

KIDS SAFE, FAMILY TOGETHER, COMMUNITY STRONG

10-YEAR GENERATIONAL STRATEGY

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

2023-2033



Australian Government



NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT



Aboriginal Peak Organisations
Northern Territory (APO NT)
The Premier and the Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, Health, Community
and Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency



NTCOSS
Northern Territory
Council of Social Service

The tree on the cover tells a story of how to keep *kids safe, family together and community strong*.

It all starts with creating the right environment; like many things, the tree needs the right nurturing to grow.

As the tree begins to establish, there may be no obvious signs of change. But the tree is growing underground, developing a broad and vast root system: a solid and stable base able to support new growth.

Taking the time and space to build and grow anything of worth, value and substance takes commitment and persistence. This is what will happen for Kids Safe, Family Together, Community Strong: 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory (Generational Strategy). It is why we must get the foundations right.

We will work better together so that we all grow with resilience and purpose, and so generations beyond us have *kids safe, family together and community strong*.

Design by: Cian McCue, Moogie Down Productions



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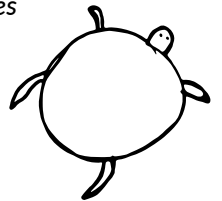
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge all First Nations people of this country and celebrate their wisdom, their stories and their enduring connection 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 strategy uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations 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.



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KIDS SAFE



ALL TERRITORIAN (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO GROW UP SAFE, THRIVING AND LOVED IN THEIR FAMILIES, (CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES).¹

We are on a path together to build generational change for all children, young people and families in the Northern Territory.

Kids Safe, Family Together, Community Strong: 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory (Generational Strategy) is something new, courageous and solutions-driven. It sets out a shared vision and policy framework for governments and the community sector to focus our shared efforts.

We know that children, young people, families and communities across the Territory understand their situation best, and empowering them to take the lead is the key to a better future.

It is important to reform and build trust in the child and family system and to recognise past harms so we can heal and move forward together.

The Generational Strategy reflects what Territorian children, young people, families, groups and organisations told us would help to create a stronger, more effective support system for all. It recognises that, in particular, we must do better for Aboriginal Territorians.

With gratitude,

Ms Donna Ah Chee
Chair, Children and Families Tripartite Forum



The Honourable Amanda Rishworth MP
Minister for Social Services of the
Commonwealth of Australia

The Honourable Linda Burney MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians
of the Commonwealth of Australia

The Honourable Natasha Fyles MLA
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

The Honourable Lauren Moss MLA
Minister for Children of the Northern Territory

¹ Children and Families Tripartite Forum, Terms of Reference (2021)

ABORIGINAL EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP STATEMENT

We are from different places in the Northern Territory. Our communities, families, language groups and clans are diverse but we have shared stories together. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Our culture, our kinship, our languages, our ceremony, our dreaming and our ways of healing, connecting and being strong all come from the land, from our country. We are always thinking and being mindful of old people, language, culture. It has always been this way.

OUR CULTURAL FOUNDATION HOLDS OUR KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL. OUR CULTURAL PROTOCOLS AND PRACTICES ENSURE DUTIES ARE CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO OUR TRADITIONAL KINSHIP SYSTEMS AND RELATIONSHIPS, WHEN NURTURING AND CARING FOR FAMILIES.

We have our own systems that are our own strengths. Our **kinship** is woven together to show our place, law and responsibilities and how we share with each other. It is the foundation of how we are connected and it defines intricate and empowered relationships in sacred ways. We have our own ways of knowing, being, doing, and learning. Most importantly these are all tied into **our peoples' ways of caring**.

We don't want another Stolen Generation. We don't want another report; we want change. Our children are carrying the hurt of the past and we have to resolve that. **Truth-telling** means we recognise what has happened to us; healing means we use our culture, our practice and our spirituality to restore pride and identity across generations. Country needs to heal too, our way.

We are always ready to reconnect those who are lost. Even when our children aren't with us, we are there ready to receive them, to teach them knowledge from the old people. We need to bring our children back. We're **healing together** and strengthening together, and we've got to do this in

every community. And the ways we care for family are a lot like the world views of other people who have made the Territory their home.

Our knowledge in our hands is a strength, and you can learn from our understandings and expertise too. We are facing a political problem, one of money, power and control, but decision making around our children must be with our mob. It's about self-determination and empowerment. It should be two-ways in everything, and our own people working with our families. Grandparents are doing lots of work for their grandchildren, working really hard and they need more support. We need to empower our Elders, grandparents, aunts and uncles to be part of this process and inform business.

We all take **responsibility** when we share the work we need to do. We've worked in our communities for so long and we want to see good outcomes. We need to do things our way and be supported and invested in to do that.

OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE TO TAKE THIS ROLE FORWARD. WE WILL LEAVE SOMETHING FOR OUR KIDS IN THE FUTURE. THIS IS ONGOING BEYOND 10 YEARS WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS WORK UNDER THIS STRATEGY FOR OUR CHILDREN TO HAVE A BETTER FUTURE.

Aboriginal people need to lead this because we know the solutions. Our Elders and kinship have the answers. Listen to us because we want action. The future is bright. It's time now for the voice of our community/ies to be heard.

Our definition of Law/Lore: *'Our Lore is only one part of our Law, and Lore should inform Law'* Understanding our definition of 'Law' and 'Lore' is essential as this underpins how we as Aboriginal peoples think, work and live. Our lore encompasses learnings immemorial and never changes. It is not a myth as Western definitions suggest.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
SHARED THEIR STORIES AND IDEAS

JOURNEY TO THE GENERATIONAL STRATEGY



ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT – 2017



TRIPARTITE FORUM
– FORMED 2018



THINKING TOGETHER ABOUT
A NEW WAY OF WORKING



DEVELOPED THE GENERATIONAL
STRATEGY AND A COORDINATED
INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT



A NEW WAY OF WORKING FOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Individuals, communities and organisations across the Territory have been saying that we need to take strong action to create generational change. The Generational Strategy builds on what we heard through the:

- Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT (2017)
- Productivity Commission study report on Expenditure on Children in the NT (2020)
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)
- The Story of Our Children and Young People (2019, 2021, biennial report)

It is grounded in human rights and aligned with other relevant Australian Government, Northern Territory Government and community sector strategies, policies, reports and practice frameworks.

