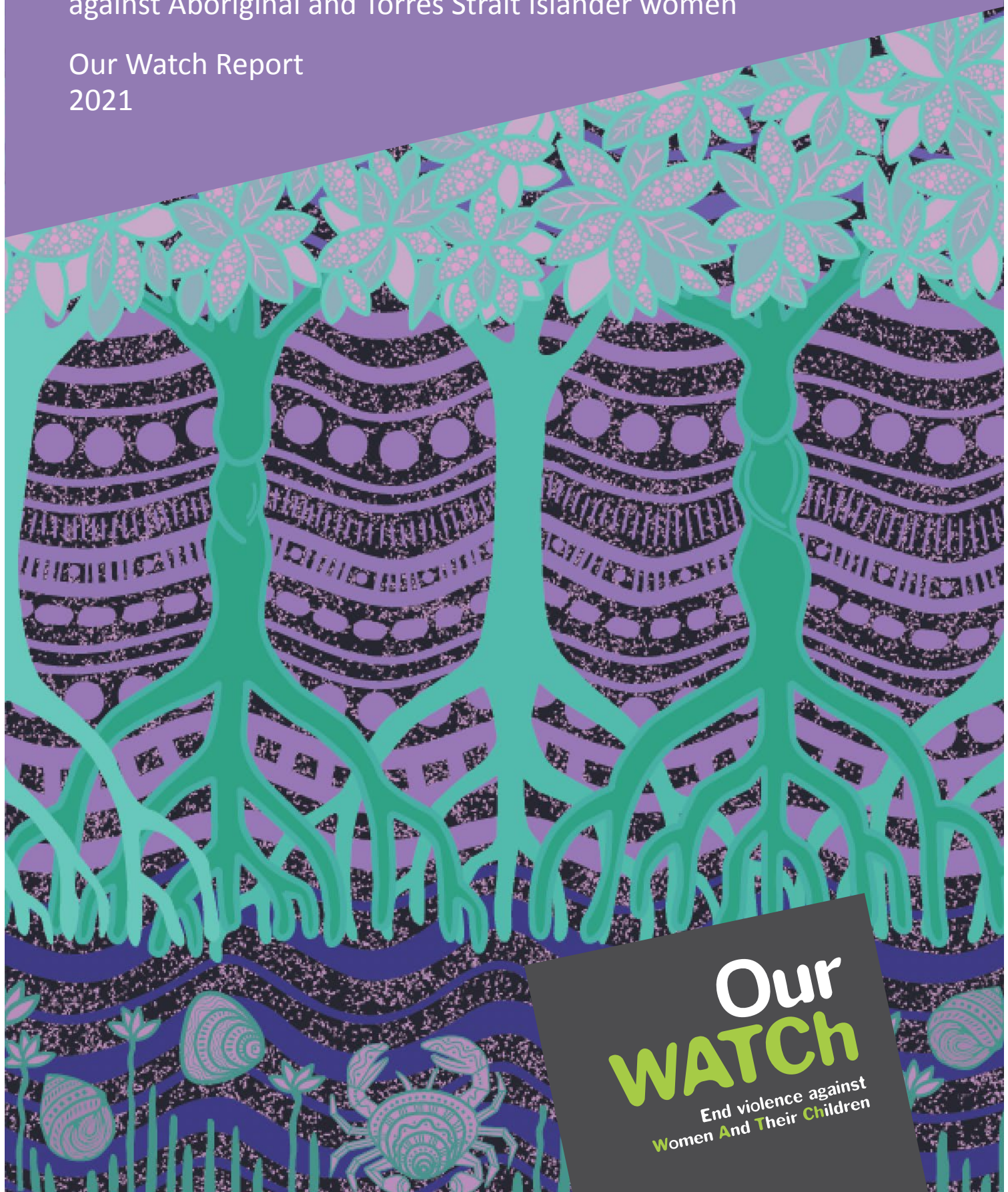


A national responsibility

Actions towards reconciliation and preventing violence
against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

Our Watch Report
2021



Our
WATCH

End violence against
Women And Their Children

About the artwork

Mangroves (2019)

Artist: Tarsha Davis

Description by artist

I am a Kuku Yalanji woman from the Mossman region of Far North Queensland. This piece depicts the mangroves I grew up exploring with my family. I remember my Uncles taking us through as kids and showing us where to find and how to catch mudcrabs. The women in my family also loved showing us how to collect mussels, periwinkles and leave what's not good to eat.

