our Anangu way, in a safe way we can [teach the caseworkers] ... We work together whitefella way and Anangu way ... [to]... be safe for everyone, be safe, happy, and enjoy [when] they go out bush" (Malparara-Malparara team member, 2023).

Uti Kulintjaku

The Uti Kulintjaku group, which means "to think and understand clearly" is led by senior Aboriginal women. Its aims are to strengthen the shared understanding of mental health, increase help-seeking behaviours, improve health services' cultural competency, and promote Aboriginal leadership. The group has developed several resources to support mental health in the community, including flashcards that depict feelings in both Pitjantjatjara and English, a 'words for feelings map' illustrated poster to help people express their emotions, a meditative colouring book featuring artwork by senior Anangu women and Ngangkari, and a collaboration with Smiling Mind to offer meditation resources in Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra. This group is important in addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation through intergenerational and collective trauma.

Uti Kulintjaku Watiku Project

The Uti Kulintjaku Watiku Project is an Anangu led, strengths-based initiative that brings together a team of 15 respected senior and younger Anangu men to learn from each other and identify ways to strengthen Anangu identity, increase Anangu wellbeing and promote healing to prevent family violence. The project's activities include workshops for the group members, small camps and bush trips, and large intergenerational camps. The Watiku team has developed several culturally specific, language-based resources including the award-winning book, Tjanimaku Tjukurpa. A key outcome of the Project over the last three years is the Watiku team's articulation of an Anangu approach to family violence primary prevention.

This approach is grounded in Anangu knowledge – the Tjukurpa (Creation story/Law) and guided by Anangu ways of teaching and learning. It leads with the strength of Anangu culture and the knowledge that men need to be strong and nurturing within their families. This approach is about supporting young men to develop a sense of identity and their place in the world. As a Senior Uti Kulintjaku Watiku team member stated:

"Just as I've learned from my grandfather, [the Uti Kulintjaku Watiku Project] enables me to educate my grandsons in a really good way... young men are listening and understanding and really taking on board the things that they need to survive well into the future, to live."

Kulintja Palyaringkuny tjaku (KP) Project Officers

Within the NPYWC Youth Service sits the Kulintja Palyaringkuny tjaku (KP) Project which supports NPYWC youth workers, young people aged 10 – 25 years and community members in the NPY region to understand and respond appropriately to topics such as healthy relationships, substance use, mental health, social media, and other associated harms. These sessions take place in facilitated camps and education workshops.

A significant event hosted for the past three years was the Kungkas (women) AFL 9's competition. Over 120 young women from 17 remote communities travelled to Yulara where they played football and engaged in KP activities. It is the biggest and only AFL competition for remote Aboriginal women. This event is significant, young women were playing football in a context where they have not seen their

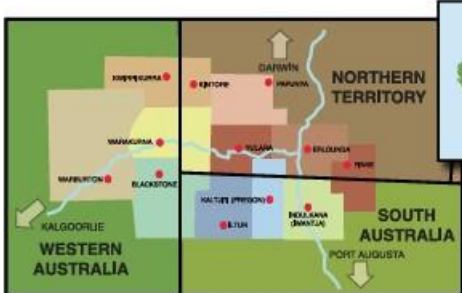
mothers or older sisters play football. Communities actively supported young women to participate and congratulated them on their return home. In the remote community of Kiwirrkurra, community members had dragged mattresses outside their home to celebrate and welcome home the young women home after they arrived in the dark after the multi-day journey to return home. The impact an event like this has on individuals and communities cannot be underestimated. Initiatives like this are key in addressing underlying drivers of DFSV.

Annexure E:



On Sunday 1 November 2009 history was made when new Cross-border Justice laws effectively removed legal boundaries where Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory meet.

Offenders are no longer able to cross state borders to escape justice. Law enforcement agencies can operate anywhere in the designated region (see map).




Cross-border Justice provides a safer environment for victims of crime in the Cross-border Justice region and gives communities the confidence to report crimes knowing justice will follow offenders across the border.

or if you live in the cross-border region the borders no longer apply.

