NGWALA
WILLUMBONG
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Reframing Homelessness Responses.

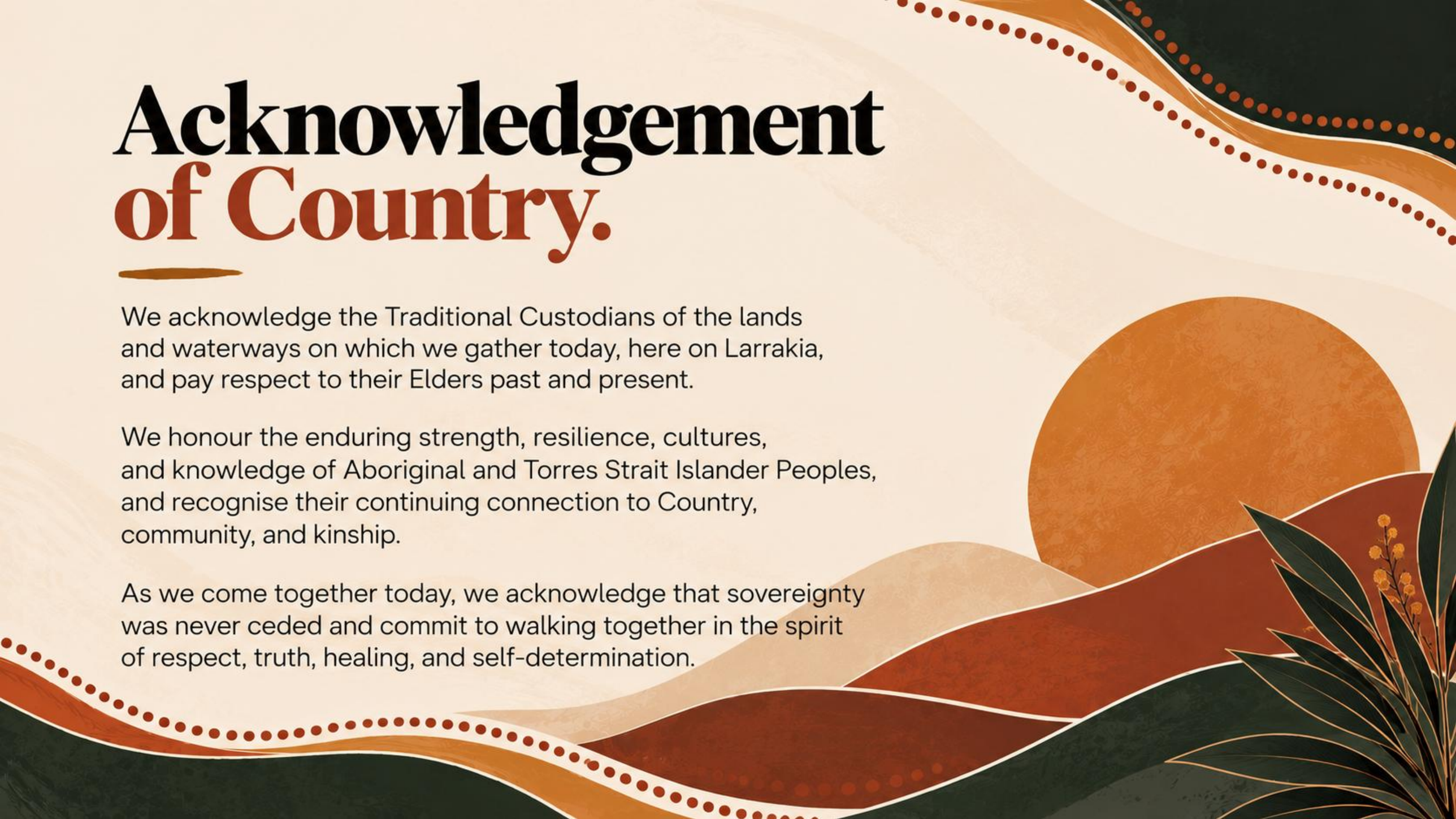
A FIRST NATIONS-LED
WELLBEING APPROACH
IN METROPOLITAN VICTORIA.