I chose to paint *Mangroves* for the Our Watch [2020] Reconciliation Action Plan report because mangroves are resilient to the harsh coastal conditions, all the while protecting the coastline and nurturing life. In my personal experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are much the same. We are resilient to the constant ebb and flow that comes with intergenerational trauma and familial violence. We do what we can with the resources available to protect country and culture. We nurture life in our children, families and communities.

Artist bio

Tarsha Davis is a Kuku Yalanji woman from the Far North Queensland. She has spent the past ten years working in various support roles within Community Health Services and Youth Justice in Queensland. Tarsha's painting practice, contemporary and narrative in style, is an act of reclamation and an expression of her healing journey.

For more detail about *Mangroves*, see Our Watch's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Acknowledgment of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.

Acknowledgements

Our Watch pays tribute to all those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been working for many decades to end violence and to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. This is extremely challenging work that often goes unrecognised and unsupported, and we pay our deep respects to their ongoing determination and commitment and to the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

We also acknowledge the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have been speaking and writing publicly about gendered and sexual violence and calling for action for decades, as have numerous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and services.

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Message from the CEO

Our Watch's vision is an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence. For women to be safe, they must be equal. To achieve gender equality, we know we must challenge the historically entrenched beliefs and behaviours that drive violence against all women in Australia, as well as the social, political and economic structures, practices and systems that support it.

Not all women experience the impacts of gender inequality or violence in the same way. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. The national resource *Changing the picture* that we launched in 2018 tells us:

‘Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is not an “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem”. Nor should Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bear sole responsibility for addressing it. This violence is an Australian problem, and it is perpetrated by men of all cultural backgrounds. Preventing it is a national responsibility.’

Alongside gender inequality, we know racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation are drivers of these high rates of violence. In our work to prevent violence against women, we must address the intersecting forms of discrimination that combine with gender inequality – and this includes addressing the ongoing impact of colonisation and racial inequality.

This annual report, the first of three, provides a point-in-time capture of Our Watch's work to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. It was prompted by an open letter from Dr Hannah McGlade, Dr Marlene Longbottom and Dr Bronwyn Carlson expressing concern at the lack of public concern or response to the killings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and also prompted by the productive discussions that I and our then chair Natasha Stott Despoja had with these women.

We have listened to the concerns they raised, we have committed to act, and we will continue to listen to and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about our role in reconciliation and creating a violence-free future.

This report captures our projects, partnerships and work in 2021. While there are some things shared that show great promise there are also many areas where we know we can improve and do more. Our Watch staff are already using these learnings to improve or change our future work.

We recognise that Our Watch, as a national leader in violence prevention, has a responsibility to better support, create space for and amplify evidence-led prevention activity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-controlled organisations and communities. We also know this means our organisation needs to undertake a continuous journey of learning to be a non-racist and culturally competent workplace.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities know what is needed to prevent violence. They have been calling for collective action on this issue for decades. As a non-Indigenous organisation, Our Watch does not claim to have all the solutions, but we are listening and learning.

Our Watch commits to building on, responding to and amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to challenge both racism and sexism, to address the ongoing impacts of colonisation, and to strive to be genuine allies.

Patty Kinnersly
CEO



About this report

In the spirit of accountability and collaboration, this report outlines Our Watch's efforts to support and amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and individuals that are leading prevention work across the country. The report also details how, in our own workplace, as an organisation and as individuals, we are addressing and challenging the ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, men, families, communities, practitioners and organisations around Australia work and advocate to prevent violence and provide safe and respectful relationships, families and communities. Our role is to support, amplify and partner with them in their violence prevention work.

Positive outcomes in violence prevention require long-term work, regular evaluation, reworking of plans, ongoing and meaningful community input and commitment, and sufficient resources. In the following pages you will find information, stories and case studies that together illustrate some of the activities that Our Watch has participated in, supported, partnered with and funded.

Violence prevention work is challenging and there are multiple stakeholders and processes for sharing outcomes in a report like this. Guided by our partners, stakeholders and the communities we work with, some elements of our work are confidential and are not included in this report.

This report is informed by the following three key documents:

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2020, Our Watch launched our [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan](#), which commits Our Watch to 'take meaningful action to advance reconciliation' in ways that are sustainable and strategic and that 'move from safe to brave.'

