



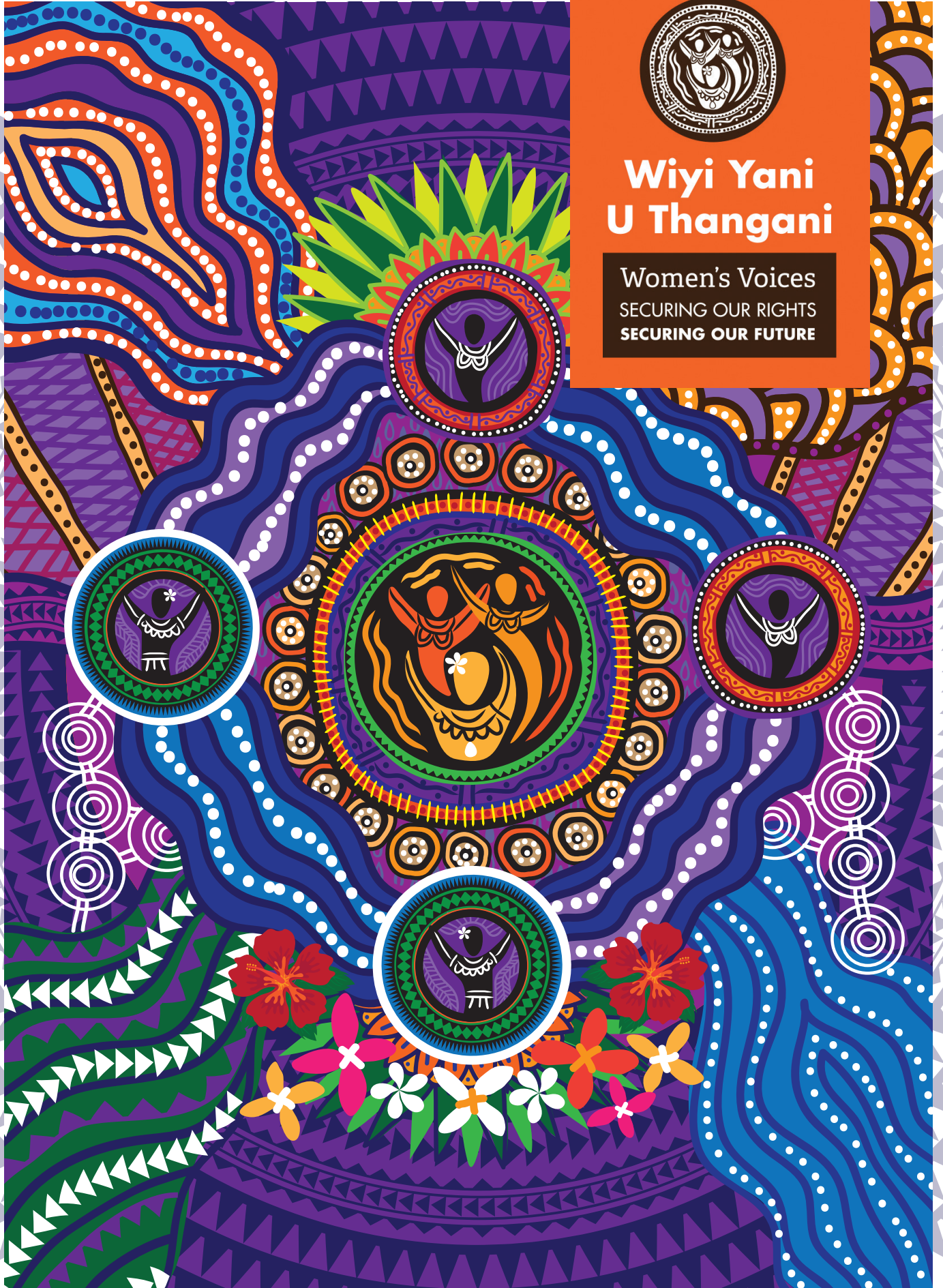
Australian
Human Rights
Commission

A COMMUNITY GUIDE
TO PARTICIPATING IN



Wiyi Yani U Thangani

Women's Voices
SECURING OUR RIGHTS
SECURING OUR FUTURE



A project by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission.

Message from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner



Wiyi yani, Galinda yani

All women, All Girls

Wina nginyji: Mimi, Ngowiji, Ngarranyi, Ngawiy, Jugu, Manay, Ngaja, Manggay, Gunday, Jimarri.

