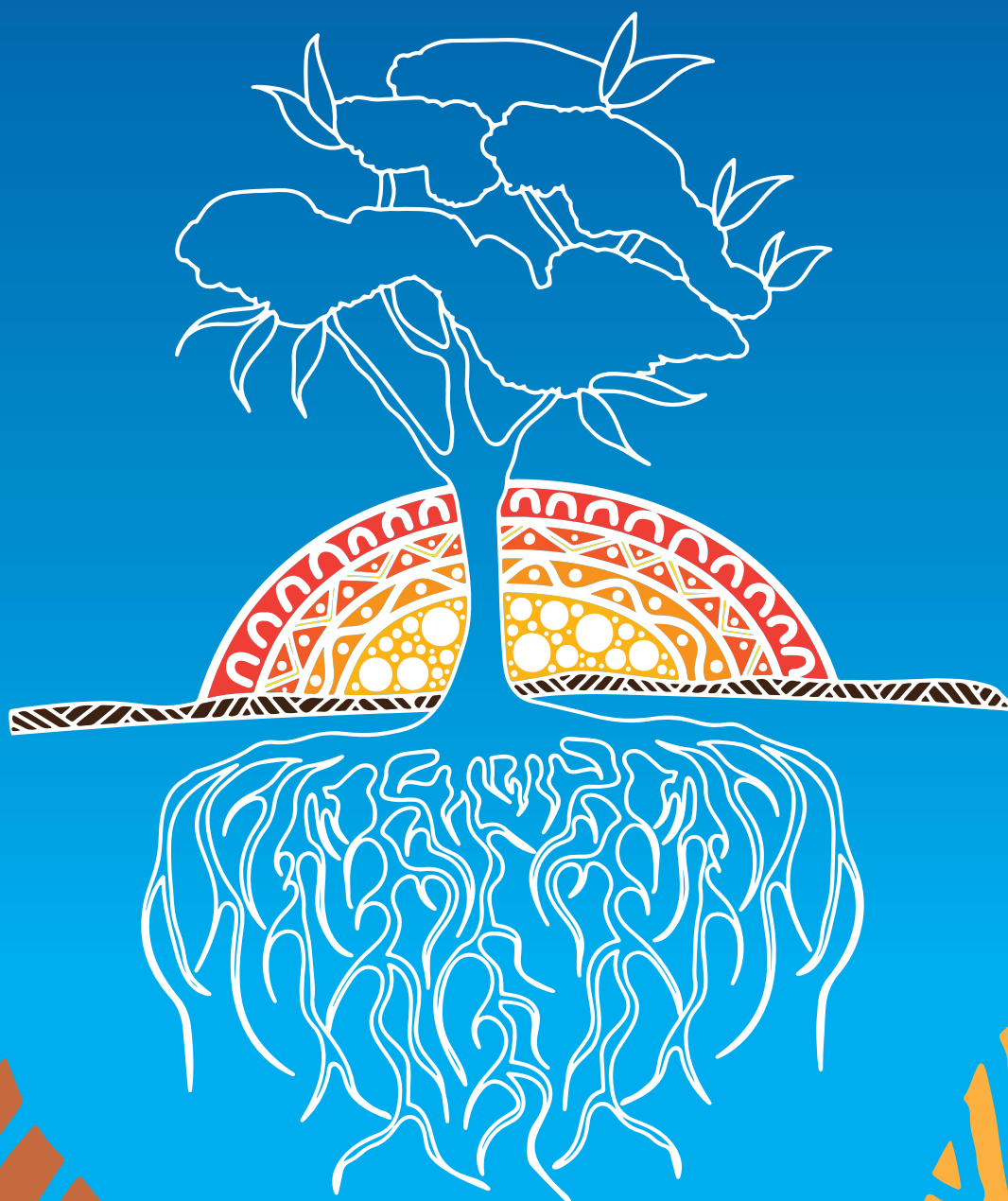


KIDS SAFE, FAMILY TOGETHER,
COMMUNITY STRONG

PLANTING THE SEEDS

ACTION PLAN 1: 2023–2025



Australian Government



NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

Aboriginal Peak Organisations
Northern Territory (APO NT)



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency



NTCOSS
Northern Territory
Council of Social Service



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge all First Nations people of this country and celebrate their wisdom, their stories and their enduring connections to their lands and water.