Cross-border Justice laws enable police, courts and corrective services to operate across the borders. If the crime is committed in the cross-border region

If you commit a crime in the region a police officer from any of the three participating states can arrest you anywhere in the region; you can be held in custody anywhere in the region and you can be tried by a court anywhere in the region.

Remember, beyond the border is not beyond the law.

For more information visit www.crossborderjustice.nt.gov.au

A joint Government initiative



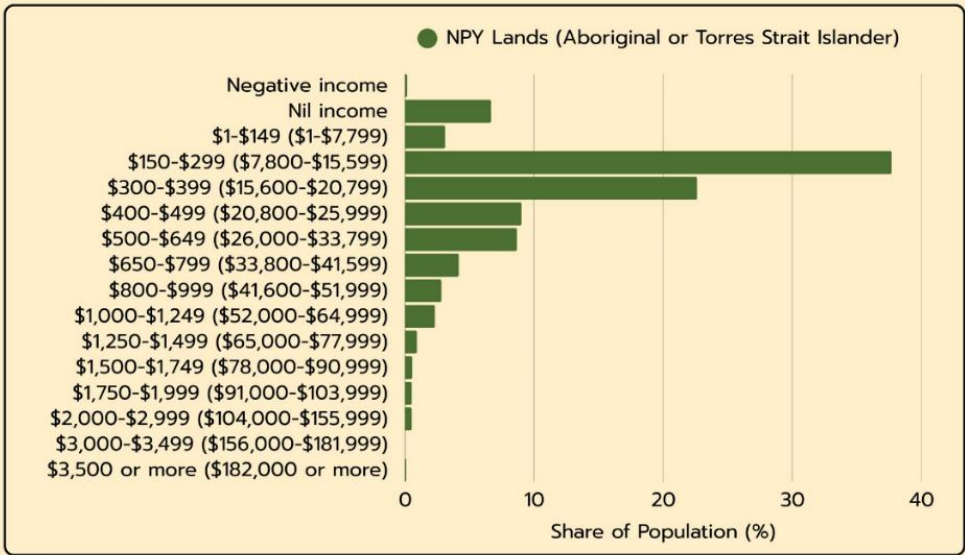



Annexure F:

Total Personal Weekly Income

NPY Lands

In 2021, 70 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on **NPY Lands** earned less than \$400 per week. Around 60 per cent earned between \$150 and \$399 per week, an amount consistent with the basic rate of JobSeeker in 2021 (\$310 per week for a single). Only 5 per cent earned more than \$1,000 per week.



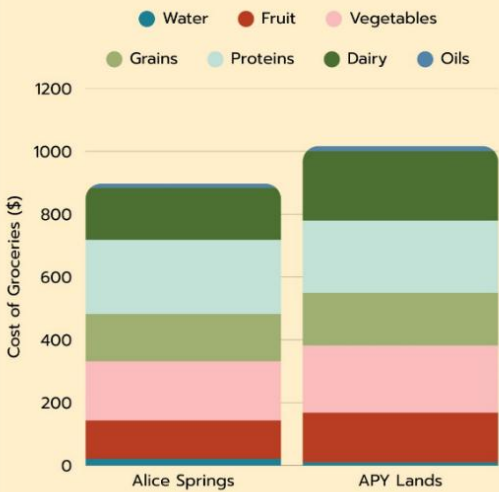
Annexure G:

Grocery Prices

APY Lands and Alice Springs

Groceries	Alice Springs	APY Lands
Water	\$21.71	\$10.30
Fruit	\$122.07	\$157.52
Vegetables	\$188.13	\$214.09
Grains	\$150.45	\$168.02
Proteins	\$235.86	\$230.15
Dairy	\$165.88	\$221.04
Oils	\$13.02	\$15.33
Total	\$897.12	\$1,016.45

A family of four needs to spend \$1,016 a fortnight on **APY Lands** to buy groceries consistent with a recommended diet. This is 13 per cent more than it costs in **Alice Springs** (\$897).



Source: Lewis M, Herron L, Bryce S, Wells L, Balmer L, Rainow S, Lee AJ (2022). School of Public Health, The University of Queensland.