

Towards impact 2025–2028

STRATEGIC PLAN



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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

At Gladstone Women's Health Centre, we acknowledge and respect all First Nations peoples, including the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda Nations – the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live, work, and connect.

We honour the deep and enduring connection First Nations peoples have to this Country – to the lands, waters, skies, culture, kinship, and community.

We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present, and we particularly acknowledge and honour the wisdom, strength, and cultural leadership of First Nations women. As matriarchs, knowledge holders, and caregivers, you carry sacred responsibilities that sustain families, Culture, and Country across generations. Your voices, stories, and guidance are deeply valued by us all.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

From the heart, we express our gratitude for the trust placed in us through the sharing of knowledge and lived experience. We are committed to walking alongside First Nations peoples with respect and a shared commitment to truth, justice, healing, cultural safety, and self-determination.

Acknowledgement of communities we work with

Grateful thanks go to all the community members and organisations that have contributed to the development of this Plan.

Acknowledgement of our team

We thank our team and Board members who contributed to shaping this Plan.

Our reason for being

Our vision

Safety, health and wellbeing for everyone in Central Queensland.

Our purpose

Strengthening safety, health and wellbeing for women, young people, families, and communities through gender equity.

Our values

Our work is underpinned by six key values and a person-centred way of working shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 Our values

Our approach

We are a community-based organisation that's deeply connected to the people and places of Central Queensland.

The communities we serve are diverse and resilient, offering rich opportunities for tailored, place-based solutions that draw on their strengths and address specific challenges.

We listen closely to regional voices and work alongside local communities to respond to their needs. We provide safe and accessible services for all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQIA+ and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

We empower regional voices and initiatives.

Our work is built on a proud legacy of local women taking action to challenge inequity and strengthen health and support services for women and their communities.

We work to influence long-term and generational change by investing in prevention to avoid the need for crisis and intervention responses.

We facilitate integrated responses to the complex drivers of gender-based violence, fostering collaboration to drive meaningful change.

We work consistently to provide accessible and adaptable services.

We are committed to working closely with individuals from all backgrounds and identities who are affected by, recovering from, or at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence.

We take a health-centred approach to domestic, family and sexual violence.

We take a health-centred approach to domestic, family and sexual violence to foster a supportive environment that empowers people and communities to overcome stigma and promotes healing and recovery. Recognising domestic and family violence (DFV) and sexual violence (SV) as a health issue is essential in tackling the stigma associated with violence.

We work with men as allies to positively influence gender equity.

We are dedicated to collaborating with men as allies, harnessing their influence to promote gender equity and strengthen our communities. Together, we can create a positive impact and effectively address gender-based violence, fostering a culture of respect and support for all.

Our proud history and evolution

Over the last 32 years, Gladstone Women's Health has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of women in our community. Founded by a small group of committed nurses and concerned citizens, the organisation began with a vision to raise awareness of critical social issues impacting women and to improve access to support in regional Queensland.

From those beginnings, we have grown into the leading women's support organisation in the region — recognised for our innovative, community-driven approach to advancing safety, health, wellbeing, and equity. Over the decades, we have built and continue to build strong, inclusive services.

Grounded in the voices and lived experiences of women, we remain committed to adapting and expanding our services so that every woman, regardless of her background or identity, can access the support she needs to be safe, healthy and well.

We are a community-based organisation that works with communities across Central Queensland.

Our core activities include:

- integrated and collaborative service delivery in areas of safety, health and wellbeing
- awareness and education for whole of community influence and prevention
- sector collaboration and leadership to influence systems and structures to address gender inequities.

This strategic plan builds on our rich history of local women taking action to tackle inequities and respond to gaps in health services and support for women.

Our context

Everyone deserves the right to feel safe and to be treated with equality.

However, gender inequality persists, even in advanced societies like ours. It manifests within our communities and systems, contributing to domestic vulnerability and escalating the risk of gender-based violence.

Despite advancements in various areas, the situation is deteriorating rather than improving. Rates of domestic and sexual violence are on the rise, leading to devastating consequences for individuals and society.

Gender-based violence is a complex and pervasive issue, deeply entrenched in our social fabric. It affects individuals, families, and entire communities across generations.