We pay our respects to the Elders and Ancestors, who watch over us and guide the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

We celebrate the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and the kinship, language, culture, knowledge and practices that have sustained them for generations.

While this Action Plan uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First National people living in the Northern Territory. Therefore, the strategies, services, and outcomes relating to 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

ACRONYMS

ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
AG	Australian Government
AG-AGD	Attorney-General's Department (Australian Government)
AG-Education	Department of Education (Australian Government)
APO NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory
ATSICPP	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principals
CIF	Coordinated Investment Framework
CM&C	Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet
CTG	National Agreement on Closing the Gap
DSS	Department of Social Services (Australian Government)
GSIG	Generational Strategy Implementation Group
GSSG	Generational Strategy Steering Group
LDM	Local Decision Making
NAAJA	North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NTCOSS	Northern Territory Council of Social Service
NT-Education	Department of Education
OAA	Office of Aboriginal Affairs
RMO	Northern Territory Government: Reform Management Office
SSATSIAP	Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan
TFHC	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities
TPF	Children and Families Tripartite Forum



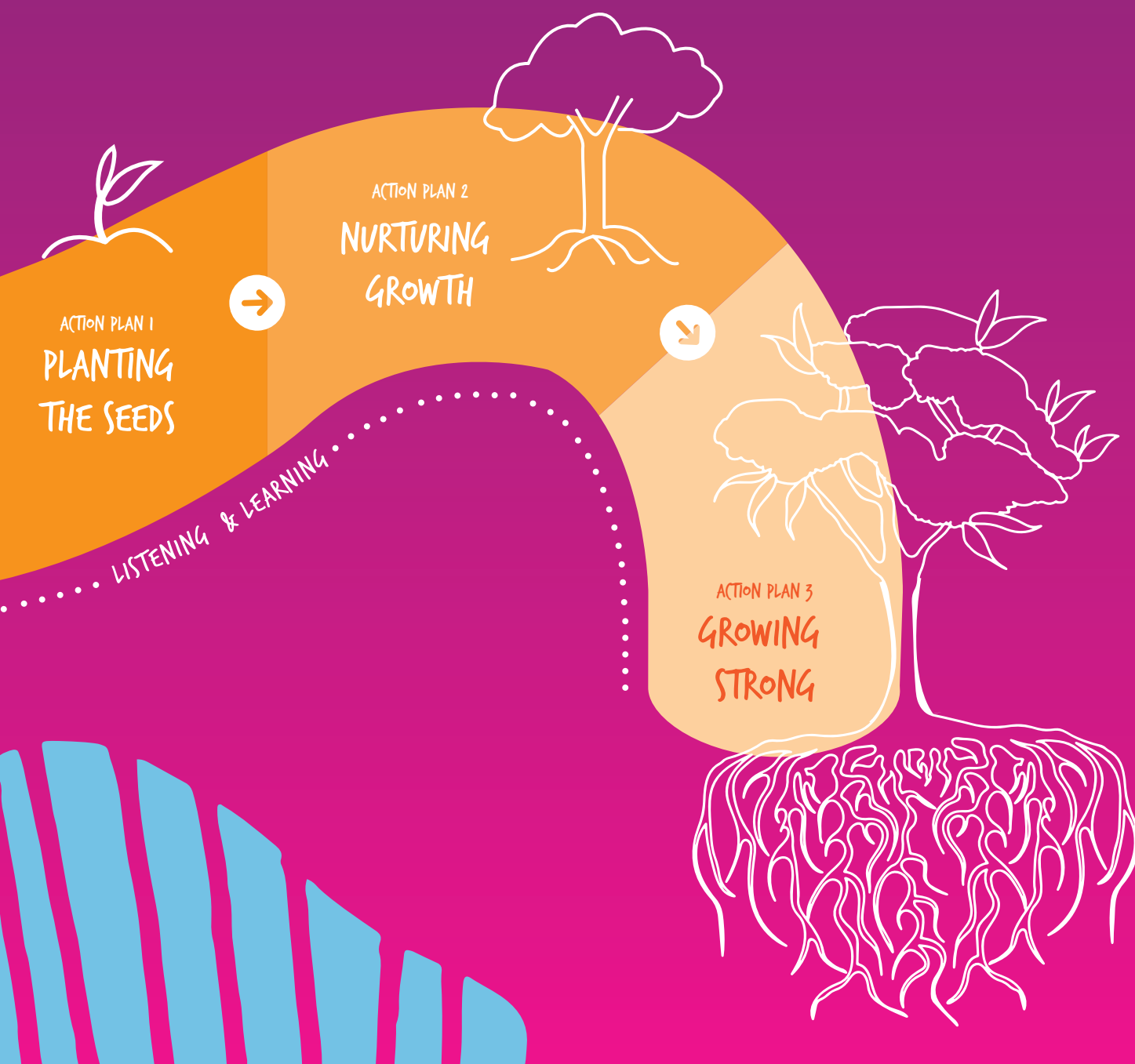
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THE ACTION PLAN JOURNEY