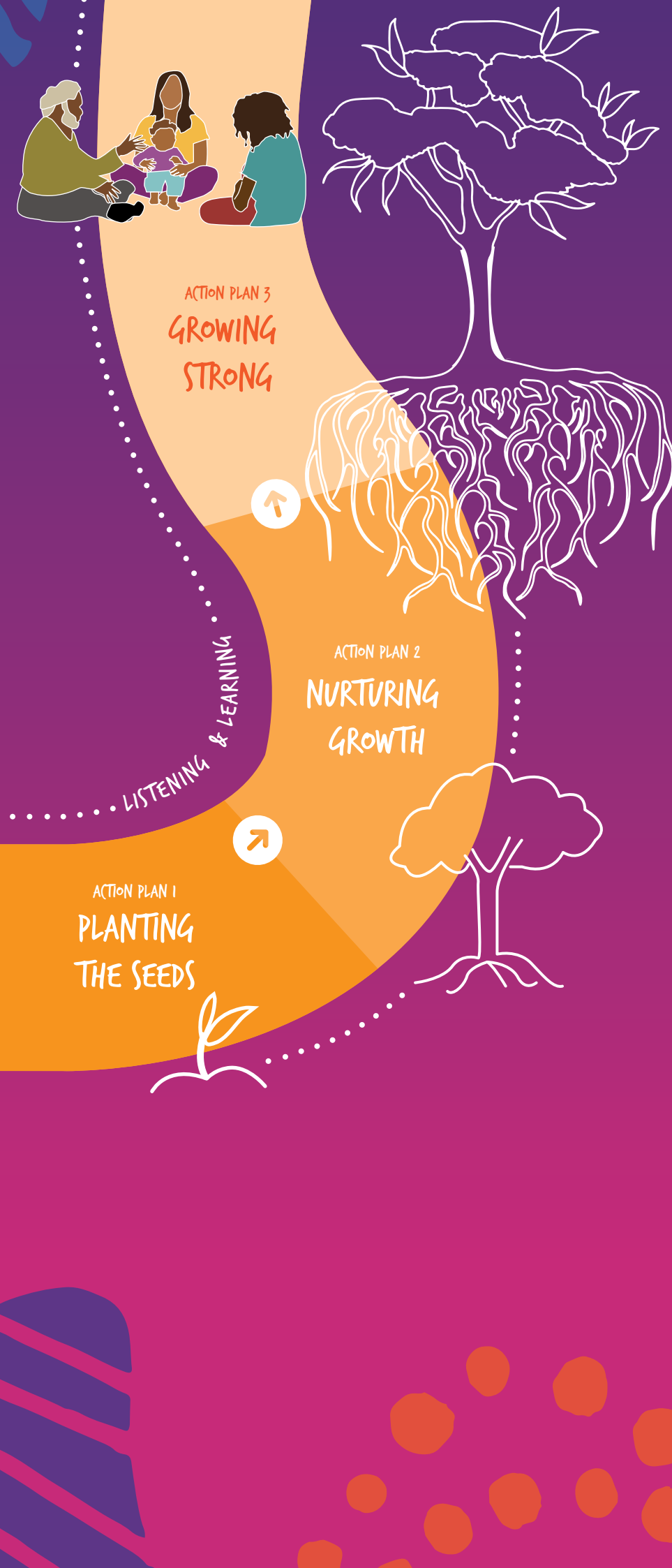
Including, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

PATHWAY TO GENERATIONAL CHANGE

We are committed to action and accountability through a new way of working together, guided by the Tripartite Forum and the voices of children, young people, families and communities. We commit to valuing community needs and preferences in supporting their children, young people and families through a process that will:

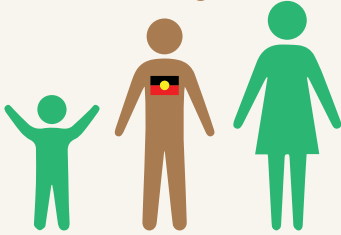
- make our goals clear from the start by laying strong foundations
- build on what is working well
- ensure we listen and learn every step of the way to keep us on the right track
- allow us to make changes that will create a positive effect for generations to come.

To deliver the Generational Strategy, three action plans will be developed. These plans will outline deliverables, scope and timing and lead to better coordinated and focussed distribution of available resources. We will take a staged approach to implementation, building on existing strengths, governance structures, programs and plans where they align and are working well. Ongoing evaluation will be embedded in each action plan to ensure subsequent action plans are responsive to community feedback, the external environment and lessons from previous actions.

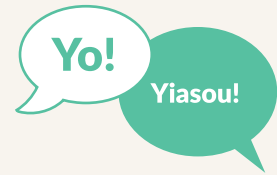


WHAT WE KNOW

Around a third of Territorians are aged between 0 and 24. One in three of these young people are Aboriginal.ⁱ



The NT makes up one sixth of Australia's land mass and is home to about 1% (246,561) of its population.ⁱⁱ



The five top languages other than English spoken in the NT are:

- Kriol
- Djambarrpuyngu
- Greek
- Tagalog
- Warlpiri.ⁱⁱⁱ



One in five Territorians were born overseas.^{iv}



Almost 98% of children in youth detention and 90% of children in out-of-home care are Aboriginal.^{vii}



More than 80% of Aboriginal people identify with a First Nations group, with more than four in five participating in cultural events, ceremonies or organisations.^x

Almost all humanitarian migrants report they or an immediate family member experienced at least one traumatic event before coming to Australia.^v



\$538 million was invested by the Australian and NT governments in children and family services in 2018–19. More than 500 service providers were funded to deliver 20 programs and more than 700 grants.^{vi}



Over half of all National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) recipients in the NT are young people aged 24 years or under.^{viii}



Almost one in four children in the NT were developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains under the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) when starting school, compared with one in nine across Australia.^{xi}



In Australia, 3–4% of the population have reported identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual. This figure is higher among people younger than 25: 4% for males and 7% for females.^{ix2}

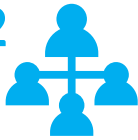
² Accurately estimating the number of people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Sistergirl and Brotherboy (LGBTQIA+SB) or other sex, sexuality or gender diverse identities in the NT is a critical gap in data.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

The Generational Strategy is built on the voices of the Territory. Thank you to the many individuals, groups and organisations in all six regions who contributed. A full consultation report will be published with further detail on what we heard.

WE SPOKE TO:

102



organisations and groups

340



people

AND RECEIVED:

25



written submissions

We heard about the key priority areas that families, communities and organisations want to see change in over the life of the Generational Strategy. This feedback shapes the strategic direction of the Generational Strategy and development of future action plans.

The strongest feedback we heard across all consultations is that the Generational Strategy partners must listen, take concrete action and be consistent, transparent and accountable to children, young people, families and communities.

We heard that for Aboriginal people, the Generational Strategy must incorporate Aboriginal world views and two-ways approaches, as well as embed truth-telling and holistic pathways to individual and community healing throughout. A key part of this includes Aboriginal children, young people and families being able to feel pride and strength in their identity and culture.

We heard that success for the Generational Strategy would look like:

- Families empowered with the opportunities, knowledge, tools and resources they need to raise their children independently and in the way they choose.
- Families and community members have a voice and feel ownership over decisions, processes and systems that affect them.
- Organisations work together effectively to provide coordinated, wrap-around support that meets the holistic needs of children and families in their community.

