

# IWDA STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING REPORT 2021-2022

May 2023

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## Executive Summary

### Purpose

Financial year (FY) 2021/22 is the second year of programming under IWDA's *Strategic Plan 2020-2023*. This plan clearly differentiates between IWDA's work and the work of the Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) that we fund and support. The plan articulates five strategies to define and guide our work (Box 1).

#### Box 1 IWDA strategies

We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access

We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality

We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation

We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence

We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning process for the second year of the Strategic Plan aimed to address four enquiry questions, as defined in the Strategic Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework:

1. To what extent have we delivered against our strategies or objectives?
2. What outcomes were achieved?
3. Where did we fall short, and why?
4. In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

This report draws on information gathered against these focus questions to present a succinct overview of IWDA's performance in FY2021/22. The report is designed to share key learnings from our successes and challenges, to articulate the value we provide as an organisation, and, ultimately, to guide our future work.

### Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by IWDA's Core MEL Group, composed of members drawn from across the organisation. Core MEL Group members facilitated a reflection session with each team. Data from these internal reflections was triangulated with external stakeholders' perspectives, as gathered by external consultants through structured consultations with IWDA partners, donors, peer organisations and other external stakeholders. Operational data, including our progress against the IWDA Operations Plan, provided further insight into how we have performed as an organisation.

Preliminary findings were developed by IWDA's ex-Senior Program Quality Manager and validated with the Core MEL Group. Summary findings were then shared at an all-staff reflection workshop, with staff invited to identify tangible ways in which IWDA could adapt in light of evaluation findings. The Core MEL Group and the new Senior Program Quality Manager synthesised staff members' contributions with validated findings to generate operational and strategic recommendations on how IWDA can adapt.

### Key learnings

**We performed well against the objectives of the Strategic Plan** despite ongoing COVID-19-related disruptions, notably office closures and staff illnesses, as well as the need to balance time and energy between progressing both our Strategic Plan and our River of Change initiative to strengthen organisational culture. Actions taken to deliver on our ambitious strategic objectives for organisational

change are increasingly apparent across IWDA. In FY2021/22, IWDA progressed key elements of our Strategic Plan through investments in internal systems (e.g. Salesforce), programming (e.g. stronger funding pipeline, development of the Disability Inclusion strategy) and technical expertise (e.g. Equality Insights). All teams at IWDA contributed to the progress made against Strategic Plan objectives.

**Significant outcomes have been achieved across all five strategies** (Table 1). Of particular note are increased external recognition of our expertise and thought leadership in technical areas and feminist practice, renewal of our accreditation by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), and our internal structural changes to live our organisational values.

*Table 1 Overview of outcomes achieved in FY2021/22*

<b>Goal 1: Resource and contribute to resilient and vibrant feminist movements, primarily in the areas of: power leadership and civic space; freedom from violence; and gendered climate justice</b>
<b>Strategy 1: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access</b>
<p>IWDA distributed AUD\$4.8 million to women’s rights and feminist organisations. We maintained existing funded partnerships with 18 organisations and entered into new funded partnerships with three additional organisations, including an organisation of people with disabilities. We collaborated with partners to secure funding for partner-led programs, including one program where IWDA has a Fiscal Sponsor role.</p> <p>We drew on the advocacy skills of IWDA staff to provide significant advocacy accompaniment to partners. We also provided comprehensive accompaniment that contributed to strengthening the organisational capacity of our funded partners, including through support for organisational strategy, finance, and communications. IWDA’s partners report that they greatly value IWDA accompaniment, particularly our financial and institutional capacity support, and identify concrete benefits from IWDA accompaniment.</p> <p>IWDA leveraged our locational power to facilitate partners’ access to Australian and global decision-making networks, and amplified partners’ priorities in our own engagement with Australian political networks. IWDA has also brokered connections between partners to enhance partners’ organisational capacity and service delivery, particularly in the area of disability inclusion.</p>
<b>Strategy 2: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality</b>
<p>IWDA invested in making global feminist convenings more accessible to WROs in the Majority World,<sup>1</sup> particularly the Pacific. We supported national coalition building and strengthening among IWDA’s partners, and enabled the movement-strengthening work of the Pacific regional We Rise 3 Coalition. We shared and amplified expert advice on how to engage in collective action and feminist movement strengthening, including through launching the webinar series ‘Troublemakers: Courageous Conversations with Fiery Feminists’, which represents a new approach to linking IWDA’s programmatic, movement building, advocacy and communications work. We also promoted innovative approaches to research for strengthening feminist movements.</p>
<b>Goal 2: Promote systemic change towards gender equality for all</b>

<sup>1</sup> IWDA chooses to use the term ‘Majority World’ in place of ‘global south’, ‘developing world’ or ‘third world’, and ‘Minority World’ in place of ‘global north’, ‘developed world’ or ‘first world’. This is a political choice, as using this language demonstrates that ‘global south’ populations and cultures are in the global majority, thereby challenging the problematic hierarchies implied by other commonly-utilised terminology.

### Strategy 3: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation

IWDA made outstanding progress in our Equality Insights initiative, where we promoted political transformation towards gender equality together with technical innovation in gender data. We also made substantial contributions to the discourse on feminist foreign policy within Australia, and actively participated in discussions on feminist foreign policy to influence the discourse at a regional and global level. Through IWDA's work on feminist foreign policy, we used evidence and theory to enhance our thinking around how to translate knowledge to impact. This has the potential to inform our knowledge translation work more broadly. Our social media audiences continued to grow, and engaged strongly with IWDA's messaging on topics including gender data, feminist foreign policy, trans inclusion, and feminist movement principles.

### Strategy 4: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence

IWDA effectively leveraged our relationships and reputation to exert our influence across a broad range of interactions with the Australian Government. Our engagement with various decision-makers such as Ministers, politicians, bureaucrats and Ambassadors has influenced the Australian Government's position regarding Myanmar, foreign policy, and international development. IWDA continues to engage in politically sensitive collective advocacy towards the Australian Government regarding Myanmar. We engaged effectively with then Shadow Foreign Minister Wong before the May 2022 federal election, and continued to engage with Foreign Minister Wong's office following the change in government, as well as continued engagement with all political parties. IWDA also leveraged our accreditation with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action, to engage in collective advocacy with other ACFID-accredited non-government organisations. IWDA continued to build its momentum in movement strengthening and influence in regional and global fora such as the United Nations (UN) Generation Equality Forum, Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group of WOMEN7 (a satellite influencing group of the G7), Commission on the Status of Women, and the Asia Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue (AP4D).

### Goal 3: Build a resilient and relevant feminist organisation

#### Strategy 5: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

During FY2021/22 we achieved re-accreditation for the DFAT Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), a critical source of funding for IWDA. IWDA made further progress in securing grant funding for our work, by maintaining strong relationships with two longstanding funders and at the same time successfully pursuing grants from two new funders. We also piloted innovative funding models, targeting paid opportunities to share IWDA's substantial intellectual capital in ways that are aligned with our organisational values and vision. We exceeded our fundraising targets for FY2021/22 and refined our fundraising tools and tactics. Additionally, we finalised our River of Change strategy to strengthen IWDA's organisational culture. Steady progress was made against the River of Change action plan throughout the year to strengthen diversity, inclusion and wellbeing at IWDA.

Overall, considering **how our achievements in FY2021/22 align with the 3S Framework**: We 'stepped up' by providing thought leadership and backing ourselves as experts, strengthening our capacity to effectively influence stakeholders and decision-makers, proactively pursuing innovative resourcing strategies for feminist work, and maintaining a rigorously feminist approach to collaboration and partnership.

We 'stood with' our funded partners and other organisations by amplifying the voices of others and providing meaningful accompaniment support to enable women's rights organisations and other actors in feminist movements. Importantly, however, we received feedback from our funded partners and donors that – while in many cases our support was highly valued – we did not always clearly articulate our value-add to partnerships, and furthermore our value-add was not always recognised by our funded partners and donors.

We 'stepped back' by frequently deferring to the expertise and priorities of our funded partners and other local stakeholders – although we also received feedback that, at times, we had been overly directive. On multiple occasions, we also played a supportive role to help IWDA partners take the lead.

**There are some areas where we did not make hoped-for progress.** Several planned investments in strengthening IWDA's systems and processes were delayed due to competing priorities, including the need to focus resources on on-boarding new funded partners. Some staff strongly expressed a continued sense of overwhelming workload. Differences between teams in culture, ways of working and workflow were apparent, with staff in different teams reporting very different experiences of their year at IWDA. Gendered climate justice had been identified as priority thematic areas through which we could strengthen IWDA's work, however, we did not fully meet our change objectives.