We are just at the beginning - “Planting the Seeds” Action Plan 1 (2023-2025) - represents the start of a 10-Year journey and is where we will lay strong foundations for future reform. Across the 3 Actions Plans (Planting the Seeds 2023-2025 - Nurturing Growth 2025-2029 - Growing Strong 2029-2033) we will take a flexible and phased approach to ensure the Generational Strategy remains responsive to new priorities and challenges as the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector strengthens and takes on more responsibility for supporting Aboriginal children, young people and families.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework and a commitment to work in a continuous cycle of strengthening partnerships, shared decision making and co-design will ensure future actions plans are informed and shaped by learnings from the past to meet the needs of communities and nurture future growth.



COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

To successfully implement the Generational Strategy, we need to change the way we work with places and communities. Locally-led community plans are essential to implementing the reforms that children, young people and families need. A shift to community-led service systems will underpin all work across the Generational Strategy.

We need to listen to local people. Local Aboriginal people have a continued connection to country which comes with an extensive knowledge of local resources, needs, and leadership structures. Local people remain best placed to identify the priorities, understand the challenges and, design and implement appropriate solutions.

Community-led plans acknowledge and respect the strength of the Northern Territory's communities including, Aboriginal ways of being, doing and knowing. These plans recognise place-based solutions can improve the lives of children, young people and families across the Territory.

Community-led planning is about self-determination and empowerment. It is about recognising the strength of Aboriginal knowledge in Aboriginal hands and resourcing Elders, community leaders and young people to drive the solutions.

For community-led plans to be successful, it must be two-ways in everything we do, with Aboriginal voices leading and governments actively listening, hearing and supporting. The Australian and Northern Territory governments have committed to working in partnership with communities, to resource the right services and initiatives in a way that is flexible and responsive to community needs. Under this approach, communities will be empowered to lead and decide what needs to be done and governments will coordinate resources at the community-level to support community leadership.



THE GENERATIONAL STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Children, young people and families are at the centre of everything we do. The woven circle surrounding children, young people and their families represents the kinship or extended family systems that provide support and protection. The frayed areas symbolise that for some families these bonds have been broken through stolen generations, removal and detention of children and family members, cultural disconnection or having family located far away. The stitching demonstrates that it's possible for these bonds to heal and be strong again.

The pathways to change that flow out are Truth-telling and healing, responsive support, holistic prevention and meaningful evidence and all the work we do must be done in genuine partnership, informed by a two-ways approach and grounded in community-led planning.

The eight icons represent the outcomes domains where we hope to achieve success and create generational change for all children, young people and families in the Northern Territory. Although represented separately here, they are deeply interconnected and we need to see change across all areas for children, young people and families to thrive.





JOURNEY TO ACTION PLAN 1 AND SCOPE

The Children and Families Tripartite Forum (TPF) was established as a key component of the reform program arising from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, 2017 (Royal Commission).

The TPF provides the main source of advice regarding Children and Families in the Northern Territory to the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments and works in equal partnership with the community sector, to bring about transformative social change, particularly for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities.

