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## Context

Yuwaya Ngarra-li (Yuwaalayaay languages), is the partnership between the Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) and UNSW Sydney.

The purpose of the Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partnership is for DEG and UNSW to work together to improve the wellbeing, social, built and physical environment, and life pathways of Aboriginal people in Walgett through collaborating on evidence-based programs, research projects and capacity building, and to evaluate this as a model of CommUNITY-Led Development.

The Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partnership at its core is about doing things differently, and is guided by the following questions:

What would it look like for a university to partner with an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation (ACCO) in a way that is truly community-led?

What does it look like for a place-based and community-led initiative to influence thinking, policies and practices far beyond its own geography?

How can we ground and grow our collaboration through embedding key values and principles?

What does it mean to respect Indigenous sovereignty in how we research, learn and evaluate?

These questions draw us to how we do our work, not only what we do. This orientation has required the Yuwaya Ngarra-li team to invest in and experiment with a range of processes and practices to centre community leadership, catalyse systemic influence, and enable ongoing learning and adaptation.

This paper details the core practices that Yuwaya Ngarra-li has adopted, developed or tested since 2018. Some of these were already practices of Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG), some have emerged from the work, and others were introduced and supported through Yuwaya Ngarra-li's work with advisors, in particular May Miller-Dawkins.

Reflecting on the set of more than 400 outcomes Yuwaya Ngarra-li has contributed to since 2020 at community, place-based and systemic levels, it is clear that these practices have been critical enablers of that impact and influence.

## Elder engagement and Elder s Council decision - making

The most significant commitment of Yuwaya Ngarra-li is to be community-led. For us, this means that its work is led by the vision and governance of the Dharriwaa Elders Group Elders Council (ie directors). Other key principles that underpin Yuwaya Ngarra- OL ¶ V D S S U R D F K D U H E H L Q J F X C connected, strengths-focused, rights-based and holistic.

Yuwaya Ngarra-li's vision and long-term goals were set by the Elders and have remained constant as the work has developed. While strategies, approaches and focus may shift, the work is always contributing to the following long-term goals:







Another point of regular reflection is to look at progress against goals and also to understand Yuwaya Ngarra-li's contributions by reflecting on the analysis of outcomes on an annual basis.

The development of these practices of coaching and advising has led directly to thinking around an



the community frontline of change to step back and see progress over time as well as enabling the whole team to reflect in a grounded way on which actions and processes are enabling impact.