- Racism, discrimination and inequities are actively addressed and reduced.
- The Territory has a thriving Aboriginal workforce and Aboriginal leadership across all communities and sectors.

We heard many people say there is need for more or better supports across a wide range of areas. Some of the areas we heard about most strongly were:

- housing, shelter and safe spaces
- basic needs, including financial security, nutritious food, power, quality drinking water, technology and transport
- education, including culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum and supports both inside and outside the school environment, including life skills and pathways into training and employment
- health, particularly mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, traditional medicine and healing
- child protection system including formal and informal kinship care, connection to culture and reunification
- justice system, including police, courts, youth justice and Corrections.

We also heard that more support is needed for particular groups, including youth, men, people with disabilities, the LGBTQIA+SB community, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people in remote communities.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Generational Strategy is for all children, young people and their families in the Territory. It starts before birth and continues through each stage and transition period across a child's life course into young adulthood (age 24).

The Generational Strategy framework shows the pathway to achieving generational change for children, young people and their families. It is informed by a two-ways approach, which is about bringing diverse knowledges together on an equal basis to achieve a common goal. It allows us to be inclusive of the worldviews, needs and circumstances of everyone in the Territory.

Children, young people and families

The rights, strengths and diversity of children, young people and their families are at the centre of the framework and must come first in everything we do.

Interwoven kinship network

The woven circle surrounding children, young people and their families represents the kinship or extended family systems that provide support and protection, including the laws and responsibilities inherent within these systems.

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.

Pathways for change

The pathways that flow from children, young people and families at the centre represent the main themes that must be addressed across all areas of the framework to achieve the change we wish to see. We must focus on:

- *Truth-telling and healing*: listen, tell the truth, recognise harm and repair relationships.
- *Responsive support*: be flexible and respond to the diverse and unique needs of children, young people and families.
- *Holistic prevention*: shift our focus and efforts to addressing root causes and preventing disadvantage.
- *Meaningful evidence building*: measure, learn and improve in ways that are meaningful to families and communities.

Support layers

The layers surrounding children, young people and their families represent the conditions we must create to support them to thrive. Within each layer, we must address:

- *Places and communities*: urban, regional and remote locations; social and cultural communities; and other physical spaces and environments.
- *Services*: prevention, early support, crisis intervention, transition and reunification supports.
- *Systems*: organisations, institutions and sectors; policy and legislation.

Outcome areas

The eight icons represent the outcome domains or the areas we hope to achieve success in for all children, young people and families. These represent the areas that are needed for children, young people and families to thrive, and although represented separately here they are deeply interconnected.

Artwork: recognition to Larrakia, Warumungu Elder Dr Christine Fejo-King and Cian Mungatj McCue (Larrakia, Yanyuwa and Mulluk-mulluk) for their inspiration/direction



BETTER OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

These domains and outcomes³ are what we heard you say are important for all children, young people and families in the Northern Territory. These are the goals that the Generational Strategy aspires to achieve by reforming the way we work.

ALL TERRITORIAN (CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES):

Domains	Outcomes
Have mental, physical and spiritual health from conception across all stages of life	1. All children are born healthy, are active and thrive, and have developmental equality
	2. Children, young people and families have the best physical and mental health and wellbeing throughout their lives
Have appropriate and secure housing	3. Individuals and families have access to the right home and accommodation at the right time, in the right locations
	4. Housing is fit-for-purpose, affordable and both culturally and climate appropriate
Are connected to culture, community and country	5. Children, young people and families have pride in their identity and culture, and have connection with these through language, country, truth and healing, and kinship
	6. The diversity and range of needs of all children, young people and families are valued, respected and included
Are able to learn, contribute and achieve their aspirations	7. Children, young people and families see a positive future for themselves
	8. Children and young people have access to quality and appropriate education
	9. Young people and families have the skills, training and resources to access employment opportunities
	10. Employment and education pathways are created and supported by training and mentoring that is appropriate, inclusive and relevant to culture
Are empowered to participate	11. Children, young people, families, their broader kinship networks and other important people to the child have their voices heard
	12. Children, young people and families have the opportunities, skills and information needed to exercise their right to self-determination
	13. Opportunity is provided for children, families and communities to come together for support and to plan for the future

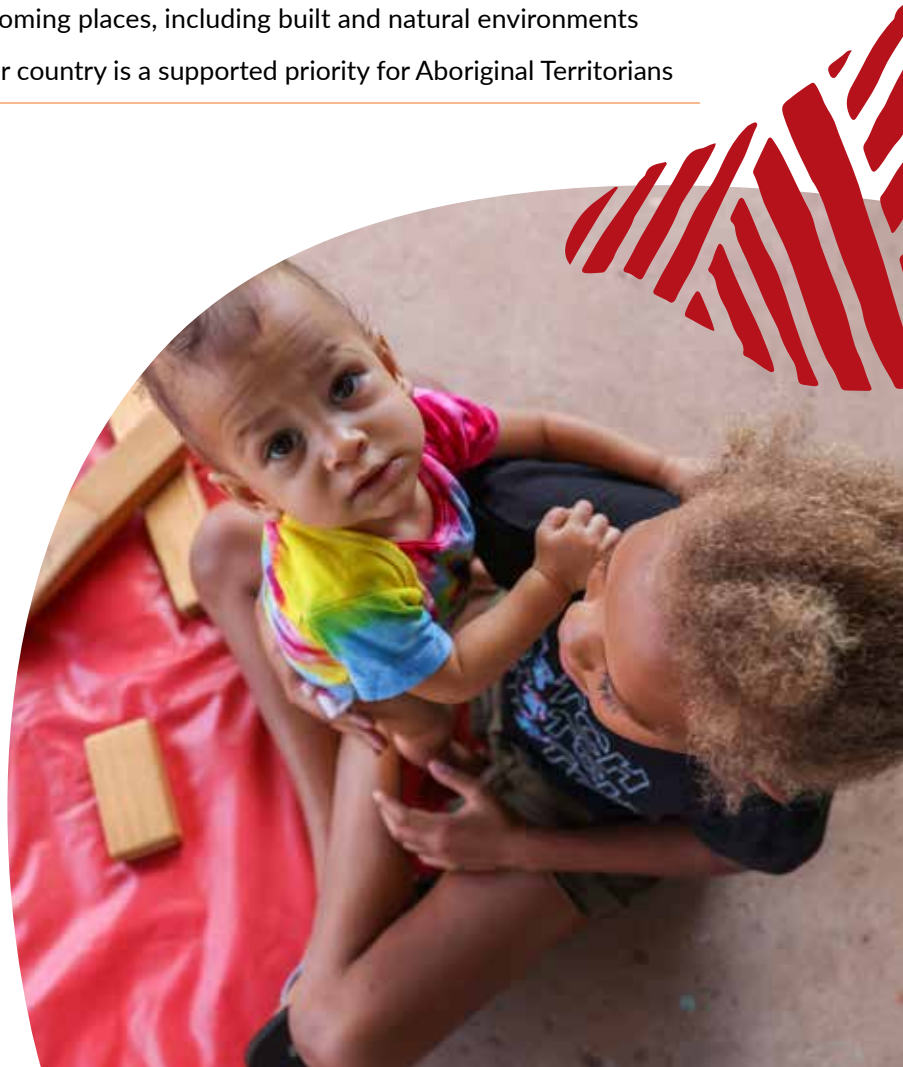
Domains	Outcomes
Are cared for, valued and safe	14. Environments and systems are free from abuse, neglect, violence, racism and discrimination in all its forms
	15. Children and young people grow up strong in their families and have positive family relationships
	16. The justice system meets the needs of families and communities
	17. Children and young people are kept out of the youth justice system and out-of-home care, and Aboriginal children are not overrepresented in these systems
Are financially secure and have material basics	18. Communities have affordable, secure, reliable and high-quality food, water, energy, access to transport and digital technologies and any other basic needs
	19. Secure job opportunities are available to young people and families
Have a natural and built environment that supports a high quality of life	20. The Territory has no barriers to social inclusion, has infrastructure to connect all communities, and is resilient to climate change
	21. Children, young people and families have access to safe, accessible and welcoming places, including built and natural environments
	22. Caring for country is a supported priority for Aboriginal Territorians