**Both internal and external challenges contributed to the areas where we did not make hoped-for progress.** Externally, our work was impeded by the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, domestic and global backlash to women's rights and gender equality, and the challenge of supporting work in settings affected by economic, social and political upheaval, violence, and environmental disasters. Internally, staff movement substantially increased workloads, and there was a mismatch between our ambitious organisational change objectives and the resourcing required to deliver on these objectives. A positive finding of the FY2021/22 evaluation is that changes in ways of working and newly designed roles have reduced (although not eliminated) silos within IWDA, which had been identified as a key internal challenge in previous years.

## **In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?**

Strategic recommendations (Recommendations 1-5) were developed by the Core MEL Group based on a review of all evaluation data, and refined by the Leadership Team based on their knowledge of the organisation.

**Recommendation 1: Define IWDA's unique value-add in more detail.** We should more clearly articulate the full scope of our role and value proposition. We also need to strengthen our ability to mobilise the resources required to fund the full cost of taking a feminist, decolonial approach to our work, particularly through untied funding.

**Recommendation 2: Promote an organisation-wide approach to progressing IWDA's goals and strategies.** We should explore how IWDA can more holistically progress our organisational vision, recognising that many parts of the organisation can (and do) contribute to each goal and each strategy. We should identify how the existing work of each team can better support our three goals and five strategies. We should also review opportunities for deep cross-team collaboration.

**Recommendation 3: Lean into our growing strengths in thought leadership.** We should build our capacity to generate knowledge and translate knowledge to impact, not only within the Knowledge Translation team but more broadly across the organisation. We should continue to engage with diverse, innovative thinkers and amplify Majority World voices and expertise. In the short term, we should sustain our thought leadership in Equality Insights, decolonial and feminist approaches within

the Australian NGO sector and global convenings, and feminist foreign policy; alternate areas where we have a unique value-add may emerge over time.

**Recommendation 4: Explore opportunities brought by new approaches to convening.** We should explore opportunities for enabling experience sharing, convening and coalition building among IWDA's partners. We should also explore opportunities for IWDA, and our partners, to connect with organisations adopting innovative approaches to issues that are important to us. We should actively pursue opportunities to engage with diverse, highly skilled people and organisations, in order to develop and share best practices.

**Recommendation 5: Update IWDA's Strategic MEL framework as part of the process to roll and extend our Strategic Plan to 2025.** The current Strategic MEL framework is aligned with our Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The proposed rolling update to this Strategic Plan will require updates to the Strategic MEL framework. We should develop a MEL framework and process that better enables synthesis and critical reflection, in order to inform strategic (rather than operational) recommendations. For example, we should refocus headline indicators to the strategic level.

Additional, operational recommendations (Recommendations 6-9) were synthesised from the all-staff reflection on summary evaluation findings. These recommendations represent aggregated guidance from staff on how their day-to-day work should reflect the findings of the evaluation. A final operational recommendation (Recommendation 10) was developed by the Leadership team following their review of preliminary recommendations.

**Recommendation 6:** Continue to embed language, culture and ways of working that are aligned with IWDA's unique identity as articulated under the current Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation 7:** Maintain and strengthen our existing partnerships, and further enhance these partnerships through decolonial and feminist approaches.

**Recommendation 8:** Strengthen our organisational capacity for effective collaboration among IWDA staff.

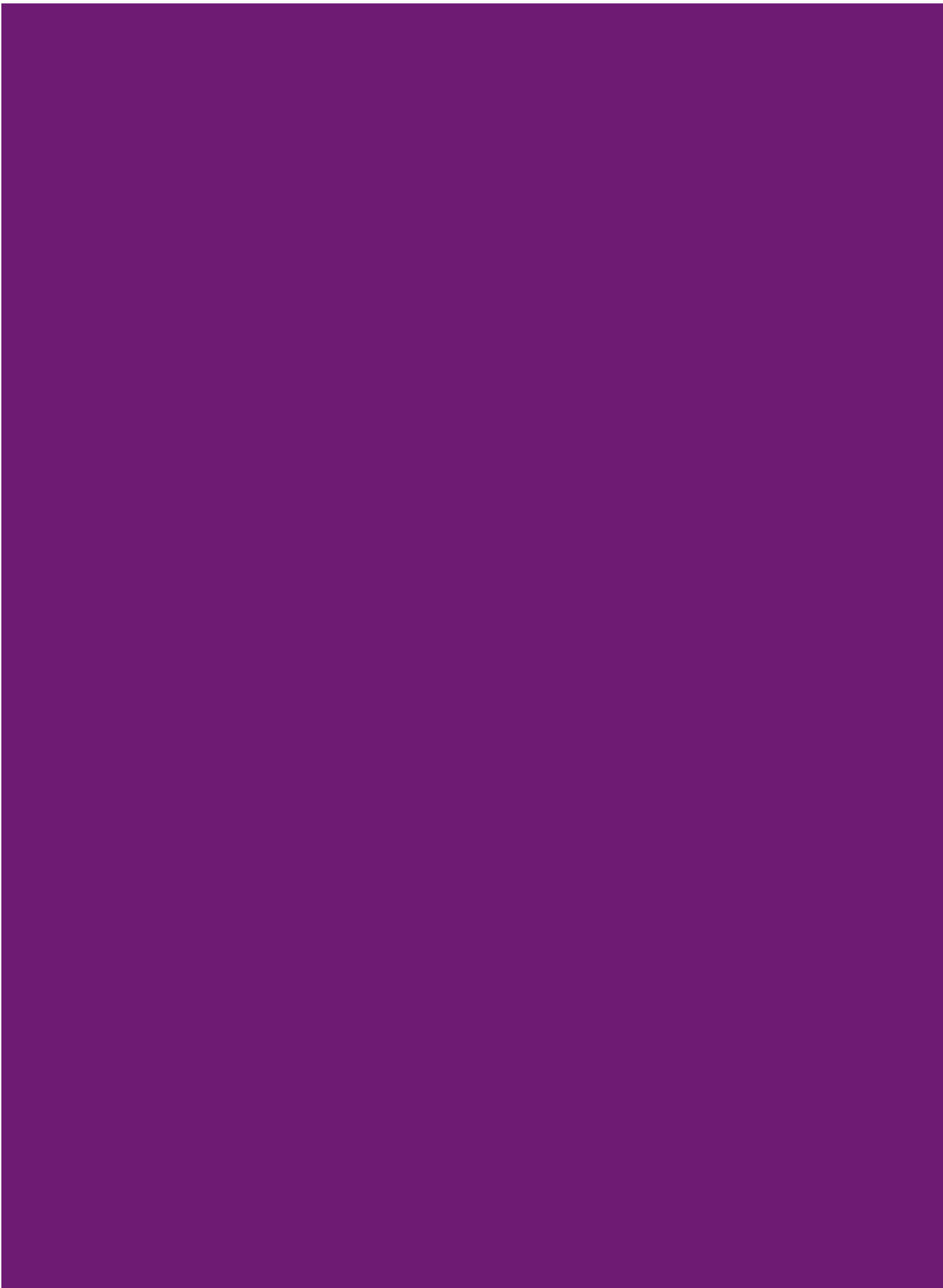
**Recommendation 9:** Sustain and strengthen our initiatives to improve staff wellbeing and ensure that IWDA lives our values.

**Recommendation 10:** Continue to explore and test our funding model and costing methodologies to better resource IWDA's unique value-add.

## **Next steps**

As part of the process to refresh IWDA's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to roll and extend it to 2025, findings and recommendations were shared with IWDA's Board in February 2023, prior to finalisation of this report and immediately preceding the 2023 Board Strategy Day.

At the Board Strategy Day in February 2023, the Board considered several analyses including a scan of the external landscape, financial modelling, and analyses designed to capture IWDA's unique value proposition. On the basis of all the information considered at the Board Strategy Day, the Board concluded that IWDA's refreshed Strategic Plan to 2025 should maintain the focus of the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023, and decided to increase investment in leveraging IWDA's assets and capabilities in order to better resource our innovative and effective ways of working.





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### Box 2 IWDA strategies

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## Methodology

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Preliminary findings were developed by IWDA's ex-Senior Program Quality Manager and validated with the Core MEL Group. Summary findings were then shared at an all-staff reflection workshop, with staff invited to identify tangible ways in which IWDA could adapt in light of evaluation findings. Staff members' contributions were synthesised with validated findings to identify operational recommendations for how IWDA can strengthen implementation of our current strategies. Additionally, the Core MEL Group and the new Senior Program Quality Manager identified several strategic recommendations emerging through a reflection on all evaluation data.