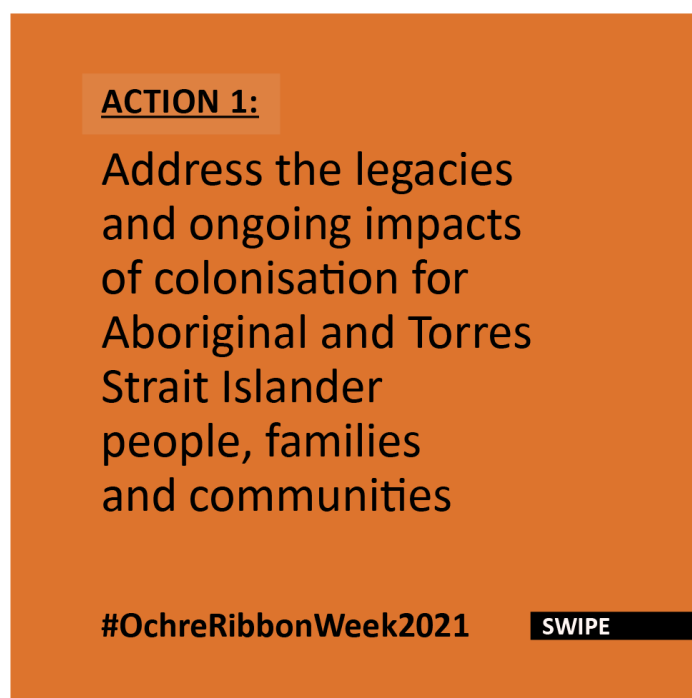
Based around the three core pillars of relationships, respect and opportunities, our Reconciliation Action Plan sets goals that enable and support our organisation to gain a deeper understanding of our sphere of influence and establish the best approach to advance reconciliation. For this reason, our earlier resource *Changing the picture* is central to our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Changing the picture (2018)

Responding to expert advice calling for a specific resource focused on the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, Our Watch launched *Changing the picture* in 2018. [Changing the picture](#) recognises that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is shaped by the intersecting drivers of gender inequality, racism, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation.

Our Watch recognises that *Changing the picture* builds on existing work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars, practitioners and organisations that have been speaking out, working and publishing in this field for decades. Seeking to amplify these voices, *Changing the picture* was guided by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group.

Figure 1: Our Watch Instagram post from Ochre Ribbon Week on actions required to end violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women



Change the story (2021)

[*Change the story*](#) is the national framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia. Revised and updated in 2021, it outlines the essential actions needed at all levels of society – from individuals to schools, workplaces to governments – to address the underlying drivers of gender-based violence, and to stop it before it starts. *Change the story* recognises the importance of addressing intersecting forms of discrimination, including racism, highlights how the ongoing impact of colonialisation intersects with gender to shape how violence is experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and identifies the type of preventative actions that are needed.

From Understanding to Action and Connected Communities – trialling new approaches to funding and partnering

Our Watch has run two programs, *From Understanding to Action* and *Connected Communities*, commencing in 2020, that have allowed us to fund, support, work closely with and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led violence prevention work. *Changing the picture* recognises that preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is a national responsibility and gives guidance and actions. The perpetrators of this violence, as is the case with non-Indigenous women, is overwhelming men known to the victims. In both cases, the perpetrators can be from any background, and include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and non-Indigenous men. Community-led activity – like that of *From Understanding to Action* and *Connected Communities* – draws on the principles for prevention in practice outlined in *Changing the picture*:

- self-determination: community ownership, control and leadership
- cultural safety
- trauma-informed practice and practitioner self-care
- healing focused
- holistic
- prioritising and strengthening culture
- using strengths-based and community strengthening approaches
- adapting to different community, demographic and geographic contexts
- addressing intersectional discrimination
- non-Indigenous organisations working as allies in culturally safe ways.

From Understanding to Action

Made possible through a donation from the Luke Batty Foundation, the *From Understanding to Action* initiative is focused on strengthening prevention knowledge and capacity through workforce development. Through the initiative, Our Watch partnered with three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led community-based projects: Thursday Island Community Justice Group, the Gamang Ngambaa Jiinda's Women's Group, and Strong Women Talking. All these projects are led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who best understand the impact of the intersecting problems of colonisation, racism and gender-based violence in their communities. Additional funding from Our Watch, and support and resources provided by a dedicated Our Watch senior advisor, have allowed for an expansion of these groups' work and an evaluation.

Thursday Island Community Justice Group (TICJG)

The TICJG is made up of community Elders and members from the Inner Islands of the Torres Strait, who also have connections to the Outer Islands and the Northern Peninsula Area. The partnership with Our Watch was designed to develop locally contextualised and culturally grounded services that incorporate violence prevention and intervention programs. In addition, the TICJG sought to better understand the different types and drivers of violence. Specific support was also provided to set up yarnning groups and interviews with key stakeholders working with the TICJG.