New ways of working are needed to address the entrenched and unacceptable over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection and youth justice systems. It is fundamentally important that Aboriginal people are empowered to lead and drive reform. This will be achieved through genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations and working in a collaborative and transparent way.

Development of the strategy and action plan

The development of the Kids Safe, Family Together, Community Strong: 10 Year Generational Strategy for Children, Young People and Families in the Northern Territory (Generational Strategy) and action plans are an important part of progressing a new way of working and achieving the vision that children and young people in the Northern Territory grow up safe, thriving and loved with family, connected to culture and in community.

The Generational Strategy reflects what Territorian children, young people, families, groups and organisations said would help to create a stronger, more effective support system for all and prioritises Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, learning and doing, along with continued healing. The TPF established the 10-Year Generational Strategy Steering Group in 2022 to drive the ongoing development and implementation of the 3 Action Plans. The Steering Group reflects strong Aboriginal leadership and partnership principles of Closing the Gap, consisting of:

- An independent Aboriginal Chair
- 2 Independent Aboriginal representatives
- 4 community sector representatives selected from the membership of Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) and Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APONT)
- 2 representatives from the Australian government
- 2 representatives from the Northern Territory Government (NTG)

The Steering Group representatives are from across the Northern Territory's regions and remote communities, to capture regional and remote expertise.

Scope

"Planting the Seeds" - Action Plan 1 (2023-2025) - focusses on reducing the number of children and young people in contact with the child protection and youth justice system by reforming the children, young people and family sector. The goal is to establish a way of working driven by the aspirations of Aboriginal people and for all children to be safe. Essential to this is creating a system which is more culturally secure and responsive to family's needs.

"Planting the Seeds" represents an important shift in transforming the sector to better support Aboriginal people by creating the right conditions and strong foundations to promote Aboriginal self-determination and increased community control by developing models of place based, community-led planning. This will enable meaningful engagement and genuine influence in decision making around funding, policy development and the design and delivery of services that impact the lives of Aboriginal people.

This action plan sits within the broader landscape of significant program and policy development aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal Territorians and addresses unmet policy reforms for children, young people and families that complement rather than duplicate work already underway. Where aligned work is occurring, that work will be assessed through the lens of the Generational Strategy to ensure it is undertaken in-line with the Generational Strategy's commitments as we know this will achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

"Planting the Seeds" is strongly aligned with the national policy frameworks of *Closing the Gap*, the *Safe and Supported National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021-2031)* and the *Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan*, all of which commit to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people through building the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector and transitioning more services for children, young people and families to Aboriginal control.



ACTION PLAN 1
PLANTING
THE SEEDS

ACTIONS

OUR COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL TERRITORIANS

ACTION 1 – ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK AND PLAN

Culturally safe and appropriate services are critical to supporting Aboriginal children, young people and families.

This action commits to building on existing work to develop a shared Aboriginal cultural security framework and plan for the children, young people and families sector.

The framework and plan will be led by Aboriginal people and include a strong set of standards and will ensure cultural security is measurable and organisations are accountable.

The framework and plan will include standards and criteria for achieving:

- Culturally competent and trauma-informed workforces;
- Culturally secure workplaces;
- Culturally secure services families and young people feel safe using;

The framework and plan will be:

- Locally-led by Aboriginal peoples, measurable and accountable; and,
- Will identify and eliminate racism.

DOMAIN



Connection



Learning



Safety

LEAD

APO NT

PARTIES

CM&C, NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Aboriginal leadership of the project established (Year 1)
- Draft Cultural Security Framework developed (Year 1)
- Final Cultural Security Framework developed (Year 2)

ACTION 2 – HEALING FRAMEWORK AND PLAN

Truth-telling and healing is central to a better way of working so that Aboriginal kids are safe, families are together and communities are strong. Success for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Territorians starts with truth telling and working with respect in unity, and having Aboriginal people lead this. We must acknowledge the past and the need to heal and move forward.

This action commits to empowering Aboriginal people to develop a healing framework and plan for the children, young people and families sector, so the healing journey can begin and we can move forward together, stronger.