## Question 1: To what extent have we delivered against our strategies?

Financial year 2021-22 has been a period of consolidation of investments in internal systems, programming and technical expertise, and a strengthening of IWDA's identity under its current Strategic Plan. Significant achievements have been made despite the organisation continuing to manage the challenges of COVID-19 disruptions, notably office closures and staff illnesses, and investments of time and energy for 'River of Change' activities to improve organisational culture.

All teams at IWDA has succeeded in making significant progress against objectives of IWDA's three-year Strategic Plan, and IWDA is recognized by partners and external stakeholders as a high-performing organization that brings to its partnerships *"intellectual heft, specialist knowledge and technical skills, useful resources and content expertise."*<sup>2</sup> Formal external recognition was demonstrated in the 2021 Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Awards presented to IWDA nominees: Sir Ron Wilson Human Rights Award to Women's League of Burma, and the Outstanding Contribution to the Sector Award to IWDA's long term staff member, Jo Crawford.<sup>3</sup> IWDA's funded partners described 'how exhausted and overwhelmed they felt over the past 12 months with the multi-layered and intersecting issues of COVID-19, political wars and tension, backsliding of women's rights, [and] diminishing of women's rights movements...' but they noted 'the ongoing and constant support IWDA provides to its partners despite their situations and changing contexts.'<sup>4</sup>

A snapshot of key quantitative data for each of the five strategies is included below, including annual targets when available. Qualitative examples of outcomes achieved under each goal are included in Section 2. See Annex A for the collated headline indicators for FY20-21 as outlined in the Strategic Plan MEL Framework.

### **Strategy One: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access**

- IWDA exceeded its target for funds released to diverse women's rights organisations; \$4.79m released (target \$4.5m), supporting 21 women's organisations.
- 4584 donors (individual and philanthropy) contributed \$2.57 million in funding
- Four donors (individual, philanthropy, government, multi-lateral, business) provided multi-year funding
- 169 accompaniment activities were delivered to IWDA partners

### **Strategy Two: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality**

- 178 convenings were supported

### **Strategy Three: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation**

- 57 knowledge products were produced
- 237 'uptake, use and advocacy activities' were conducted by IWDA – these are actions that support or enable stakeholders to use information produced, or data collected, by IWDA

### **Strategy Four: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence**

- IWDA contributed to 9 multilateral forums

<sup>2</sup> Interviewee, IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Nov21.

<sup>4</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Partner Perception Review.

- 30 solidarity actions were supported by IWDA

**Strategy Five: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice**

- 7 tied funders supported IWDA’s work, providing \$8.59 million of funding throughout the year
- The number of regular givers was 1030, short of the 1300 target
- 21 of 52 (40%) IWDA staff identified as Women of Colour,<sup>5</sup> including one staff member who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- The rate of employee internal fill was 19%, exceeding the 15% target, and the rate of employee retention was 79%, just above the 75% target.

IWDA’s Operational Plan identified 39 key deliverables for FY2021/22. Two thirds of these deliverables were either achieved or had satisfactory progress (Table 2). One third of our planned deliverables were not progressed; unsatisfactory progress was made against nine deliverables and a further four deliverables were reassessed throughout the year and removed due to capacity challenges.

*Table 2 Progress against key deliverables in the FY2021/22 Operational Plan*

20	Completed
6	Low exposure (on track to be achieved with minor delays; or part of a multi-year investment with satisfactory progress made in FY2021/22)
9	Medium or critical exposure (unsatisfactory progress and/or outcomes not achieved)
4	Removed

<sup>5</sup>Update: Four of ten (40%) of Board members identified as WoC; two of five (40%) of the Leadership Team identified as WoC; seven of 20 (35%) of the Senior Leadership Group identified as WoC; fourteen of 32 (43%) remaining staff identified as WoC.

## Question 2: What outcomes were achieved?

Key outcomes achieved under IWDA's three goals and five strategies are presented below, followed by a reflection on how our achievements in FY2021/22 align with the 3S Framework. These examples are only a few of IWDA's many achievements, and have been chosen to bring to life the high-level quantitative information and show mid-point outcomes against our Strategic Plan.

**Goal 1: Resource and contribute to resilient and vibrant feminist movements, primarily in the areas of: power leadership and civic space; freedom from violence; and gendered climate justice**

**Strategy One: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access**

**Money:** IWDA submitted its first annual report against the commitments made at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in June 2021. In FY2021/22, **IWDA directly distributed AUD\$4.8 million** to 21 women's rights and feminist organisations.<sup>6</sup> In addition to maintaining 18 existing funded partnerships, IWDA entered into three **new funded partnerships** with Brown Girl Woke (Samoa), Sista (Vanuatu) and People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI, Solomon Islands).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, IWDA collaborated with existing and new partners to **secure funding for partner-led programs**. This included the Equality Fund Catalyse Grant to support the Ta'ang Women's Organisation (TWO) in Myanmar, where IWDA holds a Fiscal Sponsor role.<sup>8</sup> IWDA has also taken on the role of Fiscal Sponsor in contracting PWDSI to strengthen the capacity of partners (such as Family Support Centre and Christian Care Centre) to improve the accessibility of their services for women with disabilities who have experienced violence.<sup>9</sup>

**Skills:** In FY2021/22, IWDA continued to draw on the advocacy competencies of our staff to provide significant **advocacy accompaniment** to partners. With support from a dedicated advocacy accompaniment grant from Foundation for a Just Society (FJS), IWDA collaborated in the advocacy efforts of Myanmar partner Women's League of Burma (WLB), and Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) and United Sisterhood (US) in Cambodia. As these organisations all have significant advocacy skills in-house, IWDA's role in accompaniment involved acting as an additional resource to partners, for example leading drafting of WLB's bi-monthly situation report, or supporting ad hoc requests for meeting briefs and speaking notes. Separately, IWDA provided technical support in advocacy to Wide Bay Conservation Association (WBCA) in PNG for their submission to the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (VAW) and climate change, to inform the report to be presented at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly.<sup>10</sup> IWDA also supported three of our partners to make written submissions to the PNG Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to advocacy, IWDA provided comprehensive accompaniment in **organisational capacity strengthening**, including through the areas of organisational strategy and sustainability, finance, communications, and monitoring and evaluation. For example, in Solomon Islands IWDA provided technical support to West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA) to develop its organisational

<sup>6</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>7</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>8</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>9</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>10</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>11</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

monitoring, evaluation and learning framework<sup>12</sup> and to Family Support Centre (FSC) to develop its Strategic Plan 2022-27.<sup>13</sup> The Partner Perception Review found that IWDA's **partners greatly valued IWDA's accompaniment**, particularly financial and institutional capacity support; this is consistent with feedback from partners from the previous Partner Perception Review for FY2020/21. Reflecting on their work with IWDA during FY2021/22, partners highlighted that *"our financial team needed a lot of support and IWDA was very flexible in providing this support even though they didn't have to"*.<sup>14</sup> Various partners reported that IWDA's accompaniment had enabled them to sustain their organisations' core business, maintain progress in project implementation despite the complex impacts of COVID-19, and meet the policy and reporting requirements of other institutional donors.<sup>15</sup>

**Access:** We leveraged our locational power to **facilitate partners' access to Australian and global decision-making networks**. We facilitated meetings between partner organisations, Australia-based diaspora networks, and Australian Members of Parliament (MPs).<sup>16</sup> We also opened up connections for partner organisations to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) through our discussions with former Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott Despoja and the Australian Ambassador to the UN, which will enable future engagement for partners with CEDAW.

We also **amplified our partners' priorities** in our own engagement with Australian political networks. For example, Cambodian partner RoCK identified an opportunity for IWDA to support RoCK's advocacy through our networks. At RoCK's request, we wrote to the Australian Consulate General in Geneva to request their support for the renewal of the mandate for the UN's Independent Expert on prevention of violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>17</sup> This mandate has since been renewed, with Australia's support, and the UN Independent Expert's subsequent January 2023 trip to Cambodia provided an important advocacy opportunity for RoCK.<sup>18</sup>

IWDA also **brokered connections between partners** to enhance partners' organisational capacity and service delivery, particularly in the area of disability inclusion. For example, IWDA continued to develop our partnership with the Inclusion Advisory Group of CBM to strengthen our approach to disability inclusion, and in FY2021/22 we built on this work to connect CBM with funded partners, particularly Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) and PWDSI.<sup>19</sup>

**Strategy Two: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality**

In FY2021/22, IWDA invested in **making global feminist convenings more accessible to WROs in the Majority World**.<sup>20</sup> We were elected to the Global Advisory Group for the upcoming Women Deliver conference, which will be held in Rwanda in June 2023.<sup>21</sup> As a member of the Global Advisory Group,

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<sup>12</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>13</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>14</sup> 2021-22 Partner Perception Review, p.4.