Acknowledgement of Country.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways on which we gather today, here on Larrakia, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We honour the enduring strength, resilience, cultures, and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and recognise their continuing connection to Country, community, and kinship.

As we come together today, we acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and commit to walking together in the spirit of respect, truth, healing, and self-determination.



Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation

NGWALA WILLUMBONG ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

For almost 50 years, Ngwala has walked alongside community across the Kulin Nations, responding to the needs of community as they have changed, while remaining grounded in culture, connection and self-determination.

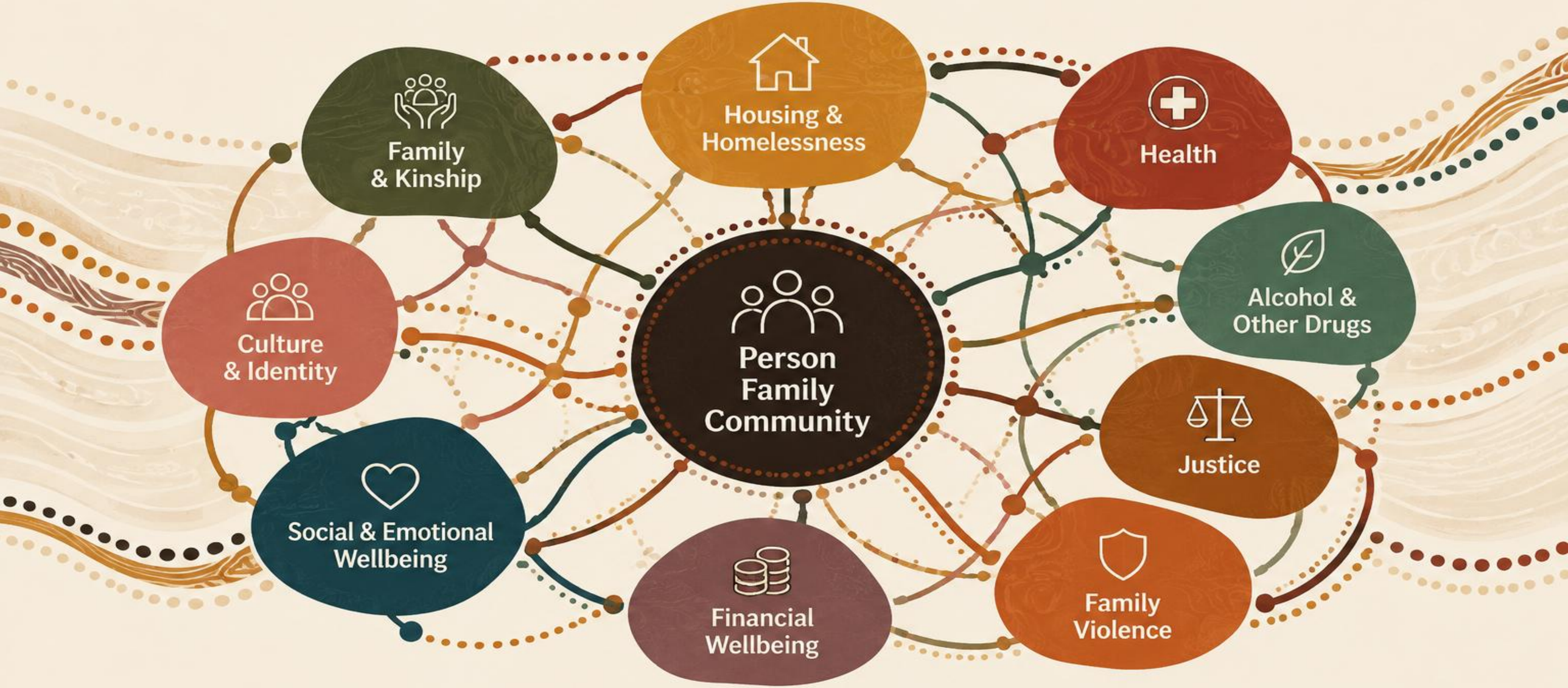
From our beginnings in Aboriginal alcohol and other drug support, Ngwala has grown into a multidisciplinary Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation working across our core business:

- Housing & Homelessness
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Public Intoxication Response
- Residential Rehabilitation Centres
- Family Violence
- Social & Emotional Wellbeing
- Health
- Youth Support
- Counselling
- Community Services

Our services have grown, but the principle has remained the same: community at the centre, with Aboriginal people leading the solutions.