The remoteness of the Torres Strait poses a challenge, especially at times when violence occurs. While there are several well-attended services that support people who experience violence located on Thursday Island and the other islands, for people who use violence there is very little support.

Though remoteness is an issue, the imposition of the Western legal system has also disrupted local community responses that are focused on restoring community values through 'Ailan Kastom' (island custom; culturally grounded values and knowledge). In these circumstances the community was provided with access to resources and guidance on how to support both the victim-survivor and the person perpetrating violence.

The next stage of this program will include working with front-line staff in the human services sector, including health, education, child protection, police, law and justice corrections personnel, who provide support to Indigenous community members in the Inner Islands, to further improve local resources and services.

Gamang, Ngambaa Jiinda's Women's Group (GNJWG)

Working with local Aboriginal women within the Macksville, Stuarts Point, Eungai Creek and Scotts Head areas, Our Watch supported the development of GNJWG. The group was established through several consultations and yarn-ups within the Nambucca Valley community, Health NSW and NGO stakeholders. GNJWG provides a safe space for local women.

The group's aims were to empower these women by providing support programs. Working with a dedicated Our Watch senior advisor, a series of initiatives were co-designed that enable women to come together as a community to share stories and provide guidance. Activities include: cultural workshops for young mothers; support to undertake training through TAFE to become job ready; arts and crafts workshops; and spaces that enable women to connect and heal on Country.

GNJWG would like to 'build on this space to educate women about primary prevention and incorporate those conversations into their cultural activities'. Future aims of the group, which Our Watch assisted in designing, include continuing to develop a process of support and referral for women who may be at risk of or are currently experiencing family or domestic violence.

Unkya Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), based in Macksville, NSW, is the broker for the women's group, and assists with venues, food and transport.

Strong Women Talking

Strong Women Talking is a 'grass roots movement' led by Sono Leone, aunties and sisters in the Brisbane region which provides a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to learn more about different forms of abuse and the cycle of violence, and to empower and equip them with tools to be able to heal from trauma.

In 2020, Strong Women Talking was funded by Our Watch to develop and deliver a digital campaign based on the drivers of violence linked to colonisation, lack of gender equity and the need for culture and respect. Work with Strong Women Talking focused on two-way learning between this organisation and Our Watch staff. The campaign, drawing on *Changing the picture*, developed seven digital posters featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in community, reinforcing the cultural practice of respect for women and children.

The posters were launched at the Wunba Barangaman (Open Thinking) conference in November 2020. The photos were also exhibited at the *In Her Hands* Exhibition at AFTM Gallery & Studios in Brisbane in December 2020.

In addition to this digital campaign continuing, a new website for Strong Women Talking (featuring this campaign) is being developed, and a comprehensive evaluation of the project, focused on how to extend the impact and uptake of *Changing the picture* and these resources, is being undertaken.

Figure 2: Campaign poster from partnership with Strong Women Talking



Connected Communities

Palawa Rullanih (Strong Men), South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC)

The SETAC Palawa Rullanih (Strong Men) Program and Our Watch worked together through the *Connected Communities* project. This project has been made possible through funding from the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*. Located in Southeast Tasmania through the Strong Men project, SETAC is delivering a series of workshops that aim to empower and educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and non-Aboriginal male partners of Aboriginal women to have resilient, respectful and positive relationships with their partners and families.

SETAC identified, co-designed, implemented and evaluated the primary prevention activities as part of the Strong Men project. Our Watch's partnership role was to provide capacity building and support to assist SETAC to drive this work.

Our Watch's support included:

- catch-up and reflection sessions
- tailored training and support in learning how to use Our Watch resources
- facilitating communities of practice with external experts and practitioners
- mentoring and professional development.

As a result, six workshops were delivered to community in 2021, with SETAC noting that they were able to broaden their networks and strengthen community ties.

'The Our Watch funding has created a space for men to connect and lead the way in preventing violence in the community.'

– Program participant

Some feedback for the project team members was that the format of Our Watch's primary prevention resources needs to better reflect different styles of learning. One partner noted that many community members would find it more useful and engaging to have illustration-intense resources. Taking on board this feedback, the project is currently developing illustrated resources with the community.