Research indicates that women and children are disproportionately affected, with long-lasting repercussions on their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

Discriminatory attitudes and unequal power dynamics surrounding gender continue to perpetuate this violence, while social structures and systems often reinforce oppression, limiting access to safety, support, and justice.

Gladstone Women's Health is dedicated to working with communities to change the structures and systems that perpetuate gender-based violence with our vision being 'safety, health, and wellbeing for everyone in Central Queensland'.

What we heard from communities we serve

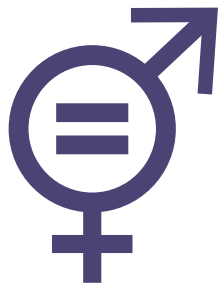
To support the development of the strategic plan communities shared:

- strong expectations that we lead around domestic and family violence (DFV) and sexual violence (SV) support with calls for: more counselling and support; housing and crisis support; accessible, inclusive, culturally safe, out of hours access to services
- high expectations and need across the community with 'lack of services and support' particularly in the health care system cited as the most pressing issue followed by 'lack of safe, secure and affordable housing' and 'high levels of DFV'
- strong support for more prevention and education work (stated by 88% of community survey respondents) including behaviour change, parenting, relationships, wellbeing, life skills initiatives

- the importance of work to engage men in creating change, however feedback reflected polarized perspectives on how
- they want to see collaboration, more communication/feedback and linkages to other services.

Key definitions

Gender equity and gender equality are not well understood terms. Gender equality is a fundamental human right that all people should be treated equally. Gender equity is the process to get us there.

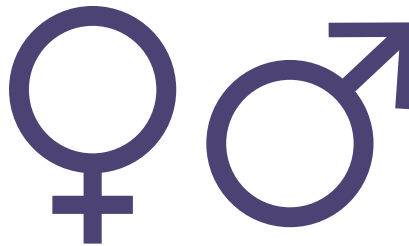


Gender equity

The process required to achieve gender equality. Gender equity acknowledges fairness of treatment for all people according to their respective needs.

Gender equality

A fundamental human right that all people should be treated equally across all aspects of society and should not be discriminated against based on gender.



Why we need to be louder than ever

To truly address this crisis, we need a systemic, sustained response – one that embraces all people, recognises intersectionality, and acknowledges diverse lived experiences in our work toward gender equity, healing, and lasting change.

While the DFV and SV workforce and service system has grown over the past three years, the sector cannot yet meet the needs of all people and our aspirations for the end of gender-based violence.

So, the challenge remains, to provide ongoing crisis support services to address immediate needs, and to invest in and work collaboratively to prevent violence so we can truly affect long-term and generational change in our communities, societal systems and structures.

This strategic plan embodies our commitment to fostering longer-term, social behaviour change by investing in prevention, ultimately reducing the need for crisis and intervention responses and supporting communities to thrive.

The impact we seek

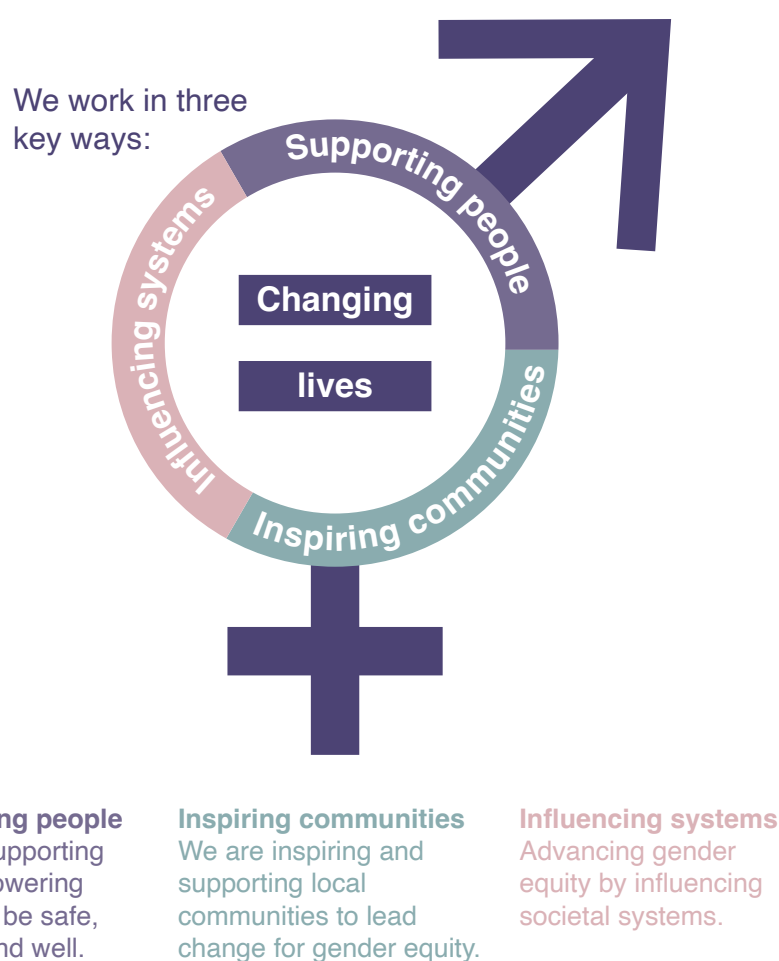
Our intended impact is visualised through the high-level theory of change in Figure 2 below. It illustrates how our work for gender equity leads to changes in people's lives, in communities and systems.