”

KEEP KIDS THRIVING AND
GROWING IN SAFE AND
STRONG FAMILIES

Top End participant

³. Outcomes align with NT Social Outcomes Framework; National Agreement on Closing the Gap; The Nest, Research Alliance for Children and Youth; Aboriginal Framework, Story of Our Children and Young People



HOW WE WILL WORK TOGETHER

These principles outline how we will work together to achieve the outcomes of the Generational Strategy. The principles reflect our common beliefs and must be reflected during implementation.

Taking a human rights-based approach commits all parties to promote, protect, respect and fulfil the rights of children, young people and families.

WE WILL:

Principle	Explanation
Uphold and respect human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre human rights in all aspects of service design and delivery, aligning with relevant international frameworks • Recognise the right to self-determination for all children, young people and families • Remove inequalities, racism and other forms of discrimination, including on the basis of sex, sexuality and gender in places and communities, services and systems
Respect Aboriginal worldviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal people know what is best for their communities, and respect Elders and cultural authority • Recognise the importance of Aboriginal knowledge and authority in evidence building • Prioritise lore and kinship systems in the service system
Listen to the voices of children, young people and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children, young people and families are heard in decisions that affect them • Capture and act upon their voices early and across the service system • Build a service system that is responsive to their voices, including in formats and languages users can understand
Respect diversity of communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value the perspectives of people from diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in practice so they are culturally relevant and promote inclusive access for all • Create a service system that is responsive to diverse needs and has a culturally safe and competent workforce

Principle	Explanation
Share responsibility, accountability and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through on our commitments and involve communities as active partners throughout • Ensure open communication between all partners and communities, including sharing accurate and timely information and data • Commit to public and independent oversight of targets and actions related to the Generational Strategy • Allow time and space to build and grow this new way of working
Be trauma- and healing-informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments and organisations acknowledge that their history has caused the disproportionate overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the child protection and justice systems, and facilitate truth telling to enable reconciliation and active and ongoing healing • Address the effects of complex and intergenerational trauma, and ensure future generations are supported to thrive in their communities • Prioritise trauma-aware, healing-informed and therapeutic approaches to service delivery, including Aboriginal ways of healing
Adopt strengths-based approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and build on the strengths of individuals, families and communities and what is already working well across the Northern Territory • Services operate from a capacity-strengthening and family-centred approach



OUR COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL TERRITORIANS

Aboriginal worldview and working two-ways

This Generational Strategy reflects an Aboriginal worldview because it is overwhelmingly Aboriginal children and families who are impacted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families represent the vast majority in both the care and protection and youth detention systems in the Northern Territory. We need to work with Aboriginal Territorians more holistically and openly; we need to work in partnership using a two-way approach.

Two-ways means valuing Aboriginal knowledges equally with non-Aboriginal knowledges by bringing both knowledges together, on equal footing, to achieve a common goal. It means working in partnership to build shared goals and mutual respect, and redress past harms. In practice, two-ways ensures Aboriginal cultural authority and Aboriginal knowledges are the foundation of how children, young people and families are supported to remain safe and well, and that collectivist values (that include a focus on shared needs, goals and decision-making) and kinship systems are central in how we support communities to be strong.

Two-ways requires commitments from both Aboriginal Territorians and non-Aboriginal Territorians to listen, learn and reform. It is an opportunity for healing to take place between Territorians so that together we may achieve the outcomes of this Generational Strategy.

To work in a new way with Aboriginal Territorians, we commit to:

1. two-ways practice when working with Aboriginal children, young people and families
2. empowering Stolen Generations to connect with their families, language, knowledge, land and culture through tracing their own unique story
3. embodying Aboriginal worldview and two-ways throughout the commitments in this Generational Strategy.



THE TERRITORY NEEDS A GENUINE RECKONING OF ITS HISTORY. AND THEN A COMING TOGETHER...THE TERRITORY, THE NATION, NEEDS A NEW DIRECTION - NEW RELATIONSHIPS RECOGNISING ABORIGINAL CULTURE, LANGUAGES AND LORE AS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR IDENTITY, OUR STRENGTH, OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE.

NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner,
Barunga Agreement, 2018



Truth-telling and healing

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. We must value the strengths and self-determination of Aboriginal families and communities and empower them to lead their own solutions. By doing this, we provide sufficient opportunities, time and space for families, kin and communities to heal together.

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WE ALL NEED TO SIT DOWN GOOD WAY FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE NEED TO BE SUPPORTED TO TAKE KIDS DOWN TO THE RIVER AND SIT DOWN GOOD WAY. WHITEFELLA WAY IS JUST YOUR HOUSE, LOOKING AT THE SAME PLACE ALL THE TIME. FAMILIES ARE ALREADY HOLDING EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE TO BE A GOOD FATHER AND A GOOD MOTHER.

Aboriginal Expert Advisory Group (AEAG)

For truth-telling and healing, we commit to these actions for children, young people and families:

4. recognising the historical and contemporary impacts of intergenerational, individual and collective trauma
5. embedding trauma- and healing-informed approaches at the community, services and systems levels
6. repairing trust and rebuilding relationships through deep listening and improving the practices and systems that are causing harm.



OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

ALL CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES ARE VALUED, EMPOWERED
AND HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP AND CONTRIBUTE.

At the centre of our Generational Strategy and its framework is our commitment to all Territorian families.

We recognise that when families or young people are struggling, they try to help themselves by first turning to other family members, friends, kin and community.