<sup>15</sup> 2021-22 Partner Perception Review, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>17</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>18</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>19</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>20</sup> IWDA chooses to use the term 'Majority World' in place of 'global south', 'developing world' or 'third world', and 'Minority World' in place of 'global north', 'developed world' or 'first world'. This is a political choice, as using this language demonstrates that 'global south' populations and cultures are in the global majority, thereby challenging the problematic hierarchies implied by other commonly-utilised terminology.

<sup>21</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb 2022, page 1

IWDA has provided strategic advice and input to co-design a conference that provides inclusive and effective convening opportunities. Additionally, we identified that the 2021 Generation Equality Forum did not have strong processes to engage WROs, particularly in the Pacific region. We therefore invested in making the Forum more accessible to organisations in our region, for example by providing regular updates and summaries to an email distribution list of 240 recipients, reducing the workload required for organisations to track and engage meaningfully with Forum activities.

We also supported **coalition building and strengthening among IWDA's partners**. In Solomon Islands, IWDA brokered a partnership between PWDSI, FSC, and the Christian Care Centre (CCC), strengthening the capacity of these organisations to integrate feminist and disability inclusive approaches. PWDSI has now been engaged to provide technical support to enhance disability inclusion within FSC and CCC, for example through disability inclusion audits of FSC and CCC offices and safe houses.<sup>22</sup> At a regional level, IWDA supported the **We Rise 3 Coalition**. IWDA enables the movement-strengthening work of the Coalition through providing funding and operational support for convening. In FY2021/22, a steering committee of representatives from Coalition partners' leaderships was established to support structured and inclusive decision-making given the expansion of the Coalition to six members.<sup>23</sup> The We Rise 3 United Nations Commission of the Status for Women (CSW26) side event was held in March as an online forum entitled 'Women of the Pacific: Policies to Practical Realities'. The panel was chaired by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) Executive Director with speakers from FemLINK (Fiji), Sista (Vanuatu), Brown Girl Woke (Samoa) and Voice for Change (PNG), and discussed how Pacific feminist organisations can respond to climate change and disasters in the region.<sup>24</sup>



*Image: Participants at the We Rise 3 Coalition retreat*

IWDA also shared and amplified **guidance on effective collective action**. We hosted a panel on collective action at the Research for Development Impact conference in July 2021. Panel members, including representatives from IWDA partner organisations United Sisterhood (Cambodia) and Brown Girl Woke (Samoa), spoke on the value of collective action and coalitions and shared reflections from

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<sup>22</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>23</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>24</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

their experience. Additionally, through Project Springboard we launched a suite of workshops and training for IWDA’s Plan Your Power toolkit, which includes guidance on engaging in joint advocacy.

Furthermore, IWDA enabled **dissemination of expertise on feminist movement strengthening** through a new webinar series, ‘Troublemakers: Courageous Conversations with Fiery Feminists’. The series is designed to showcase feminist trailblazers from the Asia Pacific in candid, no-holds-barred conversations on key topics relevant to movement strengthening. The two sessions released between March and June 2022 were with Virisila Buadromo and Zharin Zhafrael on Feminist Co-Leadership, and with Sanam Amin and Kate Lappin on Anti-capitalist feminism.<sup>25</sup> The ‘Troublemakers’ series represents significant progress for IWDA in **linking our programmatic, movement building, advocacy and communications work**.

We also promoted innovative approaches to **research for feminist movement strengthening**. IWDA hosted two stand-alone events at the Research for Development Impact Network Conference and contributed to two additional panels, to promote awareness of our Feminist Futures methodology.<sup>26</sup> The WEAVERS PNG program, with partners Wide Bay Conservation Association and Voice for Change included a component on research, which commenced in April 2022. The WEAVERS research methodology is modelled on IWDA’s former research ‘Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships’, including the use of a local research consultant and local steering committee to drive the project, with support provided by IWDA.<sup>27,28</sup>

## **Goal 2: Promote systemic change towards gender equality for all**

**Strategy Three: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation**

In FY2021/22, IWDA made outstanding progress in our **Equality Insights** initiative. Data collection was completed for the **first large-scale Equality Insights Rapid surveys**, conducted in Tonga and Solomon Islands. This is a substantial technical and logistical accomplishment – in Tonga, for example, IWDA collaborated with the Tongan Statistics Department to conduct nearly 6800 individual surveys from approximately 2275 households in order to generate nationally representative results.



*Image: Members of IWDA’s Equality Insights team with a representative from the Tongan Statistics Department*

Furthermore, we invested in knowledge translation strategies that actively **promote political transformation through the Equality Insights methodology**. For example, we launched a video articulating the importance of granular, gender-sensitive data (‘Our Data Demands’) and hosted a

<sup>25</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>26</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>27</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>28</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

lead-in event to the UN Generation Equality Forum highlighting the role of gender data in achieving gender equality. Our Equality Insights policy brief proposal was selected from over 800 submissions by the THINK20, a satellite influencing group of the G20 comprising think-tanks, research institutions and academia.<sup>29</sup> Equality Insights was also featured by the German foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in their advocacy targeting the G7, promoting the use of Equality Insights to support a gender-just recovery from COVID-19.<sup>30</sup> A key achievement for FY2021/22 is the EOIs received from three governments with a commitment to make Equality Insights data official statistics. This illustrates the robustness of the survey tool and value of this data as perceived by governments, and shows the shift from traditional poverty measures towards use of multidimensional, gender sensitive measures of poverty.

We also made **substantial contributions to the discourse on feminist foreign policy** within Australia. IWDA launched the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition (AFFPC) in December 2021, with 20 core group members, 25 endorsing organisations, and over 100 individual signatories demonstrating the breadth of support for feminist foreign policy in Australia. In FY2021/22 we launched the AFFPC Issues Paper series, which releases monthly papers by authors with expertise and lived experience exploring the practical challenges and opportunities of implementing feminist foreign policy.<sup>31</sup> We also wrote two think pieces on what feminist foreign policy could look like – in light of the conflict in Ukraine, and the China-Solomon Islands security pact – that were published in the highly-regarded and influential Lowy Institute blog *The Interpreter*.<sup>32</sup> In November 2021, IWDA met with then Shadow Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon Penny Wong to discuss the potential of feminist foreign policy for Australia. On the basis of this meeting, she then proactively sought out an opportunity to meet with IWDA and the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition (AFFPC) for a Roundtable to discuss the first three Issues Papers of the AFFPC (on feminist climate diplomacy, Indigenous foreign policy, and gendering the Indo-Pacific Dialogue). Furthermore, through participation in the Asia Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue (AP4D) IWDA secured the recommendation that Australia “[w]ork with Southeast Asia to co-create a feminist foreign policy agenda that identifies common goals and priorities that are relevant to the region.”<sup>33</sup> The AP4D includes respected, mainstream actors across defence, diplomacy and development, and the inclusion of feminist foreign policy as a credible policy option in these papers indicates significant progress in transforming discourse on this issue.<sup>34</sup>

IWDA also actively participated in broader discussions on feminist foreign policy to influence the discourse at a regional and global level. We co-led a side event on feminist foreign policy connected to CSW26, hosted jointly with Indian think tank the Kubernein Initiative and featuring speakers from Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Fiji and Australia. We also participated in the WOMEN7 (W7) Advisors Working Group on feminist foreign policy, contributing to the Working Group’s joint communique and implementation plan. IWDA supported dissemination of the communique and implementation plan in the lead up to the G7 Foreign Minister’s meeting in May and G7 Leaders’ Summit in June 2022, and facilitated connections to the G20 process where Australia is a member.<sup>35</sup>

A key achievement under Strategy 3 in FY2021/22 has been the **broadening of our thinking around how to translate knowledge to impact**. IWDA-led research into the processes through which

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<sup>29</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb22.

<sup>30</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>31</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>32</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>33</sup> <https://asiapacific4d.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Synthesis-Report.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>35</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.



countries have adopted a feminist foreign policy, completed in FY2020/21, “gave us evidence to think differently about the advocacy we were doing on feminist foreign policy”.<sup>36</sup> Guided by this evidence, as well as key concepts from IWDA’s Strategic Plan such as locational power and transformative discourse, in FY2021/22 IWDA’s Research, Policy and Advocacy team developed a theory of change to guide our advocacy on feminist foreign policy. In line with this theory of change, we expanded from primarily using formal policy channels to advocate for feminist foreign policy, to also focusing extensively on the groundwork needed outside of formal processes such as capitalising on the interest from an individual minister. As described by a member of the Research, Policy and Advocacy team, “[t]he way we were working two years ago [on feminist foreign policy] is very different to how we’ve been working in the last twelve months”.<sup>37</sup> This new way of thinking about knowledge translation was developed through IWDA’s work on feminist foreign policy, but has the potential to inform our knowledge translation work more generally.