This plan will include:

- Developing a collective understanding of what healing means for diverse groups of people including for Aboriginal women, Aboriginal men, young people, LGBTQIA+ Sister Girls and Brother Boys and disability groups;
- A strengths-based approach that learns from and builds on existing approaches to healing and truth-telling;
- Ways to embed roles, criteria and practices of healing in the way the sector works and functions;
- A plan for how to measure long-term outcomes; and
- A focus on growth, as well as recovery from racism.

DOMAIN



Healthy



Connection



Safety

LEAD

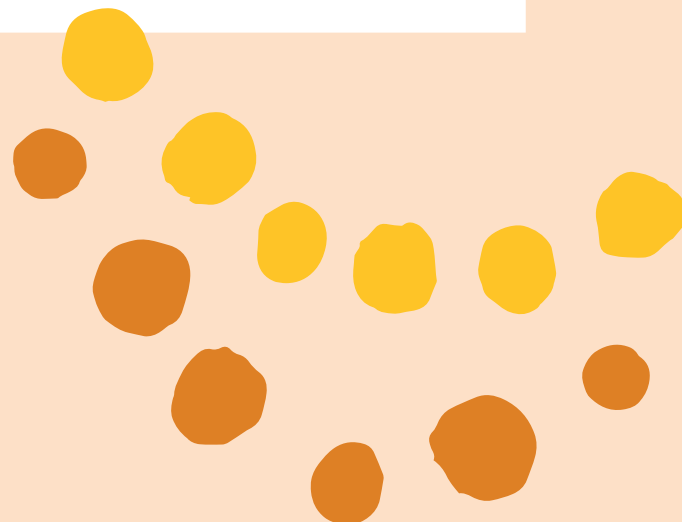
APO NT

PARTIES

TFHC, NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Aboriginal leadership of the project established (Year 1)
- Draft Healing Framework and Plan developed (Year 1)
- Final Healing Framework developed (Year 2)



OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES:

All children, young people and families are valued, empowered and have opportunities to develop and contribute.

ACTION 3 – MECHANISMS FOR THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people are at the centre of everything in the Generational Strategy and must be valued and engaged as genuine decision makers.

This action commits to creating mechanisms for young people to be empowered, have their voices heard and be involved in decision making around the legislation, funding, governance, design and delivery of services that impact their lives. Including, embedding youth voice into the ongoing governance and implementation of the Generational Strategy.

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

TFHC

PARTIES

NTCOSS, APO NT,
AG-Education, NIAA, DSS

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Map of existing mechanisms and gap analysis at the local, regional and Territory level provided to the TPF (Year 1)
- Joint plan to develop and/or strengthen existing mechanisms including the mechanism for the Generational Strategy (Year 1)
- Process review by the young people involved reported to the TPF (Year 2 and annual reviews)

ACTION 4 – EDUCATION AS PARTNERSHIP

Our communities must play a key role in shaping our schools, building on our strengths and making positive changes that will last.

This action commits to progressing the goal under the Education Engagement NT Strategy to deliver “Education as a Partnership” through:

- Establishing genuine partnerships between communities and schools.
- Establishing a strategic partnership with Aboriginal peoples and student voices as committed to under Closing the Gap

DOMAIN



Learning

LEAD

NT Education

PARTIES

APO NT, AG-Education, NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Regular process review from community education partnerships and student bodies on the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the education partnerships (Year 1).
- Number of genuine partnerships established between communities and schools (Year 1 and reported annually)
- Establishment of strategic partnership (Year 1).

ACTION 5 – ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS SECTOR STRENGTHENING PLAN

ACCOS recognise the strength, expertise and the right to self-determination of Aboriginal peoples and communities. ACCOs deliver better results for Aboriginal families and employ more Aboriginal people.

This action commits to supporting ACCOs working in the children, young people and family services sector to lead the development of a sector strengthening plan which should consider:

- The best approach to ongoing support and representation of the sector which may include establishing a peak;
- Evidence based service models of brief interventions and intensive family support;
- Building the capacity of ACCOs to undertake foster and kinship carer recruitment, assessment and support services; and
- Plans for transitioning the services and functions of the Child Protection system.