Most families in the Northern Territory are not involved with the child and family service system, and most children and young people are growing up safe and connected to their peers, families and communities. But some families can face barriers and become vulnerable when they get trapped in cycles of trauma, disadvantage and adversity.

We want to ensure future generations are supported to thrive and are empowered to find what they need – within themselves, their families, their communities and in the services they access.

FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES, WE COMMIT TO:

Empowering children, young people and families

1. enabling families to stay together where possible and, where they are apart, prioritising support to reunite them
2. understanding that children, young people and families have the right to self-determination – they have the solutions to their own needs and must be empowered and supported to take responsibility outside of the service system
3. engaging Aboriginal children, young people and families as genuine decision-makers
4. strengthening Aboriginal self-determination
5. prioritising and valuing the voice of children, young people and families in decisions that affect them, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and other diverse groups (LGBTQIA+SB, disability, young parents, migrants, etc)
6. recognising men's important place in families by empowering them to be strong fathers, uncles, grandfathers and brothers
7. respecting family, kinship and people with cultural authority to identify cultural roles and responsibilities relevant to Aboriginal children, young people and families
8. finding ways to support connections between young people, their friends and families and creating opportunities for families to build their support networks to help each other
9. empowering children, young people and families to feel value and pride in their individual and collective identities and culture
10. building the capacity of children, young people and families to understand the expectations of them in service systems, institutions and in law

11. improving access to language and interpreter services so families can access information they need on their own.

Working with children, young people and families

12. supporting children, young people and families to advocate on behalf of themselves, and ensuring children, young people and families always have someone to advocate on their behalf if they choose
13. fostering service practice that actively empowers existing family support systems
14. investing in building relationships through regular engagement and effort to build and rebuild trust, connections and confidence
15. recognising people's right to live all different family ways and learning about different worldviews of how children grow and develop
16. actively working to maximise the conditions that build on existing strengths in families (at all stages of the life course – pre-birth through to young adulthood) to enable safety, responsibility and independence outside of the service system
17. prioritising health education and culturally appropriate support to families from diverse groups during pre-birth, birthing and post-birth
18. supporting Stolen Generations and children and young people in care and youth detention to connect to culture and find their place in kinship systems.

Reforming the system to support families

19. addressing the effects of complex and intergenerational trauma, including supporting families in their own ways of truth telling and healing
20. improving access to developmental screening and assessments for children and young people
21. increasing investment in services that prevent children and young people from entering the statutory child protection and youth justice system and services that offer earlier support to families, while ensuring those in the systems receive appropriate and high-quality support when needed
22. embedding in full the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles as an expression of the rights of an Aboriginal child and their right to remain connected to kin, country and culture as much as possible
23. ongoing support for foster carers of Aboriginal children, to enhance their technical proficiencies in cultural safety, child development and care
24. improving accountability, reliability and information to help individuals and families access and navigate the children and family system
25. embedding family-led decision-making, independently facilitated by Aboriginal people or Aboriginal organisations where appropriate
26. improving support to keep families together, including for informal kinship arrangements.



OUR MOB ARE TOGETHER ALL THE TIME. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENS
– HAPPY OR SAD – WE STAY TOGETHER AND HELP EACH OTHER

Central participant

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.)

The Northern Territory has diverse environments, places and communities with unique histories and cultures.

We acknowledge the strengths of the Northern Territory's places and communities and the solutions they are putting in place to improve the lives of their children, young people and families. Places and communities understand their own local resources, needs, governance and leadership structures and local networks. They are best placed to identify gaps and priorities, solve local challenges, measure success and decide on what works and doesn't work for them and why.

To successfully implement this Generational Strategy, we need to change the way we work with places and communities. Locally-led community and regional plans are essential to implementing the changes and reforms in this Generational Strategy. Our aim is to build on what is already working well.

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WE WILL FIND THE ANSWERS,
ONCE WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE

Central participant

FOR PLACES AND COMMUNITIES, WE COMMIT TO:

Building on strengths

1. recognising and building on existing local community solutions and initiatives that successfully respond to the needs of children, young people and families, such as Elders connecting children and young people to culture and country
2. creating opportunities for communities to access brokerage funds to deliver local solutions and priorities
3. recognising local knowledge as evidence and a resource that provides a deeper understanding of community context, needs and solutions
4. building on local knowledge through research facilitated by local people
5. working with Aboriginal communities and diverse groups using a two-way approach, including respecting and adhering to cultural protocols
6. valuing and supporting established local and cultural governance groups that address community needs and have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the community



7. building the capacity of local, cultural and emerging leaders to support and advocate on behalf of their community
8. governments and organisations listening to the voices of the right people, including mandated leaders, Elders, children, young people and people from diverse groups
9. supporting networking between communities to share learnings
10. strengthening models where communities already engage with government, non-government and providers to collectively research, plan, deliver and measure improvements for children, young people and families in a place or community
11. recognise and strengthen partnerships between families and local schools to build empowerment, belonging and positive participation of children, young people and families, including the use of trauma informed approaches
12. increase collaboration between service providers and schools to improve school engagement and educational outcomes for children and young people.

Community-led planning

13. facilitating long-term success and self-determination by providing the support, resources and information to enable community-led decisions and local solutions to local challenges
14. resourcing communities' development and implementation of community-led and owned plans that reflect the needs and priorities of local children, young people and families
15. supporting communities to recognise or create an effective community-led decision-making process to develop and implement community plans
16. resourcing young people to develop, maintain or strengthen youth action plans at the community level as part of the community planning process
17. exploring opportunities and strengthening capacity of community members from diverse groups who face barriers to engaging with the system to enable them to actively contribute to community decision-making (for example, CALD or young people)
18. supporting communities to develop local impact measures, and monitor and evaluate plans through a range of techniques to ensure solutions continue to meet changing community needs and circumstances
19. being transparent so that data and information from departments and organisations feeds back to communities for them to verify and decide how to use it as evidence
20. embedding continuous learning and improvement through an active and reflective planning cycle.

Data and evidence

21. working towards increased community ownership of data and towards data sovereignty
22. implementing the Closing the Gap agreements on data and information sharing
23. giving Aboriginal people access to and custodianship of data to help them plan and deliver services in their communities
24. strengthening local capacity to collect, map, manage, use and analyse data and information to support communities to plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate services in their communities

25. discussing data and local knowledge in a format and language communities understand (for example, storytelling or interviews)
26. supporting communities' access to people with expertise in child development and family health and wellbeing to assist in planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Regional plans

27. using community plans as the basis of regional plans, which will outline regional needs and solutions and enable decisions about place-based regional investment
28. shared decision-making between the Australian Government, NT Government and community sector when developing regional plans and addressing equity in shared decision-making
29. shared decision-making at the Tripartite Forum level when providing advice to ministers on government investment to support children, young people and families
30. ensuring the needs and voices of smaller communities are considered in regional planning
31. ensuring community oversight in regional planning by utilising appropriate existing mechanisms or governance groups
32. ensuring and enabling shared accountability between governments, service providers and communities and addressing power imbalances between partners.