Finally, IWDA’s **social media audiences** continued to grow across Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Our audiences engaged strongly with IWDA’s messaging on gender data, feminist foreign policy, trans inclusion, and our ‘Troublemakers’ series highlighting key feminist movement principles and strategies.<sup>38</sup>

#### Strategy Four: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence

IWDA effectively leveraged our relationships and reputation to exert our **influence across a broad range of interactions with the Australian Government**, with various decision-makers such as Ministers, politicians, bureaucrats and Ambassadors.

IWDA continues to engage in **politically sensitive collective advocacy towards the Australian Government regarding Myanmar**. IWDA engaged proactively with DFAT, which continued to strengthen our reputation with them as trusted interlocutors for this type of activity.<sup>39</sup> IWDA also continued to work with influential allies to build the visibility of its Myanmar advocacy asks and to help connect diaspora-led advocacy initiatives to Members of Parliament and other decision-makers. Alongside this, IWDA facilitated a session in the joint ACFID-ANU convened workshop on Myanmar around the longer-term priorities for advocating and implementing gender equality.<sup>40</sup>

We built on our work in feminist foreign policy to **engage effectively with the current Foreign Minister and her office**. As described above, IWDA and the AFFPC held a Roundtable meeting with then Shadow Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong to discuss the first three AFFPC Issues Papers on feminist foreign policy, including a paper on Indigenous foreign policy. Senator Wong subsequently committed to a First Nations foreign policy approach ahead of the May 2022 federal election, and her early engagements as Foreign Minister in May and June 2022 demonstrated a promising alignment with a feminist foreign policy approach, with a focus on listening and building relationships with the region. IWDA has continued to engage with Foreign Minister Wong’s office, including providing support on Senate Estimates Questions on the use of sexual violence in the Ukraine conflict.

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<sup>36</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>38</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>39</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>40</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.



*Image: Representatives of the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition meeting with then Shadow Foreign Minister Wong*

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action. IWDA leverages our identity as an ACFID-accredited non-government organisation **engage in collective advocacy with other Australian organisations engaged in international development**. For example, through the ACFID Gender Equality Community of Practice, the sector's collective group on gender equality, in FY2021/22 IWDA met twice with the head of DFAT's Gender Equality Branch to discuss the gendered impacts of COVID-19 in the region, and share learnings on effective gender programming. We also met with Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, where IWDA raised gendered climate justice, funding for feminist movements, and feminist and First Nations foreign policy.<sup>41</sup> Separately from our engagement with the ACFID Gender Equality Community of Practice, following the Federal Budget in late March 2022, IWDA undertook gender analysis of foreign policy and international development budget measures, as well as performance and spending reporting from previous years. This analysis was shared with key contacts in DFAT and the Australian international development sector, and influenced sector advocacy positions going into the federal election.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, IWDA led the development of ACFID's election platform paper on gender equality and international development for the May 2022 federal election.<sup>43</sup>

In FY2021/22 IWDA continued to build its **momentum in movement strengthening and influence in regional and global fora**. For example, in advance of the UN Generation Equality Forum held in Paris on 30 June-2 July 2021, IWDA supported a number of collective actions to try to influence the process to be more inclusive. Although these actions did not lead to hoped-for changes in the Forum process, they contributed to a well-resourced movement that was able to articulate the need for inclusion during the Forum. Additionally, IWDA's contribution to collective action through the Forum preparation and Action Coalition process strengthened the quality of our relationships within the global feminist movement and how we are perceived within this movement; at least 11 key stakeholders reached out to IWDA following the Forum.<sup>44</sup> Separately, IWDA participated in a small

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<sup>41</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>42</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>43</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>44</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

group of organisations meeting regularly with the Australian Office for Women in the lead up to, and during CSW. IWDA was one of only two organisations outside the National Women’s Alliances structure to engage with the Office for Women in this way. In our engagement, IWDA focused on connecting the key advocacy messages from global feminist movements to the Australian government. We also used the CSW thematic focus on climate change to strategically amplify messages from Pacific women.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned under Strategy 2 above, IWDA’s work in feminist foreign policy led to our representation on the Feminist Foreign Policy Working Group of WOMEN7 (W7, a satellite influencing group of the G7)<sup>46</sup> and our participation in AP4D together with key actors in defence, diplomacy and development in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>47</sup>

### **Goal 3: Build a resilient and relevant feminist organisation**

#### **Strategy Five: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice**

During FY2021/22 we undertook the process for **re-accreditation for the DFAT Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)**, a critical source of funding for IWDA. This was a significant undertaking that reviewed all aspects of IWDA’s processes. The feedback from assessors was very positive. They commented positively on the quality of IWDA’s staff, strategy and theory of change, partnerships, organisational MEL work, and documented financial procedures. In March 2022 the DFAT delegate approved IWDA for Full level accreditation, subject to a satisfactory six-month check of our work on disability inclusion. Following this check in September 2022, DFAT confirmed IWDA’s accreditation at the Full level.

IWDA made further progress in **securing funding for our own work** by building on successful grant implementation with established donors, making inroads with new donors, and further progressing our objectives for innovative funding models.

IWDA **maintained strong relationships with two longstanding funders**, DFAT and the US-based FJS, building on our record of successful implementation of DFAT and FJS grants and indicating that these two funders value IWDA’s approach and value-add. Grant funding awarded by DFAT and FJS during FY2021/22 included the DFAT Australian NGO Cooperation Program, Foundation for a Just Society ‘Movements and Voice for Equality (MOVE)’ 2022-23 valued at USD 1 million over two years,<sup>48</sup> an additional AUD\$190,377 from DFAT to support the ongoing program of Equality Insights work through the end of December 2022,<sup>49</sup> and a new contract with DFAT Myanmar Post.<sup>50</sup>

IWDA also made inroads with **new donors**. We successfully pursued new European Union funding to jointly implement a three-year AUD\$880,000 program to protect and promote the civil, social, and economic and human rights of people with disabilities in Solomon Islands.<sup>51,52</sup> IWDA’s increasing focus on relationships-based funding is also reaping benefits; for example, IWDA entered into negotiations with the MECCA M-Power Foundation via an introduction from Board Co-Chair Kerry Gardner, for a three-year grant.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>46</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb22.

<sup>47</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>48</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Nov21.

<sup>49</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>50</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb 2022.

<sup>51</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>52</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb 2022.

<sup>53</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2022.



Image: CEO Bettina Baldeschi at an event hosted by the MECCA M-Power Foundation

We began rolling out innovative funding models, targeting **paid opportunities to share IWDA’s substantial and well-regarded intellectual capital** in ways that are aligned with our organisational values and vision. IWDA’s expertise in organisational capacity strengthening was documented in a Feminist Organisational Capacity Strengthening toolkit and training package, which were used with the Equality Institute in a trial online workshop. Following the trial, the package was finalised and it is anticipated that future workshops in FY2022/23 will generate income through workshop fees.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the Plan Your Power toolkit and training package, launched in FY2021/22, is designed to share IWDA’s skills in feminist advocacy; a pilot one-day training generated AUD\$6,000 through 13 registrations.<sup>55</sup> Our Equality Insights initiative is also recognised by external stakeholders as valuable intellectual property. In FY2021/22, Oxfam Aotearoa began the process of contracting IWDA to use the Equality Insights survey to

support a baseline study of their five year, NZD\$10 million, multi-country program for additional data collection in the Solomon Islands.<sup>56</sup> IWDA also secured pro bono support to value of AUD\$60,000, via the Nous Community Partnerships Scheme, which was used to identify market opportunities for Equality Insights.

IWDA **exceeded our fundraising targets** for FY2021/22. A member of the Fundraising team characterised this past year’s performance as having “*smashed International Women’s Day and tax appeal targets*”.<sup>57</sup> We met our major gift portfolio target and secured two new multi-year funding commitments from major givers. Match giving day secured 100,000 pledges which helped to deliver a strong Tax Appeal result of AUD\$249,000 (against a target of AUD\$168,000). IWDA’s total fundraising income for FY2021/22 was \$1,812,636 (against a target of AUD\$1,627,750); this is similar to our typical annual fundraising income prior to COVID-19. We **refined our fundraising tools and tactics** to optimise results, in the context of ongoing changes in the fundraising landscape. Substantial time and effort were invested to implement the new Salesforce fundraising database. One area experiencing a decline in performance was direct mail donations; IWDA saw a 37% drop in direct mail donations, a drop shared across the market this end of financial year. Mail made up just 18% of Tax Appeal Income where it has previously been the majority, and going forward IWDA is looking at ways to optimise our mail channel in future campaigns. Strong tactical testing and changes, such as changing the signatory our Matched Giving email, resulted in email open rates as high as 43% and 3-5% click rate from our

<sup>54</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>55</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>56</sup> 2022-23 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

caseload segment of supporters.<sup>58</sup> The Fundraising team noted the important learnings drawn from our first campaign delivered under Salesforce, the International Women’s Day appeal, and a specialised digital consultancy to boost results and introduce new tactics which will further strengthen our fundraising in the future.