The context

Everyone has a right to feel safe.

Yet gender inequality exists in our communities and societal systems and is a driver of gender-based violence.

Women and children are most likely to experience this violence and the impacts are devastating.



Our impact

People in Central Queensland are safe, healthy and well.



Figure 2 Our theory of change

Our priorities – where we must put our effort

We are aligning our efforts with our purpose to maximize our impact, taking the lead in key areas while collaborating with the service sector, partners, and communities to address gaps and enhance the connectivity of services and responses.

Four strategic pillars drive our work across this strategic plan:

- **Changing lives:** Supporting and empowering people to be safe, healthy and well
- **Inspiring communities:** Inspiring and supporting local communities to drive gender equity
- **Influencing systems:** Advancing gender equity by Influencing societal systems¹
- **Strong organisation:** Sustaining a capable, connected and impactful organisation.



Figure 3 Four strategic pillars

Alignment with other key strategies

This strategy aligns with several external goals and strategies with many of our core services contributing to cross sector strategies spanning industry and regional development, disability and cultural diversity. They include but aren't limited to:

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals specifically 'Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.'
- Queensland Women and Girls Health Strategy 2032 including the five priority health action areas: Healthy lifestyles and bodies; Mental health and wellbeing; Sexual and reproductive health; Chronic health conditions and cancer; Health response to domestic and family violence and sexual violence.
- The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy (2016–2026) – Queensland Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.
- Queensland's strategy to strengthen responses to people who use domestic and family violence (2024–2028).
- The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.

¹ A societal system is a broad term describing how a society is structured and functions. It refers to the complex and patterned network of relationships, institutions, and structures that integrate individuals into a coherent whole, encompassing elements like government, culture, economy, and social norms that shape daily life and social cohesion.