Principles underpinning community-led planning

- informed by a community's own definition of what a community is and what they think success is
- facilitated by people the community trusts and have local knowledge
- culturally safe, inclusive, transparent, flexible, accessible and accountable
- clear on the roles and responsibilities of all parties
- allows for adequate time for communities to identify or establish governance groups and actively participate
- making sure the right people are involved and diverse voices participate
- ensuring people are prepared to effectively participate
- people are valued and respected for their time and knowledge through appropriate remuneration.

OUR COMMITMENT TO BETTER SERVICES

SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE, SAFE, AND RESPONSIVE FOR ALL CHILDREN,
YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

We commit to building on community knowledge and evidence to create more effective services and a more responsive service system. Many services are already working well, but there is more that can be done to provide the right services at the right time for children, young people and families.

Services must be trusted to be effective, they must be safe and inclusive for all, and easy to find and access. Service providers must understand the cultural context and have relationships in the communities they work in, and be responsive to community and user feedback so that they can grow and improve.

To achieve this, services must be well integrated, supported by a system that is governed and managed well, communicates effectively (internally and externally) and can adapt to community needs.

The Generational Strategy links individuals and families to services and systems to address these issues in a more holistic way.

FOR BETTER SERVICES, WE COMMIT TO:

Services that are accessible, safe and responsive

1. recognising the diversity of the Territory and ensuring supports are inclusive, accessible and safe for all
2. enabling individuals and families to access personalised support to navigate services and find what they need at the right time
3. prioritising therapeutic approaches in designing and delivering services, including healing programs designed and led by Aboriginal people to address intergenerational trauma
4. ensuring organisations embed processes and systems to promote culturally safe and quality services
5. improving access to supports and services in remote communities and homelands
6. maintaining clear and accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms across services, including statutory systems, and addressing barriers to using complaints mechanisms.

A community-led service system

7. enabling community input and shared decision-making in program and service design, delivery, governance, monitoring and evaluation
8. using data and evidence – such as service-user input, lived experience and local knowledge – to improve services
9. embedding opportunities for community voice in mainstream and government-delivered services.

Integrated and collaborative services

10. embedding support for an integrated, place-based and collaborative service system
11. strengthening processes for sharing current information on services to support service navigation and referrals
12. creating shared understanding between service providers about local needs and current service responses
13. developing shared systems to reduce the administrative burden on providers and increase effective and timely service responses.

Strong and capable organisations

14. ongoing support and resourcing for organisations to strengthen their capacity, including in the areas of governance and strategic planning, partnerships and place-based approaches, and research and service development
15. reviewing systems and enabling organisations to embed culturally safe, child safe, and inclusive practices and policies that are healing- and trauma-informed
16. investing in ongoing learning and support for two-way service models, including locally specific cultural training for government and service provider staff
17. valuing and elevating lived experience and knowledge of local culture, language and traditional systems when recruiting staff to work with Aboriginal people
18. strengthening the capacity of organisations to understand and work with people from diverse backgrounds across the Territory
19. supporting smaller organisations to grow and develop in response to community priorities
20. supporting mechanisms to attract and retain a skilled workforce, including upskilling and developing staff.

Transitioning more services to Aboriginal organisations

21. prioritising investment in local organisations that communities identify as preferred service providers, such as local Aboriginal organisations and community-controlled organisations
22. when transitioning services to Aboriginal organisations the transition will be consistent with the intent of the APO NT Partnership Principles.^{xii}
23. transitioning would include agreeing the targets, milestones, processes, timelines and accountability mechanisms between partner organisations and with community, and ensuring there is adequate time for the transition
24. strengthening capacity and capability of cultural authority groups and local Aboriginal organisations to take on a greater role providing supports and leading service delivery for their communities
25. facilitating effective partnerships between Aboriginal organisations, and between Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal organisations
26. building more pathways and taking different approaches to local employment, including working to address barriers and providing more on-the-job training and flexible employment opportunities.

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IF WE HAD FUNDING WE WOULD
GO. WE WOULD TAKE THEM
YOUNG PEOPLE OUT BUSH

Barkly participant

Building a local Aboriginal workforce

27. addressing barriers to employment, including structural barriers and administrative hurdles
28. providing support for priority groups to access employment opportunities
29. growing employment opportunities in priority sectors and creating more pathways into real jobs
30. making use of evidence bases to develop place-based employment strategies
31. supporting continuity and retention of local staff by enabling communities to participate in decision-making around local employment strategies, and using local knowledge to inform recruitment processes
32. investing more time and resources to strengthen the skills and capacity of organisations to recruit and retain local employees
33. providing appropriate employment support and training opportunities, including through mentoring, two-way approaches, and locally relevant apprenticeships and traineeships
34. maintaining culturally safe workplaces with flexible conditions, where possible.





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.

To create more responsive services and better support individuals and families, we must get the foundations right and build a stronger system. The Tripartite Forum will play an important role in this change, setting an example of shared leadership and partnership between sectors at the highest level.

We know that the systems, structures and institutions at the core of the child and family service system in the Northern Territory need to be transformed. To do this, we need better coordination between agencies, governments, services and communities; shared and active leadership; and inclusive governance. This will lead to improved coordination and distribution of available funding and more equitable service distribution and investment.

Ensuring the system reform has clear oversight and information channels and applying a well-defined monitoring and evaluation model will build trust and make governments and service providers accountable to service users and communities.

FOR STRONGER SYSTEMS, WE COMMIT TO:

Working together in partnership

1. a new way of working together in partnership – reinforced by commitments made through other major policies and reforms
2. increased collaboration and shared leadership between three tiers of government, the community sector and communities
3. embedding mechanisms to feed community voice into strategic policy, planning, and accountability processes, including through research
4. enabling all government and non-government service providers to come together at a systemic level to influence policy and program design to support working with communities using a placebased approach.

Partnership principles

These principles should inform and guide partnerships at all levels – between communities, service providers and governments. Working in genuine partnership will underpin how community priorities will drive reform across the child and family system.

- equity in the partnership, including through supporting self-determination and addressing power imbalances, including through support for capacity building
- commitment to building long-term, sustainable relationships based on trust
- respect for diversity and support for inclusive partnerships
- commitment to culturally safe partnerships
- shared responsibility and accountability for objectives and activities
- commitment to agreeing on processes to support a partnership, such as commitments, roles and responsibilities, allocation of time and resources, and processes for planning and reviewing the partnership
- adequate resourcing for partnerships, including for evaluation and strategic planning.

Shared leadership and stronger supporting institutions

5. recognising that the system starts with children, young people and families and is accountable to them
6. investing in the Tripartite Forum to take on expanded functions as a strengthened advisory body, including transparently managing conflicts of interest among members
7. supporting system changes that ensure government regional networks have the skills and authority to work with communities in a way that supports place based and community-led decision-making.