In FY2021/22, IWDA made substantial progress in our ongoing efforts to **strengthen our organisational culture**. Led by the People and Culture team, staff contributed to the co-creation of a ‘River of Change’ encompassing 60 short, medium and long-term actions to address the 12 organisational issues identified through focus groups in FY2020/21. The River of Change was finalised and presented back to staff in July 2021. Throughout FY2021/22, steady progress was made against the River of Change action plan. Key achievements included:

- Established confidential misconduct reporting app #NotMe;
- With the support of MindTribes, developed an updated Organisational Statement on Anti-Racism, designed a Diversity and Inclusion Network/Committee, and audited IWDA’s People and Culture policies;<sup>59</sup>
- Secured a five year extension of Equal Employment Opportunities exemption status;<sup>60</sup>
- Identified key issues underpinning systemic workload challenges, and targeted these issues through training sessions on topics including managing workload and setting boundaries and expectations;<sup>61</sup>
- Shifted almost all staff roles from fixed-term contracts to permanent positions;<sup>62</sup>
- Systematised induction and ongoing learning via the development of in-house e-learning materials for key compliance policies and processes with specific focus on cyber security, safeguarding and anti-fraud, and corruption, documentation of IWDA’s key training requirements throughout the employee cycle, and a new learning management software to enable in-house management of training modules in a simplified format.<sup>63</sup>

Over FY2021/22, the proportion of Women of Colour on IWDA’s Leadership Team increased from 20% (1 of 5) to 40% (2 of 5), while the proportion of Women of Colour on IWDA’s Senior Leadership Group increased from 23% (3 of 13) to 35% (7 of 20). An informal Women of Colour staff group provided important input into creating the River of Change and developing our Organisational Statement on Anti-Racism, and IWDA’s First Nations Justice Working Group delivered a comprehensive program of activities to celebrate NAIDOC Week which were well attended and well received by staff. To support our substantial program of internal diversity and inclusion work, we successfully pursued an AUD\$15,000 grant from FJS.

FY2021/22 also saw continued action to **strengthen disability inclusion** considerations across all of IWDA’s work. A cross-organisation working group was established and led the development of the first IWDA Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan (launched August 2022) which supports IWDA to mainstream disability inclusion across all our work, including our communications, advocacy and research work as well as programming.

During team reflections, staff provided feedback that during FY2021/22 there had been positive changes in team and workplace culture, including increased cross-team collaboration (e.g. through

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<sup>58</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2022.

<sup>59</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>60</sup> 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>61</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Feb22.

<sup>62</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

<sup>63</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2021.

Working Groups and activities that brought together staff with advocacy, programming and communications expertise), as well as positive changes in formal policies and procedures (e.g. changing the Australia/Invasion day holiday date, and increasing the proportion of full-time positions).<sup>64</sup> Staff also provided positive feedback on the level of trust placed in Working Groups and teams (particularly for finance, recruitment and fundraising within the Business Transformation team) to steer our organisation.<sup>65</sup>

The Leadership team noted that IWDA's commitment to organisational change throughout FY2021/22 had "*strengthened and stabilised workplace culture – it's a less volatile internal environment*".<sup>66</sup> Staff reported, however, that additional work is needed to further strengthen organisational culture, particularly to resolve the longstanding challenges contributing to heavy workloads experienced by some staff and to replicate the positive norms and practices from specific teams to the broader organisation.<sup>67</sup>

### How do our achievements align with the 3S Framework?

#### Step Up

IWDA's outcomes during FY2021/22 provide evidence that our organisation 'stepped up' into our role, as outlined in our Strategic Plan, in four key ways. First, we provided **thought leadership and were recognised as experts**. For example:

- External recognition of the value of the Equality Insights measure, and the robust nature of the data generated,
- IWDA's feminist foreign policy work, viewed by leadership as "*influential in moving the debate in Australia from controversy to legitimate debate*".<sup>68</sup> The Stakeholder Perception Review noted that 'The discussion around analysis, research and content knowledge was prominent in the interviews on the Australia Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition. All interviewees spoke of the strong intellectual contribution IWDA is making to instigating and leading the conversation on feminist foreign policy in Australia and the region. [...] One interviewee noted: "*I've been impressed with the professionalism and thinking. Quality and professionalism of communications and social media.*"'<sup>69</sup>
- Sectoral leadership in terms of our internal anti-racism work, influencing other ACFID members, and an awareness that "*People are looking to us for advice on how we went about this [River of Change] process*".<sup>70</sup>
- External stakeholder consensus about IWDA's strengths being "*high quality people and analysis*".<sup>71</sup> In response to the question 'what do you value most about IWDA's approach?' one interviewee said: "*That they're thinking about advocacy at different levels, and how to strengthen advocacy skills. Also, that they're thinking about regional groupings, and cross-*

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<sup>64</sup> Participant, 2021-22 IWDA Team Reflections

<sup>65</sup> Participant, 2021-22 IWDA Team Reflections

<sup>66</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Business Transformation Team, for example, have been able to successfully navigate the pressure of Salesforce implementation, and although pressure has been observed on the Equality Insights team, due to data collection training in the Solomon Islands and Tonga being held concurrently, the teams have shown a resilience that potentially indicates benefit from earlier IWDA investment through River of Change activities and effective management techniques by Leadership.

<sup>68</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>69</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.3.

<sup>70</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>71</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.2.

*country collaborations, like Cambodia and Myanmar. We're learning from IWDA about good practice in this area.*<sup>72</sup>

We demonstrated **increasing capacity to influence stakeholders and decision-makers**. For example:

- Staff working on the Equality Insights initiative used a new way of identifying potential partners, which allowed us to secure buy-in from government departments in two countries. Both countries committed to making Equality Insights data official statistics.
- Increasing sophistication of IWDA's messaging to supporters and the broader Australian public. The Communications team felt that IWDA's *"Outward facing communications is more intersectional, progressive and more aligned with its strategic plan."*<sup>73</sup>
- Engagement with Shadow/new Foreign Minister and more broadly with DFAT: *"placing ourselves as an influencer"* wherein IWDA has achieved *"significant recognition by significant players"*<sup>74</sup> on issues such as feminist foreign policy and the Myanmar bilateral program.
- Recognition of the varied roles IWDA plays with the Australian Government, navigating its roles in program delivery and advocacy, including advocating for the interests of IWDA's funded partners through activities such as contract amendments: *"IWDA's approach is often more politically and advocacy based than DFAT has appetite for. It's been easy to talk to them about that, and about what DFAT can and can't do. IWDA tries to straddle both program delivery and advocacy. IWDA tries to live its values which isn't always easy."*<sup>75</sup> IWDA's resourcing stakeholders themselves also recognised IWDA's 'skill in interacting with funders, and particularly in understanding the interests, needs and limitations of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).'<sup>76</sup> One interviewee noted: *"They are a feminist organisation that lives by its feminist values and comes to their downstream partners with a best practice feminist approach. Always ready to push back on donor ideas that won't be good for partners, won't suit partners. That can be challenging for donors, but it's good practice."*<sup>77</sup>
- Increased awareness of IWDA's role within the feminist movement, IWDA staff noted that *"Troublemakers a real game changer to bring to light our contribution to our role in the feminist movement. We are really well placed and seeing the strategic plan come to life."*<sup>78</sup>

We proactively pursued **innovative strategies to resource feminist work**. For example:

- Knowing the value and cost of IWDA's work, for example, a key achievement was voiced by the Equality Insights team who felt that this year they have a *"stronger sense of the significance of the [Equality Insights] work... Previously we were a term-taker – we had to agree to the terms DFAT set to keep the program alive. Now we can be more propositional with DFAT and ask for what we need."*<sup>79</sup> There is also increasing recognition of the importance of IWDA investing in bureaucratic relationships to continue to advocate for feminist organisations *"to be as well as to do"*,<sup>80</sup> for example by providing a 20% rather than 10% administration fee which represents the actual costs of delivering programs.

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<sup>72</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.4-5.