Our Strategic Plan 2025–2028 – priorities on-a-page

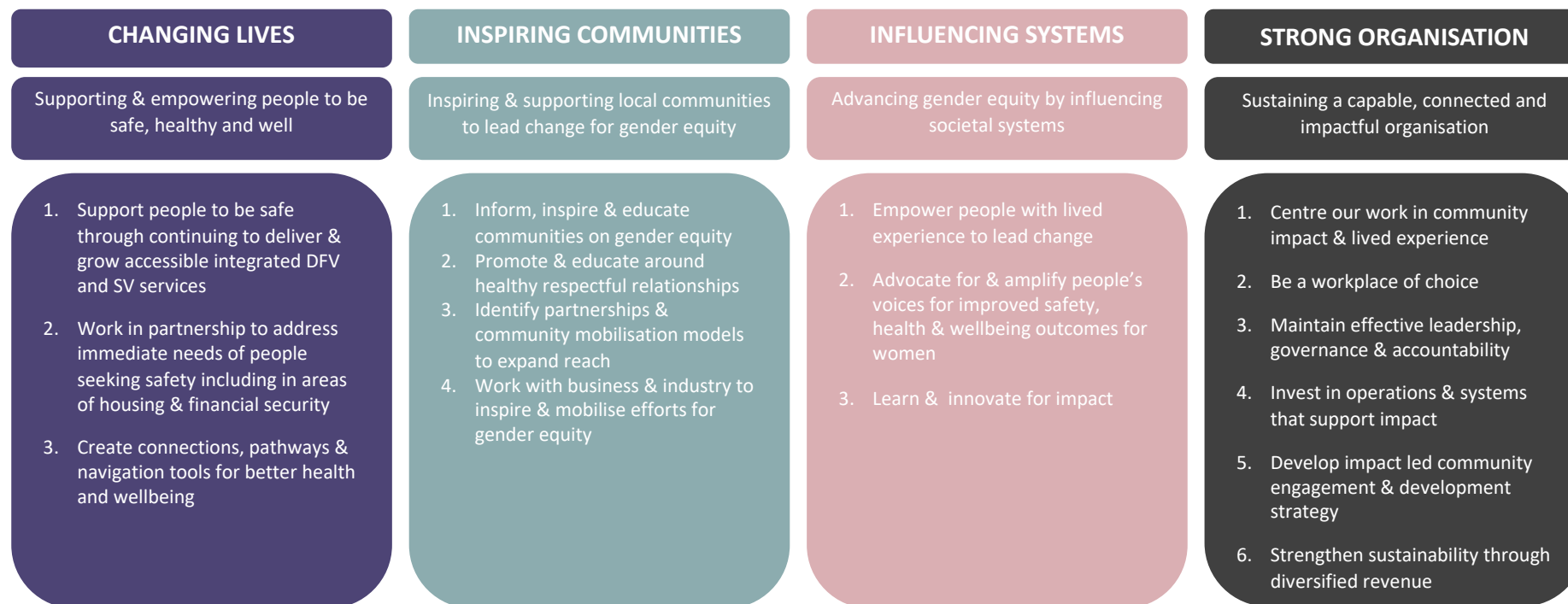


Figure 4 Strategic priorities on-a-page

Changing lives

Supporting and empowering people to be safe, healthy and well

This pillar focuses firstly on our work to ensure people who are affected by, recovering from or at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence are supported to be safe. Everyone has a right to safety, and it is a critical foundation for health and wellbeing.

It also focuses on our work to tackle inequities and respond to gaps in health and wellbeing services and support for women, young people, families and communities. This includes initiatives to create connections and pathways for women, young people, families and communities who are isolated or experience barriers to accessing health and wellbeing support inclusive of people with diverse backgrounds and identities.

Our intended impact

Progress under this pillar will see outcomes for people we work with including feeling heard, understood and supported.

They will have a better understanding of safety, risks and strategies, experience increased autonomy, self-determination and will be able to make informed decisions. They will be supported to access practical supports and through sector collaborations and partnerships will be supported to experience increased stability and improved safety.

People will be empowered with knowledge and skills to support their health and wellbeing and will have improved relationships in their lives.

Ultimately people will experience improved safety, health and wellbeing.

Our key priorities and actions

1. Support people to be safe through continuing to deliver and grow accessible and integrated DFV and SV services

- Maintain current counselling services and programming that support people affected by, recovering from or at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence.
- Grow access to our services responsive to need and opportunities including through exploring changes in operating times, new spaces and geographic reach.
- Invest in clinical governance and professional development to ensure high quality accessible service delivery aligned with our values.

2. Work in partnership to address immediate needs of people seeking safety including in areas of housing and financial security

- Establish and strengthen collaborative pathways for referrals to partner organisations and services, creating a comprehensive support network focused on safe housing and financial assistance.
- Continue to cultivate formal partnerships and alliances with initiatives, organisations, and services dedicated to promoting safety, health, and wellbeing.

- Conduct regular needs assessments for individuals seeking safety to identify emerging trends, allowing for the development of tailored collaborative support strategies.

3. Create connections, pathways and navigation tools for better health and wellbeing

- Design, deliver and/or promote health and wellbeing programs that connect women, young people, families and communities with a range of services, including mental health support, physical health resources, and wellness activities, ensuring access to holistic supports.
- Continue to organise community events, workshops, and forums that encourage participation and connection amongst community, health/service providers, and local organisations fostering collaborative and supportive networks (aligned to the community engagement and development strategy under strong organisation pillar).
- Create user-friendly platforms, such as online directories or resource hubs, that provide easy access to health services, support groups, and educational materials ensuring individuals can readily find and connect with the resources they need to enhance their health and wellbeing.
- Explore impact led health and wellbeing collaborations with communities including First Nations, LGBTQI+ and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Inspiring communities

Inspiring and supporting local communities to lead change for gender equity

This pillar focuses on our contribution to inspiring and supporting individuals, organisations and local communities to lead the change for gender equity. It includes how we engage communities across Central Queensland around the issues and how we support collective leadership and efforts to tackle gender inequality including gender-based violence in our region.