Housing is never just housing.

People don’t experience their lives in programs, portfolios or funding streams.



Disrupting the narrative.

From deficit to self-determination.

At Ngwala, we've always challenged the way Aboriginal people and communities are talked about. Our Elders didn't see problems — they saw strength, knowledge and a community that deserved to determine its own future. That way of thinking continues to guide how we work today.

THE QUESTION SYSTEMS HAVE TRADITIONALLY ASKED:

"What problems does this person have?"

- Focused on individual deficits
- Fragmented service responses
- People seen as a case or referral
- Overlooks the impact of systems and history

THE QUESTIONS WE ASK:

What has happened?
Understanding the impact of history, systems, racism and intergenerational trauma.

What strengths already exist?
Recognising culture, identity, resilience, knowledge and lived experience.

What does culture, family and community mean to this person?
Connection to Country, kinship and belonging.

What matters to them?
Their goals, aspirations and what a good life looks like.

How do we walk alongside them to get there?
Bringing the right supports around the person, their family and their circumstances.

Deficit → Strength

Intervention → Partnership

Service-led → Community-led

Doing for → Walking alongside

System choice → Self-determination

Bringing the system around the person.

A multidisiciplinary, culturally grounded response that wraps around the whole person, their family and community — not just their housing need.



Our approach

- Person-centred and strengths-based
- Culturally safe and led by Aboriginal leadership
- Integrated supports across the whole of Ngwala
- Collaboration with community, partners and systems
- Self-determination — voice, choice and control

The person shouldn't have to navigate the system.
The system should respond around the person.

COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS

Metropolitan Aboriginal Homelessness Entry Point.

The Metropolitan Aboriginal Homelessness Entry Point is the first of its kind in metropolitan Victoria.

It is the tangible realisation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and the *Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria* — putting Aboriginal community control at the front door of the homelessness system.

The Entry Point gives us an opportunity to ask what it looks like when Aboriginal community control sits at the front door.

Not simply a culturally safe version of the same system — but a different way of thinking about the response.

It is the tangible measure against which community have come to expect the standard of service delivery.

It is the warm meal and hot cuppa in the coldest of days.

It is the three people who all come to greet you and see how you are when you walk into the office.



Measuring What Matters.

We need to measure the full value of community-led responses — both the tangible housing outcomes and the deeper impacts that community tell us matter.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

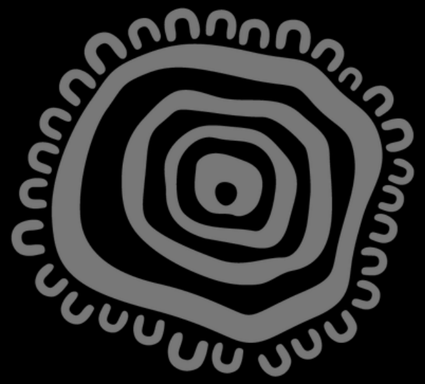
We must continue to count housing outcomes, sustained tenancies, referrals, service contacts and the measures required through our funding agreements.

DEEPER OUTCOMES

We must also recognise the things community tell us matter — feeling safe enough to come back through the door, reconnecting with family, strengthening cultural identity, having greater choice and control, and knowing there is somewhere you belong.

If First Nations communities are going to lead the response, then community must also have a voice in defining what a successful response looks like.

For us, that is what reclaiming the narrative is ultimately about: not only changing the way services are delivered, but changing who holds the authority to define what good looks like.



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