Whether you are all: Maternal and Paternal grandmothers, Mothers, Aunties, Daughters, Older sisters, Younger sisters, Sisters in law, Cousin Sisters or Friends.

Nginyjagama gurrijinggirragi, Nginyjagama linginggirragi,

Wadbinggirragali, yathawarra, mathawarra, wilalawarra, Winyiwarra yarrangi nhingi thangani, nyanangarri nhingi wiyi yani.

Whatever you are carrying, whatever you are thinking, let's all come together, to sit, share, and talk and listen together.

Manyawarrma yarrangi thangani thirrili ngarri.

Let us make our voices strong

Wiyi yani, Galinda yani Thirrili ngarri warawarra.

All women and girls lets stand with strength.

As the first Aboriginal woman appointed to the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, I want to hear what it will take to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, their families and communities feel safe, successful and empowered in their lives.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls have great strengths and potential. We perform a central role in bringing about positive social change for our families and communities. Despite this, we remain vulnerable and our voices, aspirations and needs are often invisible or marginalised.

Together with my team, I will be travelling to many places in rural, remote and urban Australia to hear directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls. *Wiyi Yani U Thangani*, which means 'Women's Voices' in the Bunuba language is the name of this Project which aims to engage with as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls as possible, both through our face-to-face engagement and our online submission process.

I want to hear about your ideas, your challenges and your hopes for the future through this process. Your voices are important and I invite and encourage all of my sisters to engage with me in this national conversation.

It is time to take action to shape our lives and our future by elevating our collective voices.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Warra Milawinyja

I will see you soon.

June Oscar AO,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Social Justice Commissioner.

The legacy of the report *Women's Business* (1986)

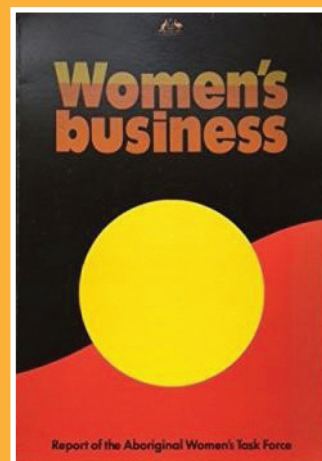
Over 30 years ago, a group of strong Aboriginal women led nationwide consultations and the final analysis were published in a report titled *Women's Business* (1986).^[1]

This report was the first of its kind funded by the Government. The report provided greater awareness of the way Aboriginal women live, provide and care for their families, and how they perceive the world. The report shared the unique stories, challenges and hopes of Aboriginal women from all over Australia.

The main observation was the crucial role of women in both family and community affairs. Despite all the ups and downs of the last 200+ years, women remain the nurturers, teachers and change agents in the community. The findings of this report became the basis for dedicated gender specific government programs aimed at addressing the challenges facing Aboriginal women at the time.

Whilst this national process has undoubtedly contributed to the elevation of issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in national policy and programming, there is much work that remains to be done.

Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) is a continuation of this important work.