Communities across Central Queensland are diverse and unique and need tailored, self-determined and place-based responses to local issues. As a community-based organisation, being deeply connected with and listening closely to communities across our region is central to this pillar.

Our intended impact

Progress under this pillar will see us contributing to increased awareness and understanding of gender equity, DFV and SV and respectful relationships amongst the individuals, organisations and local communities we engage and collaborate with. With time we will see changes in mindsets, attitudes and behaviours that enable violence through challenging rigid gender roles and gender inequality. Progress will be reflected in new partnerships and collaborations for gender equity. People we work with, including those with lived experience, will be empowered to lead change.

Our priorities and key actions

1. Inform, inspire and educate communities on gender equity

- Support and empower people with lived experience to harness their voice and shape initiatives to inform, inspire and educate communities for gender equity.
- Foster allyship to combat DFV and SV and implement a campaign strategy that empowers men to become champions of their change.
- Investigate the need and opportunities for a gender equity focused education and collaborate to design/create educational delivery opportunities and resources for individuals and community groups, including schools, businesses, and sporting organisations.

2. Promote and educate around healthy respectful relationships

- Lead and co-facilitate high quality respectful relationship programs for young people/schools (e.g. Love Bites, Puberty Blues and Clues) ensuring programs can be delivered regularly and sustainably.
- Design or collaborate on strategic community campaign(s) around healthy respectful relationships.

3. Identify partnerships and community mobilisation models to expand reach

- Investigate establishing an alliance for gender equity that promotes respect and reduces gender-based violence.
- Grow our organisational membership model in ways that empowers our members to be champions for gender equity.
- Develop a skilled volunteering program to support individuals to engage in organisational activities, events and campaigns that promote gender equity.

4. Work with business and industry to inspire and mobilise efforts for gender equity

- Identify and engage business leaders around shared issues and opportunities for gender equity.
- Develop a shared value service offering for business and a fee for service model.
- Develop a strategy for authentic partnerships that supports gender equity.

Influencing systems

Advancing gender equity by influencing societal systems

This pillar focuses on our work to influence systems and structures including policies, practices, resources and relationships for gender equity. It includes how we work with service systems, amplify the voices of women, young people, families and communities, especially those with lived experience, and advocate for improved safety, health, and wellbeing outcomes for all.

Our intended impact

Progress under this pillar will see partnerships and relationships of trust with us contributing to more integrated, person-centred service responses shaped by people with lived experience. We will be better harnessing evidence and amplifying voices of lived experience to influence change. Women, young people, families and communities, especially people with lived experience, will be empowered to influence and lead change.

Our priorities and key actions

1. Empower people with lived experience to lead change

- Harness the voices and lived experience of people and help to empower them to shape our position statements, system advocacy strategies and lead change for gender equity.

2. Advocate for and amplify people's voices for improved safety, health and wellbeing outcomes

- Promote enhanced safety, health, and wellbeing outcomes by advocating for systems and structures that support gender equity more effectively.
- Further strengthen relationships within the local service sector by fostering networks through interagency meetings, encouraging information sharing, and leading initiatives that advocate for best practices and integrated service responses.
- Leverage data, insights, and experiences from our service delivery and community engagement to formulate position statements and actionable policy recommendations on critical issues.

3. Learn and innovate for impact

- Create advocacy and prevention agendas for individual, community and system level changes.
- Actively use data, insight and lessons learned from our work and partnerships, alongside evidence-based best practices, to gain a deeper understanding of systemic barriers and enablers of gender equity in our region, driving innovation for meaningful impact.
- Continue to learn from and strengthen integrated service response partnerships, exploring key initiatives and programs such as embedded roles and cross-functional service delivery models.

Strong organisation

Sustaining a capable, connected and impactful organisation

This pillar provides the foundation for achieving our intended impact. It focuses on strategic priorities for sustaining a capable and impactful organisation that is connected to the communities we serve.