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

APO NT

PARTIES

NIAA, DSS, AG-Education,
CM&C, TFHC

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Release of a 'strengths and opportunities analysis' for the sector and an interim plan (Year 1)
- Sector Strengthening Plan released (Year 2)
- Progress reported in line with the National Agreement on CTG Priority Reform 2 and SSATSIAP 1 – Action 2

OUR COMMITMENT TO PLACES AND COMMUNITIES:

Communities are engaged, diverse and vibrant places where everyone belongs – supported by collective action and agreed plans – to make lives of children, young people and families better

ACTION 6 – COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES TO YOUTH JUSTICE

Place based approaches to youth justice, with an emphasis on community leadership, aimed at reinforcing self-determination and culture are essential to creating positive change for young people and their families.

This action commits to developing community-led approaches to youth justice that build on community strengths and empowers Elders, families and communities to lead system reform and keep children and young people out of the youth justice system.

DOMAIN



Safety

LEAD

TFHC and APO NT

PARTIES

NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- First community consultation report (Year 1)
- Governance, accountability and monitoring established (Year 1)
- Feedback from communities regarding the process, input and participation of young people, Elders and families (Reported quarterly to the TPF)
- Community-led approaches developed and implemented (Year 2)
- Plans have ongoing support and are sustainable (Year 2)

ACTION 7 – COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

Community-led plans acknowledge and respect the strength of the Northern Territory's communities, Aboriginal ways of being, doing and knowing and supporting locally-led solutions to improve the lives of children, young people and families.

This action commits to developing models of community-led planning and governance to implement the Generational Strategy at a community level.

Phase 1: April 2023

Learning from existing community planning models:

- Select sites to learn from successful local community planning models
- Place-based and desktop review to build on existing local community-led solutions and initiatives

Phase 2: December 2023

Consolidate learning and critical success factors:

- Produce the framework for community planning that reflects the principles and commitments under the Generational Strategy

Phase 3: TBA

Implementing trials of the model:

- Inviting communities to self-nominate to participate in a trial of community-led planning under the Generational Strategy

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

CM&C

PARTIES

DSS, APO NT, NIAA, AG-Education, TFHC

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Site selection, place-based learning, desktop review (Year 1)
- Develop best practice model of community-led planning (Year 2)
- Continuous feedback from the trial site to the GSSG (Quarterly)
- Progress towards achieving the 4 priority reforms of the National Agreement on CTG (Annually).

OUR COMMITMENT TO BETTER SERVICES:

Services are accessible, safe, and responsive for all children, young people and families

ACTION 8 – IMPROVED PATHWAYS INTO SUPPORT

A better system needs a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, so that children and young people can safely stay with their families and in community.

This action commits to strengthening support for children, young people and families by undertaking a review of pathways into support and child protection, including a review of mandatory reporting in the child protection system and recommendations on how to effectively support families earlier to reduce contact with the child protection system.

DOMAIN



Safety

LEAD

TFHC

PARTIES

APO NT, DSS

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED



- Scope of review developed by the GSSG and provided to the TPF (Year 1)
- Report and recommendations provided to the TPF (Year 1)
- Progress towards implementing recommendations reported 6-monthly on the Generational Strategy website.

ACTION 9 – SHARED GOVERNANCE FOR THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Aboriginal leadership is fundamental to improving the accountability of the child protection system and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system.

This action commits to establishing strong shared governance and accountability measures for the child protection system that are led by Aboriginal communities and families and promotes Aboriginal self-determination.

This will include a partnership with ACCOs to design an Out of Home Care system that is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal children, prioritises kinship care placements and supports the transition away from purchased based out of home care.

DOMAIN	LEAD	PARTIES
  Voice Safety	TFHC and APO NT	

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Working group established with ACCO member representatives and independent Aboriginal Chair (Year 1)
- 3 year plan drafted and circulated for feedback (Year 1)
- Plan released (Year 1)



OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES:

All children, young people and families are valued, empowered and have opportunities to develop and contribute.

ACTION 10 – TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY IN CHILD PROTECTION

ACCOs deliver the best services and better results for Aboriginal children, young people and families and transferring authority to community- control supports self-determination.

This action commits governments to working with Aboriginal people and ACCOs to develop a plan to enable self-determination and the exercise of authority in child protection by Aboriginal people. This includes timelines for legislative reform to support the delegation of authority with regard to statutory child protection powers.