Coordinated and effective government investment

8. funding reform to coordinate investment in services, reduce duplication and fragmentation, and increase the effectiveness of available funding
9. establishing a Coordinated Investment Framework Agreement between the Australian Government and NT Government to progress funding reform
10. the Tripartite Forum providing advice to ministers on funding arrangements based on information from community and regional/local plans and the expertise of members
11. coordinating the effort of individual government agencies responsible for areas such as housing, families, education, infrastructure and health to realise the goals in community and regional plans and deliver outcomes
12. transparent, accessible and publicly available information on grants and services
13. improving equity in the provision and distribution of services, particularly for remote areas.

Longer-term, more collaborative contracting of service providers

14. relational contract management at the community level, between governments, service providers and community, based on trust, collaboration and flexibility to achieve outcomes
15. administrative and reporting systems that value cultural ways of measuring and demonstrating success
16. where appropriate, provide mechanisms to support collaborative or joint service planning and funding agreements that are informed by community priorities and needs
17. where appropriate, enabling direct contracting of local organisations that communities identify as preferred service providers
18. contracts that reflect shared accountabilities for outcomes and measures across services
19. longer-term service contracts where they are fit for purpose, considering the varying cost of service delivery in different contexts
20. valuing and drawing on local voices and knowledges in contracting, investment and funding decisions.

Transforming organisations

21. addressing systemic and institutional racism across governments and sectors, including the importance of truth-telling and recognising past and ongoing harms to promote healing
22. reviewing relevant policies, systems and legislation to remove inequities and discrimination
23. undertaking institutional and organisational reform to support embedding two-way approaches that value both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge systems equally, including supporting processes to bring together the two knowledge systems.

Systems that support better practices

24. improving the technical proficiency in the system, including therapeutic clinical practice, trauma-informed practice and Aboriginal ways of healing
25. governments, systems and service providers learning local Aboriginal knowledges (for example, Aboriginal ways of child-rearing) and incorporating these concepts and priorities into their practice with Aboriginal families
26. governments, systems and service providers learning about family practices from key migrant communities and incorporating these into their practice when working with families from these communities.

Better data and evidence

27. embedding an approach that prioritises ongoing learning and continuous improvement, including local evidence building, data to match aspirations of success, and respectful research relationships
28. increasing accountability and transparency in decision-making by sharing accurate and timely information with the non-government sector and communities
29. supporting formalised data sharing and collaboration agreements across all sectors.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An important part of the Generational Strategy and its implementation is ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure it is meeting the needs of children, young people, families and communities and having an impact. Developing a robust and thorough monitoring and evaluation plan will be a core component of the first action plan. This process must be transparent, and the feedback loop between communities, service providers and governments must be continuous and sustainable. Monitoring and evaluation will build on existing strengths, governance structures, programs and plans where they align and are working well.



Centring Aboriginal worldviews

The Generational Strategy will privilege Aboriginal voices, leadership and expertise in both setting standards for evaluation and providing insight into the Generational Strategy's worth and success for Aboriginal people. The Generational Strategy will provide the opportunity for Aboriginal worldviews, knowledge and family ways to be centred in this work.

Central to monitoring the Generational Strategy's success will be shifting the influence back to families and communities, and ensuring the processes of evaluation – including designing appropriate timelines, resources, and setting goals of local and contextual measures of success – are embedded in the early stages of the monitoring and evaluation plan. This can also be reflected in community or regional planning to allow for local relevance and verification of data. This will also build research capacity to inform local policy and practice.

Collaboration is a key feature of monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Generational Strategy. We acknowledge it will be necessary to coordinate work with a number of government agencies and organisations to deliver outcomes. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation will necessarily include collecting and analysing data linked to the Generational Strategy outcomes and drawn from a range of portfolio areas.

Monitoring

A robust monitoring framework will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the Generational Strategy in improving outcomes for all children, young people and families. The framework will build on the foundations of other reforms, such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, where there are aligned outcomes, key performance indicators and community priorities.



High-level indicators and measures to track progress

More detailed indicators and measures will be included in a monitoring and evaluation plan; however, some initial, high-level indicators aligned to the outcomes may include:

Example key indicator	Example measure
Increase healthy start in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of babies born with healthy birthweight
Increase the proportion of children and families living in appropriate housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children and families living in overcrowded housing or experiencing homelessness
Decrease developmental vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children at school entry who are developmentally on track via use of appropriate screening measures Proportion of young people in the youth justice system with assessed neurodevelopment disorder
Increase children's and young people's engagement in education and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of educational attainment and employment
Increase children living safely with their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of children in out-of-home care Substantiated rates of harm as a proportion of child protection notifications Rates of family reunification Rates of Aboriginal children in Kinship care Compliance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Policy Proportion of children involved in the child protection system that had access to a supportive intervention (e.g. family support service)
Reduce levels of detention/incarceration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people on diversion/community orders/in detention/on parole
Reduce domestic and family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of domestic and family violence offences reported Domestic violence incidents where children were the subject of violence or heard/saw the incident

This data will be reported at the Tripartite Forum quarterly and reported separately according to by Aboriginal status where possible. Use of these measures will allow for long-term scrutiny and performance monitoring of outcomes achieved through the Generational Strategy, including reforms of the care and protection and youth justice systems.

As recommended by the Royal Commission into Protection and Detention of Children, additional work will be required to specify targets, benchmarks and outcome measures. This will include mapping the source and quality of data measures, in development of the Strategy's reporting, monitoring, and evaluation plan. The plan will include short, medium and long-term outputs, and will align with the overall aims of each of the Action Plans, as well as other indicators and targets that are part of other reforms, such as Closing the Gap. For example, data sharing principles will be considered in the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy (aligned with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4).

Annual reporting

An annual report will be compiled by the NT Reform Management Office, in partnership with the members of the Tripartite Forum. The report will be provided by the Tripartite Forum to governments and publicly released, to ensure public accountability of measures and actions under the Strategy. The report will include qualitative measures on how well:

- the Tripartite Forum governance and partnership is progressing
- the voices of children, families and communities are included in the design and mix of services
- progress on how different efforts of capacity building/strengthening is faring for families, communities and services.

Evaluation of the Generational Strategy

In conjunction with these monitoring commitments, more in-depth evaluations of the overall Generational Strategy will be undertaken. Aboriginal leadership in this process is vital. The Generational Strategy will have three independent evaluations to explore and examine its progress.

- The first evaluation will measure implementation of the Generational Strategy against the first action plan and inform the second action plan.
- A second evaluation will determine which actions are delivering outcomes and identify what is needed to sustain outcomes into the future. This will also inform the third and final action plan.

Each evaluation will be presented to the Tripartite Forum for consideration and to continue an iterative cycle of listening, reflecting, learning and actioning. A continuous quality improvement approach would then be established.