Our intended impact

Progress under this pillar will be reflected in a strong capable team, high staff retention, a positive workplace culture and effective operations, governance, leadership and accountability practices. We will have a diversified revenue model that allows us to innovate for community impact. We will measure, communicate and grow our impact so that our work continues to make a meaningful difference.

Our priorities and key actions

1. Centre our work in community impact and lived experience

- Review our theory of change and co-design an organisational monitoring, evaluation, learning and design (MELD) framework that is trauma-informed, strengths-based, and shaped by community voice.
- Regularly report on impact to our stakeholders, communities, and partners.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan to guide culturally safe and respectful engagement.
- Develop and implement a communication plan that reflects our values, amplifies lived experience voices, and strengthens trust.
- Review brand to ensure our identity authentically resonates with the communities we serve.

2. Be a workplace of choice

- Foster a positive workplace culture that values wellbeing, collaboration, and diversity, underpinned by person-centred and trauma-informed leadership.
- Continue to invest in team training, capability, and retention initiatives that recognise and build on individual and collective strengths.
- Contribute to growing the sector workforce through student placements and investment in skilled volunteers.

3. Maintain effective and accountable leadership and governance

- Continue to attract, develop, and retain a skilled board and experienced leadership team.
- Invest in governance and business practices that are transparent, ethical, and inclusive.
- Maintain robust financial, risk, audit, and performance monitoring systems.
- Establish the voice of the Council of Women as a recognised and respected platform for advocacy and influence.

4. Invest in systems and operations that support impact

- Consolidate and streamline systems for capturing and managing client, partner, relationship, feedback, and outcome data to inform learning and improvement.
- Ensure our operations are efficient, adaptable, and responsive to community needs.

5. Develop an impact-led community engagement and development strategy

- Develop, implement, and evaluate a robust, adaptive, and impact-led community engagement and development strategy to include events, promotions and strategic presence focusing on DFV and SV awareness and prevention initiatives that strengthen community connection and align with the 'Inspiring Communities pillar'.
- Use purposeful, environmentally friendly merchandise and marketing to share strategic messages.
- Represent the organisation at events and forums that are strategically aligned with our vision, purpose and priorities.

6. Strengthen sustainability through diversified revenue

- Develop a revenue diversification and investment strategy that aligns with our values and supports innovation for community impact.

Our values in action

Our values	What it means for us
 Safety	We create safe, supportive and connected environments, physically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally, that provide trauma-informed, person-centred services.
 Respect	We respect the diverse experiences, identities and choices of people we work and collaborate with.
 Accessibility	We commit to providing accessible and adaptable services that enable equitable and respectful access to trauma-informed care to support safety, health and wellbeing.
 Collaboration	We embrace collaboration as a powerful tool to amplify our collective strengths and achieve impactful change together.
 Empowerment	We work with individuals and communities, especially those with lived experience, to drive change through a person-centred, strength-based approach.
 Equity	We advocate for fair and just treatment for all peoples according to their respective need and right to self-determination.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Domestic violence	Violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour by a current or former intimate partner, this includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal, social, economic, spiritual and/or technology-facilitated abuse.
Family violence	Violence, abuse or coercive control by a family member, including a partner, ex-partner, sibling, parent, child or extended kin.
Intersectionality	An analytical framework which aims to make 'visible to institutions of power the way that social identities intersect' (Khatun 2017).
Gender equality	A fundamental human right that all people should be treated equally across all aspects of society and should not be discriminated against based on gender.
Gender equity	The process required to achieve gender equality. Gender equity acknowledges fairness of treatment for all people according to their respective needs.
Sexual violence	Any sexual behaviour or act perpetrated against a person's will that occurs when a person has been forced, coerced or manipulated into unwanted sexual activity or acts. This includes rape, sexual assault, unwanted touching, sexual harassment, image-based abuse, and coercive sexual acts.
Societal system	A societal system is a broad term describing how a society is structured and functions. It refers to the complex and patterned network of relationships, institutions, and structures that integrate individuals into a coherent whole, encompassing elements like government, culture, economy, and social norms that shape daily life and social cohesion.
Women's health and wellbeing	Gender equality is intrinsically linked with health and wellbeing. Gender-based discrimination and violence significantly impacts the health and wellbeing of women and girls, as well as their families.