Working with community and learning across the country – supporting Fourth Action Plan community grantees

As part of the Fourth Action Plan to reduce violence against women and their children, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services allocated \$8.6 million to fund 16 community-led prevention projects from 2019–2022 under the Community Grants Program. There are 15 organisations delivering these 16 projects across Australia, in a range of settings, including schools, faith communities and in the justice system, as well as in LGBTIQ+ communities and in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These grants promote intersectional, locally-embedded, context-specific solutions and strategies to combat diverse forms of violence against women and their children. Of these 16 projects, four are led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The Community Grants Program is structured by two similar but distinct funding streams:

1. *Community-led projects to prevent violence against women and their children*, which focuses on funding or engaging particular cohorts, groups or communities to lead prevention initiatives. \$6.139 million over three years was allocated to 13 organisations under this Community-led grants funding stream. This stream recognises that the nature, drivers and forms of violence vary depending on local community context.
2. *Men as role models for preventing violence against women and their children*. Over three years, \$2.471 million was awarded to three organisations under this funding stream. Projects deliver activities that involve men as positive role models to drive changes in the behaviours, attitudes or other social and cultural factors that contribute to violence against women and their children.

To ensure consistent and evidence-based design, implementation and evaluation across the diverse settings of this program, projects are required to align with:

- *Change the story: A shared framework for primary prevention of violence against women and their children*
- *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*
- *Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring.*

From late 2019 to mid 2022, Our Watch was funded by the Department of Social Services to support grant recipients to understand and apply evidence and best practice in design, implementation and monitoring of their prevention activities. The organisation was also funded to undertake a learning-focused evaluation at the project and program level. The organisations and individuals we worked with already have experience in preventing violence against women. These grants enabled the extension of some of these projects or aims. Our Watch has had the privilege and pleasure of working with these organisations over the past three years.

Our approach

Changing the picture has provided a consistent and shared approach to prevention across all of the community grants projects, and in particular aimed to ensure that we applied all of the principles in our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led projects. Our work has been tailored and varied but support across all projects has included:

- online workshops on *Changing the picture* and *Change the story*, designed to deepen understanding of primary prevention theory practice and evaluation
- tailored skill enhancement and training
- facilitating learning circles and fostered a community of practice – as culturally safe environments, these places of reflection brought together practitioners and community members from across different projects to enable the sharing of learnings and experiences
- developing an evaluation guide for partners and providing support to implement an evaluation of the project
- facilitating the sharing of 100 resources.

Principles of learning

Our Watch has an ongoing commitment to listening and being led by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is a key element of culturally appropriate and respectful learning and is emphasised and promoted in all Our Watch partnerships. Feedback from Aboriginal community controlled organisations who were funded to undertake activities suggests that local community members shared their own examples of what gender and race drivers of violence look like for them, which added further nuance to those drivers identified in *Changing the picture*. The result of this process is that Our Watch gained deepened knowledge by learning about the context and issues shaping prevention work in different communities. It also made the resource more relevant for these communities.

Reflective practices and implementing *Changing the picture*

Regular review and reflection is key to the constant improvement and growth of Our Watch as a culturally competent organisation. A staff member from Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation, one of the Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that received funding, noted that one of the strengths of the Our Watch partnership was the reflective approach of the Our Watch project team to ensure we were on track implementing the *Changing the picture* prevention principles.

‘ . . . You have a greater impact than you realise . . . Our Watch’s team approach has been incredibly refreshing. The sharing of your knowledge and facilitation of others with knowledge with genuine reflection and insight has been very much appreciated.’

– Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation staff member

Publications, participation in conferences, and advisory groups

In 2021, the Our Watch team participated, presented and hosted a number of conferences, advisory groups and events, and published relevant work. However, as COVID-19 was a barrier for in-person events, we were not as active in this area as in the past.

Some key examples include:

Change the story (2021)

In 2021, Our Watch launched the second edition of *Change the story*, our cornerstone framework for a coordinated, nationally consistent approach to primary prevention. In recognition of the disproportionately high rates and severity of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Our Watch amplified the importance of an intersectional approach to Australia's prevention efforts. This includes incorporating the evidence from *Changing the picture*, addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation, and using decolonising approaches when partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Promotion of the second edition of *Change the story*

To mark the launch of the revised edition of *Change the story*, Our Watch developed a series of videos which ask experts in the prevention of violence against women about primary prevention and how they have used *Change the story* in their own work. These videos were shared across Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

As part of Our Watch centring the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Shirleen Campbell (Co-Coordinator, Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group) was one of five experts featured in the videos. The other experts were Dr Emma Partridge (Manager, Policy and Evidence, Our Watch), Dr Michael Flood (Associate Professor, Queensland University of Technology), Bridget Eltham (Senior Policy Analyst, Family Safety Secretariat, Department of Communications, Tasmanian Government) and Jen Hargrave (Senior Policy Officer, Women With Disabilities Victoria).