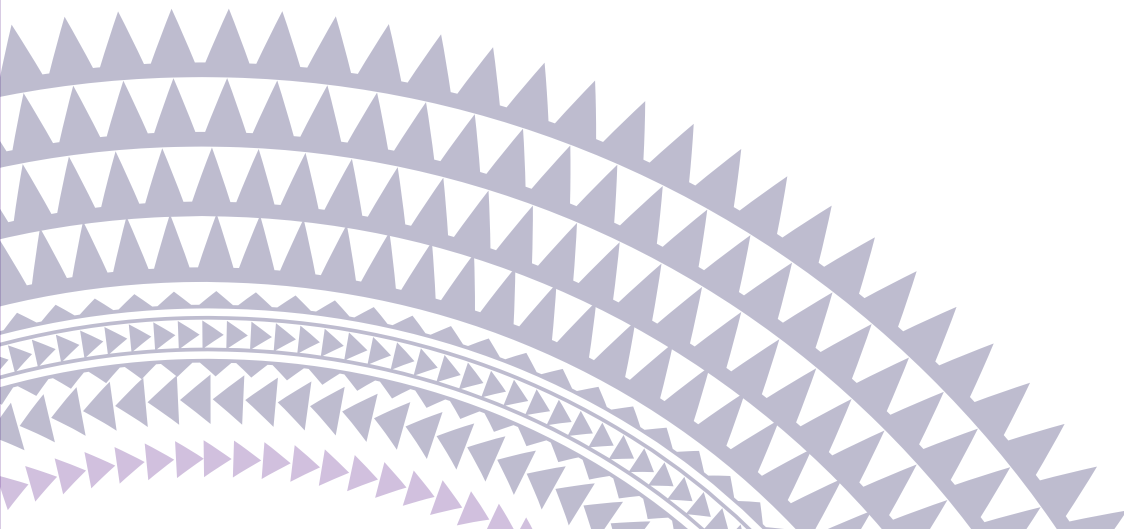


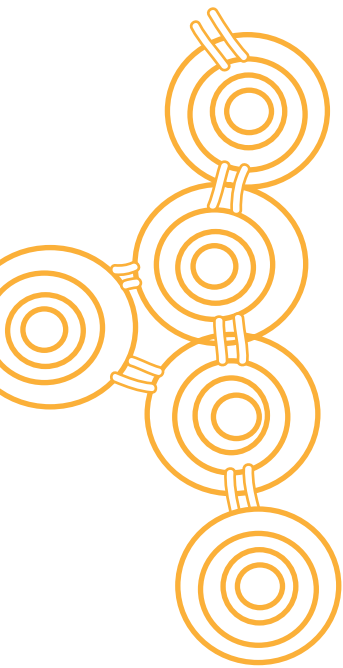
“As a
**first principle
we went out
to listen.**”

(*Women's Business*
1986) p.89)

“**They sang, danced, laughed and talked over three days in dry and hot conditions which they ignored as they each in their own way strengthened their cultural bonds under the large bough shelters.**”

(*Women's Business* (1986) p.61)





Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices)

This Project will explore the key challenges, priorities and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls.

Throughout 2018 there will be engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls from across the country through a series of community meetings and through a submission process.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, girls and communities are diverse. For this reason, the engagements will be held with a broad range of women and girls, especially those with unique aspirations and priorities, including linguistically diverse and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex (LGBTI) persons. It is hoped that hearing from a diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will help influence positive change for our children and the future generations.



Dr Anita Heiss



Magnolia Maymuru

Dr Anita Heiss and Magnolia Maymuru are the Ambassadors for the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project.

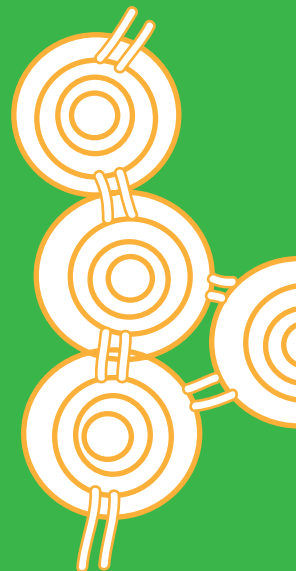
These amazing women share their stories and the importance of this Project on this website: <https://wiyiyaniuthangani.humanrights.gov.au/wiyi-yani-u-thangani-womens-voices/about-us>

The importance of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project aims to unite and elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls across Australia.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls need to be a driving force to enable positive change for themselves, their families and communities.

There is much work to be done in order to effect change. Your valuable contribution will help to identify key challenges and priorities facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls today.



A strengths-based human rights approach

In focusing on the unique circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, Wiyi Yani U Thangani will be guided by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the following foundational principles:

- **Self-determination:** is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls being able to shape their own lives, including their economic, social, cultural and political futures.^[2]
- **Participation in decision-making:** means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls have the right to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights and through representatives they choose. This participation must be consistent with the principles of free, prior and informed consent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls must be respected and treated as key stakeholders in developing, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all policies and legislation that has an effect on their wellbeing.^[3]
- **Respect for and protection of culture:** means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls have a right to maintain, protect and practice their cultural traditions and cultural heritage. This includes protecting their integrity as distinct cultural peoples, their cultural values, intellectual property and Indigenous languages.^[4]
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls should be able to govern themselves without discrimination from individuals, governments and/or external stakeholders.^[5]

Join the Conversation - Yarn with us

In 2018 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner will be traveling throughout Australia to speak directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls. The Commissioner invites all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (18+ years) and girls (12 – 17 years) to join the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Project conversation.