<sup>73</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>74</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>75</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>76</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>77</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>78</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>79</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>80</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

- Collecting evidence to inform future resource mobilisation activities, in particular by commissioning an external organisation to conduct a market scan and suggest market building principles to support the uptake of Equality Insights. The team noted that although *“It didn’t do everything that we wanted [it was] enough to give us an understanding of the data ecosystem and whether the ‘market place’ is or isn’t opened for new innovation.”*<sup>81</sup>
- Being innovative in terms of harnessing IWDA’s intellectual capital for resourcing feminist work: An external stakeholder noted *“We’re curious about feminist organisations trying to generate income, and it will be interesting to see how this will be perceived in IWDA’s relationships with the feminist ecosystem. Those learnings might be useful for other organisations.”*<sup>82</sup>
- Providing flexible funds for partners for emergency response, such as the WEAVERS program, but also noting a learning that in future IWDA needs to factor climate events into project budgets.

Finally, we maintained a rigorously **feminist approach to collaboration and partnership**. For example:

- Recognition by IWDA’s stakeholders of its ‘professionalism and engagement’, including *“mak[ing] sure everyone’s voices are respected and heard.”*<sup>83</sup>
- The Stakeholder Perception Report also found that ‘Almost every interviewee, unsurprisingly, talked about the overtly feminist lens and feminist practice of IWDA when reflecting on what they value most about IWDA’s approach and practice. [...] *“They are explicitly feminist and transformative. All about the power structures and how you change them. IWDA is not about charity for even a second, it’s about disrupting power structures for greater empowerment of women.”*<sup>84</sup>
- IWDA’s resourcing stakeholders noted: *“Often as a donor you’re coddled, the answer is always yes, people provide things at the drop of a hat. It’s been good to get some pushback. I think it signals IWDA’s deep respect for beneficiaries when we’re told ‘they’re not comfortable with meeting you,’ or that suggested activities don’t fit within a partner’s programming scope or aren’t safe for them to do right now.”*<sup>85</sup> Another interviewee noted: *“Historically, and in the last 12 months, I see them as one of DFAT’s most effective international partners. [Their strength is] the feminist human rights-based approach and how effective they are at supporting partners to grow.”*

## Stand With

During FY2021/22, we effectively **amplified the voices of others**. For example:

- The work in IWDA’s communications to both *“give credit to our partners and [promote] our partners’ stories.”*<sup>86</sup>
- Advocating for and connecting partners with the CEDAW committee.
- Supporting young women activists: *“IWDA helped them to find their voice. Because of the way they [IWDA] liaised, [...] women activists were able to find their place and speak up. IWDA played a part in starting the group.”*<sup>87</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>82</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.7.

<sup>83</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.4.

<sup>84</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.5.

<sup>85</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>86</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>87</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.5.



- The use of the AFFPC Issues papers “as a platform to amplifying the voices of the authors.... The authors have informed IWDA they are [subsequently] being invited to contribute to other forums/mechanisms”.<sup>88</sup>

We also provided **accompaniment support** to women’s rights organisations and other feminist movement actors. For example:

- Supporting partners with: developing and finalising key documents such as Operations Manuals, policies, and COVID-19 protocols; design workshops; MEL and narrative report writing; advocacy; evaluation; consideration of disability inclusion and climate justice activities in ANCP projects; funding proposals; and safeguarding, compliance, and risk management practices.
- Assisting partners to implement their activities in the remaining of the year post-COVID-19 and “working with partners to develop, implement and reprogram work plans to respond to changing contexts such as staff illness, COVID-19 or riots, [as was the case] in Solomon Islands.”<sup>89</sup>
- Providing valuable technical support, particularly notable in terms of advocacy and finance: “we have been a really effective partner in [WLB and RoCK] advocacy and we have laid good groundwork for how we can continue to support.”<sup>90</sup>
- Showing solidarity with partners in their engagement with DFAT, for example in Fiji and in DFAT’s country planning process in Solomon Islands and PNG.
- An external stakeholder noted that IWDA’s strength is in “Backing up other actors, making other resources available, including funding for campaign managers” and another noted “What we have heard from their in-country partners is that IWDA support has helped them build their capacity to do their work.”<sup>91</sup>

Importantly, however, findings from the FY2021/22 evaluation highlight **tension surrounding accompaniment**. Various funded partners, donors, and external stakeholders indicated that our accompaniment support was valuable. As noted above, the Partner Perception Review found that IWDA’s partners greatly valued IWDA’s accompaniment, including our support in the areas of finance, project management, and organisational strengthening.<sup>92</sup> The Partner Perception Review found that IWDA’s accompaniment support enables partners to focus on their core business: “IWDA brings a strong technical support to local partners that allows them to focus on operational work. Other international partners don’t give the same high-level technical support”<sup>93</sup> We also received feedback that IWDA’s support meaningfully enabled our partners. For example, an external stakeholder noted that when working with young women in Myanmar, “IWDA helped them to find their voice. Because of the way they liaised, Myanmar women activists were able to find their place and speak up. IWDA played a part in starting the group. [The IWDA staff member] set up the meetings and the zoom links, attended the meetings, and gave us time to talk, gave support and space to young women activists that they didn’t get anywhere else. IWDA has given us time.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, we received positive feedback on our approach to partnership. A resourcing stakeholder noted “We find IWDA effective in terms of advice provided to local partners and management support. A little bit different to other partners in the investments we manage. They listen to local partners, they hear, and if it’s something

<sup>88</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>89</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>90</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

<sup>91</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.3.

<sup>92</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Partner Perception Review, p.4.

<sup>93</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.3-4.

<sup>94</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review

*they can do to support them they will take the lead. If it's something we need to know about, they'll come back to us. We fund a couple of other [...] managing partners overseas; they don't do that.*<sup>95</sup> Another external stakeholder observed: *"They are able to establish real relationships of trust with local feedback. The informal feedback is that partners appreciate the way IWDA works, they see it as a real partnership."*<sup>96</sup>

At the same time, however, we received feedback that some funded partners and donors feel uncomfortable about the concept of allocating funding to IWDA rather than directly funding local women's rights organisations. Through the Partner Perception Review, one interviewee commented that IWDA may be *"coming in between [donors and funded partners] and getting the bigger chunk of the money"*.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, the Stakeholder Perception Review found several 'resourcing stakeholders have a lingering concern about funding an organisation that doesn't have in-country offices or local staff. There was a sense that while supporting IWDA makes sense for now, for a range of geo-political reasons, there is an open question about the model of funding IWDA rather than directly funding local partners.'<sup>98</sup> This indicates that **IWDA's value-add to partnerships was not always clearly articulated or recognised.**

### Step Back

Evidence from FY2021/22 indicates multiple occasions when we deferred to **partner/stakeholder expertise and priorities**. For example:

- Equality Insights team noted that they amended and refined the survey based on our in-country partner's sense of whether the questions were safe and appropriate
- Communication Team's NAIDOC week messaging directed audiences to other resources, such as 'Five ways to engage in national reconciliation week' which pointed to First Nations podcasts and publications
- IWDA supported partner-led networking and convening activities, such as United Sisterhood and ASEAN People Grassroots, locally-led research under WEAVERS which is defined and led by local actors, and partner-led project development such as the MOVE 2 proposal
- IWDA also chose not to send its own submission to the GBV enquiry in PNG but rather support its partners' activities, and also deferred to the expertise of other actors in terms of not engaging in advocacy on Afghanistan.
- IWDA supported partners' priorities, not our own or funders', when *"VfC had a request from members of their communities for them to step in and support market safety initiatives. This wasn't in the design of the WEAVERS program and is probably not a natural fit in the DFAT Theory of Change but we received this request and were able to shift budgets around to address an emerging priority for them."*<sup>99</sup>

At the same time, we also received feedback that **our actions and behaviour had sometimes been experienced as overly directive**. In particular, one stakeholder noted: *"Over the last 12 months sometimes IWDA has driven quite hard, and you've had to ask, 'whose agenda is this, is it IWDA's or the women's?' There has been a slight edge of that. Sometimes the outcomes they wanted, say around a paper written as a background research piece, it was said 'I want to be the one to use this, we have to get it done now'... the work was done in the best spirit, but it was clear that the campaign also*

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<sup>95</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>96</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>97</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Partner Perception Review, p.6

<sup>98</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.6.

<sup>99</sup> Participant, 2021-22 Team Reflection, September 2022.

*needed to service IWDA’s approach and agenda...It’s easy to take over people who aren’t as resource rich or powerful, easy to take over their way of doing things. I never heard anyone who wasn’t grateful for IWDA, but there was tension in managing those competing needs and demands.”<sup>100</sup>*

Our outcomes from FY2021/22 also demonstrate where we stepped back, to instead play a **supportive role to help IWDA partners take the lead**. For example:

- IWDA assumed the role of ‘secretariat’ for the organisation of the Pacific Feminist Forum and IWDA partner FWRM led.
- We recognised the expertise of PWDSI in disability inclusion, and funded their work to support Women’s Rights Organisations in Solomon Islands.
- IWDA supported ongoing connection and collaboration between Majority World organisations to facilitate learning, such as in We Rise programming where a Samoa partner wants to implement a Fiji GIRLS project model.