'People will say colonisation is scary stuff to talk about, but it's also educating ourselves and educating non-Aboriginal people as well, because this is our women and our girls and our children that we have to start looking after and making sure that they're having that respectful relationship as well.'

– Shirleen Campbell

Changing the picture integration forums

A series of Our Watch forums commenced in 2021, designed to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations from around Australia all working on the prevention of violence. The first forum took place in December 2021, with representatives of 28 agencies and organisations from across Australia attending. We were honoured to have June Oscar, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, as keynote speaker to present on the background to the [Wiyi Yani U Thangani](#) report (Australian Human Rights Commission 2020).

Further forums are planned for June and August 2022.

Conference presentations, training, advisory groups, and events

Presentations, training and events in which Our Watch participated in 2021 included:

- The 17th Annual Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum: Growing Stronger (Brisbane, May 2021). Our Watch presented on the work of its Emerging Practice team. Sono Leone from Strong Women Talking presented on the organisation's partnership with Our Watch and how the principles from *Changing the picture* are embedded in this work.
- The Community Respect Equality (CRE) Summit (Geraldton communities, 2021). This included a presentation on *Changing the picture*. Feedback from Aboriginal Elders at the summit was that the content helped to inform their panel discussion and provide clear messaging to the community that calling out violence against Aboriginal women is everyone's job.
- The Strong Women for Healthy Country Network Forum (Banatjarl, Northern Territory, 2021). Our Watch hosted a *Changing the picture* workshop and also supported a women's leadership and governance workshop. See [Strong Women for Healthy Country Forum 2021 report](#).

In 2021, Our Watch also partnered with the Wheeler Centre and hosted two online events:

- [Future Voices: Decolonising Australian Media](#): a panel discussion featuring scholar Dr Chelsea Watego, journalist Bridget Brennan, CEO of Strong Women Talking Sono Leone, and Our Watch panel moderator Karla McGrady. Following the event, journalist Amy McQuire later wrote a piece that reflected on media reporting, which is now included with the online materials.

'Aboriginal women who are victims of violence are often re-victimised in media representations following their deaths.'

– Amy McQuire

- [Rewriting Masculinity: Larrikins, Power and Accountability](#): a panel discussion that showcased how changing men's behaviour is key to preventing violence against women. The panel included Shaun Braybrook, the general manager of Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place. Braybrook noted in the forum how his organisation brought together issues of men's violence and racism to assist men to 'understand their cultural pathways'.

As part of our broader work to engage media with the aim of better reporting on violence against women, Our Watch worked with the Walkley Foundation to deliver a Fellowship program for journalists to develop their capacity to report effectively on violence against women. In 2021, three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander journalists – Bridget Brennan, Laura Murphy-Oates and Rachael Hocking – were appointed as fellows. More broadly in media, the Our Watch team delivered newsroom training on reporting on violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and *Changing the picture*. This training was delivered to *SouthWest Times* in Western Australia, as well as to SBS, *Crikey* and *The Mandarin*.

The Our Watch team also participated in the Knowledge Circle advisory group for research work, led by Professor Bronwyn Carlson and Madi Day, which was part of the ANROWS (Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety) project to explore [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to domestic and family violence and sexual assault](#).



Our Watch Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

Separate but connected to the work listed in previous sections, Our Watch has also focused on implementing the first year of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, published in 2020. Below is a summary of key activities that pertain to commitments within our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, published in 2020. Below is a summary.

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Coordination of the Our Watch Reconciliation Action Plan has taken place through the cross-organisational Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. This working group is comprised of representatives from across the organisation, including at least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff member.

Opportunities, employment and procurement

Employment

Our Watch has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development framework that includes a tailored mentoring and professional development program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

In 2021, Our Watch had:

- three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including for two identified roles
- two Aboriginal Board members
- one Aboriginal ambassador.

Procurement

Our Watch is committed to using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisations and businesses to supply key goods and services.

In 2021, services supplied under this initiative included Welcomes to Country and cultural training workshops. Additionally, our project partners have also utilised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled businesses. For example, Strong Women Talking, our project partner in the *From Understanding to Action* project, contracted all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the project, including the digital web designer, communications contractor, photographer, and presenters at the 2020 conference.