DOMAIN	LEAD	PARTIES
   Connection Voice Safety	TFHC	APO NT, DSS

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Working group established with independent Aboriginal leadership (Year 1)
- Draft plan provided to TPF (Year 1)
- Plan developed and released (Year 2)
- Progress reported in line with the National Agreement on CTG Priorities 1,2,3 and SSATSIAP 1 – Jurisdictional Plans (Annually)

ACTION 11 – TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

A strong Aboriginal workforce is a necessary foundation for achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families.

This action commits to increasing Aboriginal employment by developing clear training, employment and career pathways for Aboriginal people to deliver and lead services in the Child, Young People and Family sector.

DOMAIN



LEAD

TFHC

PARTIES

APO NT, NIAA, DSS

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- All parties report to the TPF annually on existing and emerging training employment and career pathways for Aboriginal people in the Child, Young People and Family services sector (Year 1)

ACTION 12 – ENABLERS AND CHALLENGES FOR CARE PAYMENTS

To make sure children can stay safely in community and connected to culture and country, it is important that extended family, informal carers, foster and kinship carers and grandparents have access to the resources they need.

This action commits to exploring in partnership key enablers and challenges to better coordinate and improve carer supports, including assessing payments for adequacy, consistency and accessibility.

DOMAIN



LEAD

DSS

PARTIES

TFHC, APO NT

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Terms of Reference developed (Year 1)
- Report and recommendations provided to TPF (Year 1)

ACTION 13 – GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR THE 10-YEAR GENERATIONAL STRATEGY

In order to effect real change, governments must work in genuine, formal partnerships with Aboriginal peoples because they are the essential agents of change.

This action commits to reviewing the governance structures for implementing the Generational Strategy to ensure Aboriginal people share decision-making with governments, in line with the strong partnership elements in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

APO NT and OAA

PARTIES

CM&C, NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Partnership review undertaken (Year 1)
- Implementation of the review's strengthening recommendations (Year 1)

OUR COMMITMENT TO STRONGER SYSTEMS:

Our systems, agencies and partners are agile, responsible and focussed on our collective impact for children, young people and families.

ACTION 14 – COORDINATED INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Underpinning the Generational Strategy's commitment to transition to community-led child, young people and family service systems is the Australian and Northern Territory Government's commitment to implement the Coordinated Investment Framework (CIF).

The CIF will support community-led planning by providing transparent funding arrangements, harmonised recording of data, and relational contracting of services.

This will improve coordination and efficiency of government investment in children and families in the NT.

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

RMO

PARTIES

DSS, NIAA, TFHC

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Annual Implementation Plan developed for the Framework (Year 1)
- Annual reporting provided to the TPF on the administration of the Framework, progress against the implementation plan and the extent to which it achieves improved coordination and efficiency of government investment in children and families in the Northern Territory
- Public reporting on the Framework will form part of the annual public reporting associated with the Generational Strategy

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

ACTION 15 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An important part of the Generational Strategy is ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure it is meeting the needs of children, young people and families.

We commit to engaging a specialist before the start of the first Action Plan to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, to apply for the life of the Generational Strategy. There will be an independent evaluation of each action plan.

Parameters for the approach to monitoring and evaluation include:

- Aboriginal voices, leadership and expertise embedded at all levels
- A participatory approach, including building the capacity of local Aboriginal people and organisations
- Trauma and healing informed methodologies, undertaken using a two-ways approach that embeds Aboriginal ways of learning, being and doing
- Regional voices to ensure Territory-wide representation
- Data safety, security and ownership
- An iterative process that focuses on the end user
- Ways to incorporate Aboriginal employment

DOMAIN



Voice

LEAD

RMO

PARTIES

APO NT, DSS, NIAA

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan procurement commences (Year 1)
- Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan released for consultation (Year 1)
- Monitoring and Evaluation framework published (Year 1)



ACTION PLAN 1
PLANTING
THE SEEDS



A white line-art illustration of a stylized tree trunk and canopy, decorated with colorful patterns including red, yellow, and black geometric shapes and dots.



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Australian Government



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