We encourage all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls to yarn with us.

For the latest news and updates about the Project, including information about where we will be visiting, please visit <https://wiyiwaniuthangani.humanrights.gov.au> or follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/June-Oscar-Aboriginal-Torres-Strait-Islander-Social-Justice-Commissioner-302662176455907/>.



Disclosure of information

Throughout the engagement, unless you expressly give permission, we will:

- Ensure your confidentiality is maintained. This means that any collection of personal information (such as name, age and contact details) will be collected for statistical purposes only.
- Ensure anonymity is maintained. This means that while your story or experience may be included in the final report, you will not be identified.

The exception to anonymity and confidentiality is where information is disclosed by or about a child or young person where there is a risk to their safety. Where there is a current or future risk to the wellbeing of a child or young person it is necessary, for the protection of that person, that the relevant authorities are informed.



Other options for having your say

If we do not get a chance to speak with you directly through the community consultations, we would still very much like to hear from you.

Make a submission

Guiding questions have been developed to prompt you, however they are intended as a guide only and you are encouraged to speak freely <https://wiyiyaniuthangani.humanrights.gov.au/have-your-say/make-submission>.

Or let us know your views, experiences and opinions:

By phone

If you would like to speak directly over the phone with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team at the Australian Human Rights Commission, please contact us by telephone: **(02) 9284 9600**


Write to us

Write to us via email at wiyiyaniuthangani@humanrights.gov.au or post to GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001.


Send us a video or other creative expressions (artwork, music, a poem) and upload it via the website at <https://wiyiyaniuthangani.humanrights.gov.au/join-conversation>




Contact details for more information and to lodge a submission:

 <https://wiyiyaniuthangani.humanrights.gov.au/>

 wiyiyaniuthangani@humanrights.gov.au

 <https://www.facebook.com/June-Oscar-Aboriginal-Torres-Strait-Islander-Social-Justice-Commissioner-302662176455907/>

 Social Justice Team GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001

 (02) 9284 9600

Annotations

^[1] Phyllis Daylight and Mary Johnstone, *Women's business: Report of the Aboriginal Women's Task Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra (1986)

^[2] *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, GA Resolution 61/295, UN Doc A/RES/61/295 (2007), arts , 4, 5, Preamble 16, 17 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>; Mick Gooda, *Social Justice and Native Title Report 2012*, Australian Human Rights Commission (2012), p 109.

^[3] *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, GA Resolution 61/295, UN Doc A/RES/61/295 (2007), arts 18, 19, 5, 10, 11(2), 27, 28, 29, 32(2), 41, 46, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>; Mick Gooda, *Social Justice and Native Title Report 2012*, Australian Human Rights Commission (2012), p 109.

^[4] *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, GA Resolution 61/295, UN Doc A/RES/61/295 (2007), arts (1), 31, 11(1), 11(2), 12(1), 13(1), 15(1), Preamble 3, 7, 10, 11, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>; Mick Gooda, *Social Justice and Native Title Report 2012*, Australian Human Rights Commission (2012), p 109.

^[5] *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, GA Resolution 61/295, UN Doc A/RES/61/295 (2007), arts 8(1)(e), 9, 15(2), 21(1), 22(2), 44, 46(3), Preamble 5, 9, 18, 22. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Declaration.aspx>; Mick Gooda, *Social Justice and Native Title Report 2012*, Australian Human Rights Commission (2012), p 109.

Support Services

Speaking out about a traumatic experience can be distressing. If you decide to provide information to us but find that either during or after providing information, that relaying the experience(s) of trauma is causing you distress, please contact:

1800 Respect (1800 737 732) – 24/7 national sexual assault and domestic and family violence counselling service

Lifeline – 13 11 14

beyondblue – 1300 224 636

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800

OR

Your local Aboriginal Legal Service or Legal Aid

Your local Aboriginal Medical Service or local state/territory government health service

Your local family violence prevention service

Dealing with discrimination

The Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent organisation that investigates complaints about discrimination, harassment and unfair treatment on the basis of race, colour, descent, gender, disability, age and other grounds.

For free advice on discrimination and your rights, or to make a complaint, call our **Complaints Information Line** on **02 9284 9888/1300 656 419 (local call)** or **1800 620 241 (toll free)**.

Information about making or responding to a complaint is available at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/complaint-information>.

You can also email complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au

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