Internal learning

In 2021, Our Watch supported non-Indigenous staff to increase their understanding and amplify recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights, and the impacts of colonisation and racism, through cultural learning. This included:

- compulsory intersectionality training included in organisational induction (five sessions delivered in 2021)
- information and direction giving to managers and staff on how to incorporate Reconciliation Action Plan and *Changing the picture* KPIs into annual performance plans, with specific direction based on job role and seniority
- attendance at the 2021 Australian Reconciliation Convention to meet delegates (1,500 attendees) from other organisations who have an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Taking an organisational position on significant issues

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan, we committed to investigate the development of organisational positions on significant issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which align with *Changing the picture*. In 2020, we undertook internal and external consultation on the significance and approach of Our Watch taking a public position on the 26 January issue. This work, which took place from late 2020 and through 2021, resulted in the publication of a clear and strong statement, social media activity that educated the general public on the issue of 26 January, and [an op-ed from our CEO](#) published in *The Age* on 25 January, 2022.

Cultural safety

In 2020, Our Watch undertook an external review of cultural safety in order to benchmark our current situation and to guide our future work to promote cultural safety.

In 2021, we have focused on implementing findings into our practices through actions, including:

- improving our delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency training for new colleagues as part of their induction
- providing ongoing learning on cultural safety for existing staff, aiming for a minimum of 20% of existing staff attending per annum (at present approximately 80% of colleagues have completed at least one session)
- deepening the cultural safety of the recruitment process, including targeted advertising, using local community networks, and ensuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interviewers are on panels.

Supporting and celebrating

As well as listening to and co-designing our practices with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, an important part of our work is celebrating and recognising events and issues that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

Our Watch staff celebrate and show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through daily Acknowledgements of Country where we work, and by including a Welcome to Country for any large and public events.

During National Reconciliation Week 2021, non-Indigenous colleagues focused on expanding their knowledge of First Nations cultures, and took part in activities, including inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers to deliver events, and attending external learning seminars, workshops, documentary screenings and training sessions.

Our key National Reconciliation Week event saw us invite members of the Victorian Yoo-rrook Justice Commission to share with us their work 'looking into past and ongoing injustices experienced by Traditional Owners and First Peoples in Victoria in all areas of life since colonisation'.

Figure 3: Our Watch Instagram stories from Ochre Ribbon Week based on *Changing the picture*



Our Watch also used its platform and reach to recognise National Reconciliation Week publicly through the media, including supporting Our Watch Ambassador Jarman Impey, a Yorta Yorta man and AFL player, to publish an opinion piece in the *Herald Sun* on 1 June 2021.

'It's a national tragedy that continues to plague our communities – Aboriginal women have been calling for stronger action on this issue for decades.'

'But this is not an Aboriginal problem, it's an Australian problem.'

'To prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, we must address gender inequality, as well as the ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism on Indigenous people. We are not all starting from the same place.'

– Jarman Impey

Communications and media

Our Watch is committed to increasing the visibility of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women within the national conversation. In 2021, we focused on meeting our Reconciliation Action Plan actions using our marketing, media and communications functions to create awareness and drive change.

Media

Throughout 2021, Our Watch used media releases as well as opinion pieces and requests from media for commentary to both raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Coverage included:

- 9 Apr 2021: 'Women's safety advocates hope summit will highlight First Nations experience' in *National Indigenous Times*
- 31 Aug 2021: 'Patty Kinnersly: Covid's shocking toll on women' in the *Herald Sun*, *Courier Mail*, *Geelong Advertiser* and *Adelaide Now*
- 7 Sep 2021: 'What did Australia's women's safety summit achieve and what needs to happen now?' in *SBS News*
- 11 Sep 2021: Interview on *Saturday Breakfast*, broadcast across ABC Radio
- 24 Nov 2021: 'Our Watch: National framework focuses on ending violence against women' syndicated across Australian Community Media
- 24 Nov 2021: 'Revamped national framework to prevent violence against women' in *The Mandarin*
- 16 Dec 2021: 'Indigenous Australians make up almost 30% of hospitalisations due to domestic violence, report finds' in the *Guardian*.

'To prevent violence against First Nations women, we know the [national] plan must address racism and discrimination, and the multiple ongoing impacts of colonisation along with gender discrimination.'

– Patty Kinnersly

Additionally, Our Watch also published a number of news articles on its website:

- 8 Sep 2021: 'Our Watch statement on the National Summit on Women's Safety'
- 20 Dec 2021: 'New grants to break down barriers of violence against women in diverse communities'

‘No one is better placed to take the reins than community leaders themselves. We must listen, support and work with diverse communities.’