A final evaluation, near the conclusion of the Generational Strategy, will determine if it has had the expected impact, been inclusive of the right voices and delivered positive change for children, young people and families.



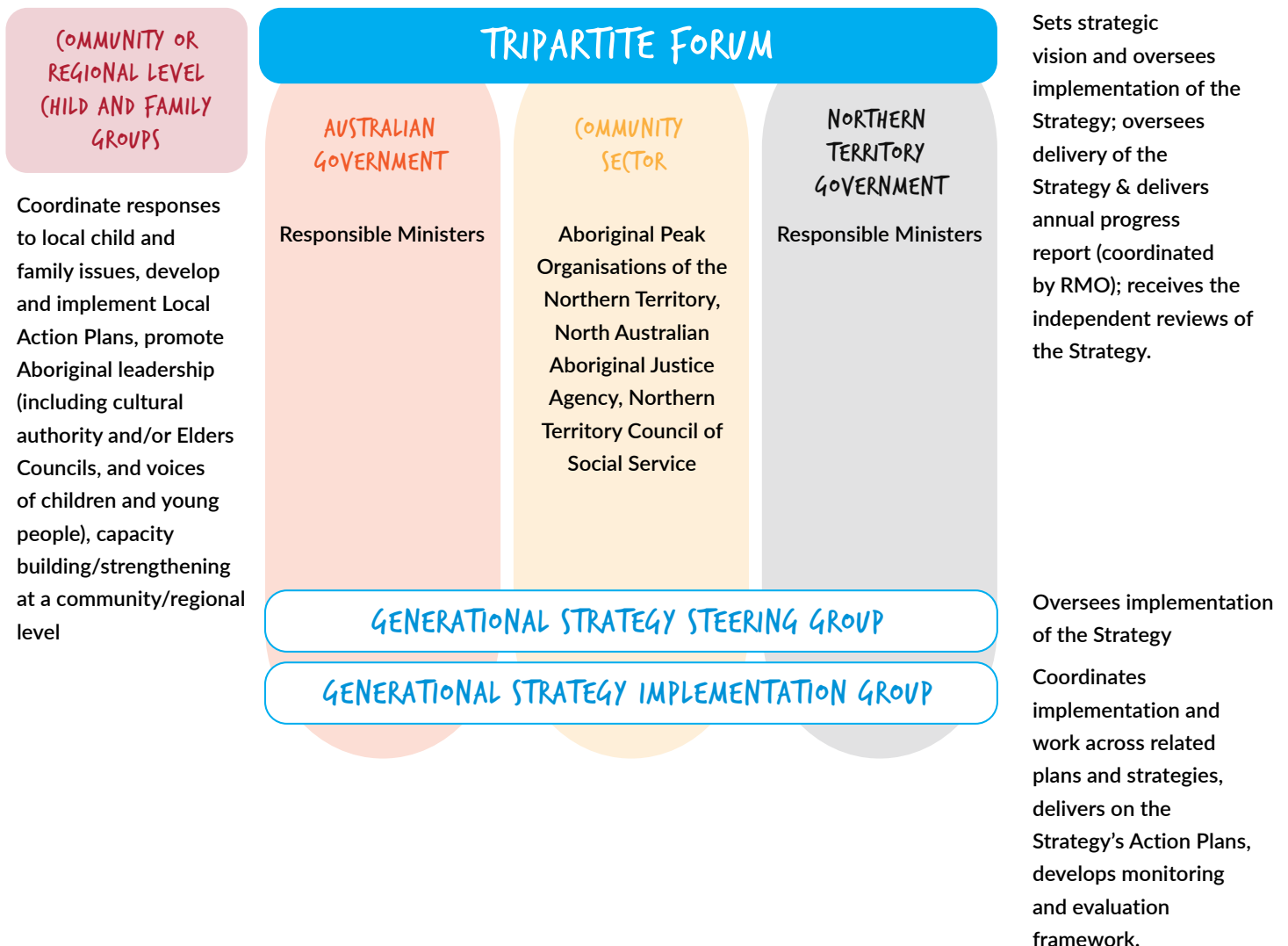
GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT AND (CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY)

All parties to the Generational Strategy will monitor and assess the effectiveness of its actions and action plans and be accountable to families and communities.

Under priority reform three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, governments have committed to

"SYSTEMIC AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF MAINSTREAM GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE."

To ensure accountability, by 2023 under Clause 67 of the National Agreement governments are committed to identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism that will support, monitor and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions.





Tripartite Forum

The Tripartite Forum will oversee the Generational Strategy and the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress against the commitments. It will also ensure those with responsibilities for the Generational Strategy's implementation follow through on their commitments.

Independent oversight

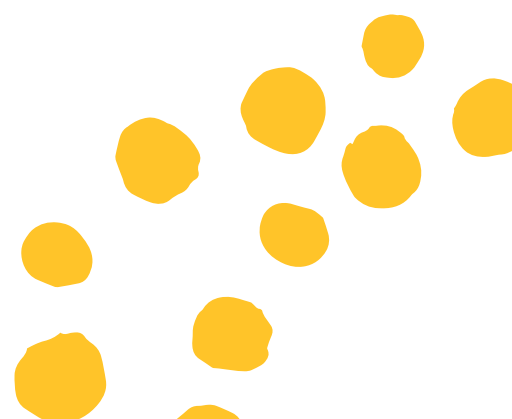
We are committing to independent oversight of the implementation and performance of the Generational Strategy. The Generational Strategy will be independently reviewed to ensure it is meeting its commitments including tracking of expenditure.

Aboriginal leadership

The Generational Strategy requires Aboriginal leadership and expertise at a high level to ensure progress of its implementation reflects the expectations of Aboriginal families and communities. The governance of the implementation of the Generational Strategy will align with the accountability mechanisms agreed through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Local/regional child and family groups

Local child and family groups will lead the development and implementation of specific community plans. This may occur through new or existing groups or processes or through a specific regional approach and will allow for decision making to occur at a local level.



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With thanks to and acknowledgement of the members of the Aboriginal Expert Advisory Group:

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Kim Mulholland

Jade Ritchie

Valda Shannon

Linda Turner

Yananymul Mununggurr

Mr Wunungmurra

The late Mr Wunungmurra was Yalu Aboriginal Corporation's Cultural Liaison Manager and Chairperson. He has many legacies and has impacted many people, projects, and policies across the board. One of his legacies with Yalu will live on through the grassroots work it started in child protection where he advocated and pushed to create a footprint within East Arnhem Land to keep Yolngu djamarrkuli (children) safe, which is now recognised as a best practice model throughout Australia. This is what he stood for. Our djamarrkuli





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Australian Government



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Aboriginal Peak Organisations
Northern Territory (APO NT)

An Alliance of the Northern and Southern Land Councils,
Northern and South Australian Aboriginal Justice Agencies,
and South Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency



North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency



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