– Patty Kinnersly

Social media

Our Watch has a strong social media following across multiple platforms, and recognises that social media has an important role to play in: addressing – and raising awareness of – the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; building respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures and histories; and demonstrating support for significant issues and observances.

‘The continuing cycles of imprisonment, child removal and trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women often stems from their own experience of violence. Breaking these cycles helps prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.’

– Our Watch post on Instagram

Instagram

Our Watch used its Instagram account to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with several posts throughout 2021, including posts about the following:

- 27 Jan 2021: Recipients of 2021 Australian of the Year awards
- 12 Feb 2021: Ochre Ribbon Day
- 18 Feb 2021: Essential prevention actions to end violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (Ochre Ribbon Week)
- 26 May 2021: National Sorry Day
- 27 May 2021: Acknowledgment of Country (National Reconciliation Week)
- 28 May 2021: *Mangroves* by Tarsha Davis (National Reconciliation Week)
- 1 Jun 2021: Our vision for reconciliation (National Reconciliation Week)
- 10 Jun 2021: Jarman Impey (National Reconciliation Week)
- 4 Jul 2021: NAIDOC Week
- 7 Jul 2021: *Mums Can Dads Can* project by the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program (NAIDOC Week)
- 8 Jul 2021: Jarman Impey (NAIDOC Week)
- 4 Nov 2021: Drivers of violence against Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander women (produced by the Equality Institute and Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program, adapted from *Changing the picture*)
- 16 Dec 2021: Jarman Impey (*Doing Nothing Does Harm* campaign).

Figure 4: Instagram post highlight *Mums Can Dads Can* project by the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program



Facebook

Throughout December 2021, Facebook posts by Our Watch that raised awareness of preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reached 129,472 people, and were seen 138,050 times (impressions). The posts received 7,712 engagements, including 361 shares, 3,224 likes, 180 comments, 3,419 clicks and 529 photo views.

LinkedIn

Our Watch also used LinkedIn as a professional network to raise awareness of preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Posts by Our Watch on LinkedIn were seen 44,640 times, receiving 610 engagements.

Twitter

On Twitter, posts by Our Watch that raised awareness of preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were seen 193,959 times.

In September, Our Watch posted on Twitter about the severity of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and this resulted in [an article published on news.com.au](#) drawing attention to the disproportionate rates, complexity and severity of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, as well as Our Watch's content on the subject on the [Prevention Handbook website](#).

Google Ad campaign

Our Watch launched a Google Ad campaign in June 2021 to drive traffic to the '[Preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women](#)' page on the *Prevention Handbook* website. The ads were seen 49,919 times, resulting in 3,749 clicks through to the resource.

What's ahead for 2022?

In 2022, Our Watch will continue to build upon much of our work from 2021. The *From Understanding to Action* and *Connected Communities* projects are both due to come to an end in 2022; we look forward to potentially expanding this approach to partnership and community-led prevention practice through the next National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. As a national leader, we will be actively seeking opportunities to create space for and amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led work in this space, including through processes like the National Plan. We will also look to expand our approaches to ensuring a diverse and inclusive staff body at Our Watch, including furthering our work on cultural safety and recruitment and retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Included in this work is delivering extended training to managers and directors on cultural safety and intersectionality.

We are also looking to the next significant actions stemming from our Reconciliation Action Plan. In 2022, we will look specifically at endorsing the 'Principles for a Partnership-centred approach for NGOs working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations and Communities' (developed by APONT20 and ACOSS) and explore what the Uluru Statement from the Heart means for our work and how we might better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and stakeholders.

Central to all our work is *Changing the picture*; throughout 2022 this resource will continue to be integrated into our internal and external work, including being key to our organisational strategies and individual workplans.

Importantly, our aims and practices in this area will be shaped by the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, leaders and communities to this report. Our Watch needs to be open to hearing when we get it right and where we need to improve. Through this listening and learning, we can better tailor and improve our partnerships and internal learnings, all of which support our vision to create an Australia where all women and children are free from violence.

Listening and learning

Our Watch welcomes the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, leaders and communities to this report and the work it outlines. This feedback will be used to guide future work to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, as well as to inform future annual reports on such work.

Contact

Cara Gleeson
Reconciliation Action Plan Champion
Director Prevention in Action
Cara.Gleeson@ourwatch.org.au