*Image: Participants at the GIRLS redesign workshop in Suva, Fiji*

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<sup>100</sup> IWDA 2021-22 Stakeholder Perception Review, p.7.

### Question 3: Where did we fall short, and why?

Several planned **investments in IWDA's organisational capacity were delayed** due to competing priorities, including the need to focus resources on on-boarding new funded partners. Delayed investments included NetSuite optimisation, updating IWDA's Finance Manual, finalising the Decolonising Framework and Partnership Framework, and two fundraising campaigns.<sup>101</sup> Despite delays, progress was made during FY2021/22 and deliverables are anticipated in FY2022/23.

Some staff strongly expressed a continued sense of **overwhelming workload**. Differences between teams in culture, ways of working and workflow were apparent, with staff in different teams reporting very different experiences of their year at IWDA.

**Gendered climate justice and disability inclusion** had been identified as priority thematic areas through which we could strengthen IWDA's work. While results have been achieved under these themes, we did not make hoped-for progress. We have led, contributed to and amplified advocacy on gendered climate justice, but we have not yet developed a clear sense of how IWDA can best engage with and resource women's rights organisations working in this area. Additionally, while IWDA developed our first Disability Inclusion strategy and established our first formal partnership with an Organisation for People with Disabilities (OPD), PWDSI in Solomon Islands, Equality Insights has not been able to reach OPDs in the meaningful way anticipated and we have instead proposed further engagement with OPDs to DFAT as an area for further funding under the Equality Insights initiative.

Both internal and external challenges underpinned the areas in which IWDA did not make hoped-for progress. The **ongoing impacts of COVID-19** disrupted collaboration, both internally and with partners, led to significant staff absences due to illness,<sup>102</sup> and significantly constrained IWDA's funding environment<sup>103</sup> and ability to access and disburse funds due to disrupted program delivery.<sup>104</sup> Challenges were also encountered when supporting work in settings affected by economic, social and political **upheaval, violence, and environmental disasters**.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, **backlash to women's rights and gender equality** impacted the types of support IWDA provided to funded partners, and also resulted in safety and wellbeing concerns due to IWDA's public activism being targeted for negative attention.

Internally, the **movement of staff substantially increased workloads** within the Business Transformation (particularly Finance, People & Culture, and Operations) and Strategic Change & Partnerships teams due to recruitment and on-boarding. There was a competitive recruitment market

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<sup>101</sup> 2021-22 Board Report, Aug 2022.

<sup>102</sup> Over 450 hours Personal Leave taken in December 2021-January 2022, compared with 100 hours in the same period in 2020-21, due to staff and dependents being ill with COVID-19, 2021-22 Board Report, Feb 2022.

<sup>103</sup> Noted for example, in being unable to expedite the establishment of trusting relationships by face-face interactions by the Equality Insights Team, and lack of engagement by participants in the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership due to a lack of global resourcing and lack of global leadership by UN Women. 2021-22 Board Report, May 2022.

<sup>104</sup> For example, IWDA noted its observation of a 'long tail' decrease in donations that was predicted in FY2020/21, uncertainty over contract extensions for WE RISE due to delayed transitions from Cardno to DFAT, and also noted that current donors who have been affected by COVID-19 have advised that FY2021/22 funding has been affected (M Foundation), 2021-22 Board Report, June 2021.

<sup>105</sup> For example, the disaster and response in Tonga de-prioritised Equality Insights data collection for in-country partners and the Tonga Eruption of an underwater volcano on 15 January 2022 caused a tsunami, resulting in three deaths and widespread destruction of buildings and infrastructure, 2021-22 Board Report, Feb 2022.

in Australia in FY2021/22, potentially contributing to staff movement and also causing some delays in recruitment.<sup>106</sup>

IWDA's commitments to organisational change extend beyond the objectives of the Strategic Plan, and our staff and systems have a finite capacity to plan, implement and manage organisation-wide change; it was therefore not feasible to progress all of our commitments to organisational change. Commitments to establish new systems and processes, in particular, required substantial resources. For example, the implementation of a new customer relationship management system (Salesforce) caused considerable workload pressures in the Business Transformation team across Fundraising, Operations and Communications.<sup>107</sup> Many teams noted that while IWDA has set ambitious objectives for change, there is a **mismatch between ambition and resourcing**: we do not have sufficient resources to progress as quickly as we would like to across all of our change objectives. For example, the People & Culture team noted that some areas of work under the River of Change initiative could not be progressed as originally intended due to insufficient resources.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, particularly in the Knowledge Translation & Equality Insights and Strategic Change & Partnerships teams, the need to respond to donor timelines and requirements constrains the ability of staff to contribute to strategic change.

Previously, IWDA staff had identified silos as a key internal challenge for our organisation. During reflections on FY2021/22, staff reported that positive changes in ways of working and newly designed roles had **reduced silos** within IWDA. Where silos persisted, however, they had a negative impact, particularly as experienced by the Strategic Change & Partnerships team.

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<sup>106</sup> 2021-22 Board Report, Aug 2021.

<sup>107</sup> Database - The Salesforce database continues to cause workload pressures in the fundraising, operations and communications team. A report into implementation has been commissioned and will outline where IWDA may need to consider future investments to fully utilise the tool and reconsider responsibilities for key roles, 2021-22 Board Report May 2022.

<sup>108</sup> 2021-22 Board Report Aug 2022

## Question 4: In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

### Strategic recommendations – how can we adapt to better progress our organisational vision?

Strategic recommendations were developed by the Core MEL Group based on a review of all evaluation data, and refined by the Leadership Team based on their knowledge of the organisation.

#### Recommendation 1: Define IWDA's unique value-add in more detail.

IWDA's role and value proposition differ from most other organisations we work with – we have chosen to pursue a 'third way' between women's funds and international development NGOs. Our structures, systems and processes need to adequately support us to provide our unique value-add.

As one step towards this, we should more clearly define the scope of IWDA's 'being' work – i.e. what we do to progress our goals and strategies, and align with our values, that goes beyond what is covered by grant deliverables. This may also help to address some of the challenges encountered by staff, particularly within the Partnerships team, by providing a methodology to clarify the scope of IWDA's role with partners and define our accompaniment.

In order to provide our unique value-add, we also need to strengthen our ability to access the resources required to fund the full scope of our role. In order to resource our work that goes beyond project-specific outputs, we will need to increase the proportion of our funding that is not tied to delivering these outputs – i.e. we will need to increase our proportion of untied funding. A more clearly articulated value-add proposition would also support communication to funders and prospective funders. As we look to new opportunities for untied funding, we should ensure that our resource mobilisation is aligned with IWDA's values and priorities.

#### Recommendation 2: Promote an organisation-wide approach to progressing IWDA's goals and strategies.

Staff and teams across the organisation have a tendency to retrofit the goals, strategies and objectives articulated in our Strategic Plan onto IWDA's existing organisational structure. This has the potential to constrain our ambition, hinder integration across teams and functions, and, ultimately, limit our capacity to progress our goals.

In team reflections and Board Reports, the work of each team is typically conceptualised as aligned with one particular goal. Work done by the Partnerships team is generally conceptualised as sitting under Goal 1, work done by the Knowledge Translation team is conceptualised as sitting under Goal 2, and work done by the Business Transformation team is conceptualised as sitting under Goal 3.

This limits the scope of our work. For example, program learnings have the potential to make substantial contributions to discourse change, however this opportunity is less visible because the program support provided by the Partnerships team is typically considered to align with Goal 1, rather than Goal 2 which includes Strategy 3 and Objective 2.1, both focused on discourse change. Conversely, advocacy accompaniment provided to grantee partners by Knowledge Translation team members is sometimes considered separately from other types of accompaniment that are led by Partnerships staff and reported under Goal 1.

Rather than conceptualising our Strategic Plan through the lens of IWDA's existing structure, we should explore how IWDA can more holistically progress our organisational vision, recognising that many parts of the organisation can (and do) contribute to each goal and each strategy. We should identify how the existing work of each team can better support our three goals and five strategies. We should also review opportunities for deep cross-team collaboration.

### Recommendation 3: Lean into our growing strengths in thought leadership.

IWDA is increasingly recognised as a thought leader, within Australia and globally. Our intellectual capital is a useful contribution to the feminist movement. Furthermore, our thought leadership contributes to our locational power by strengthening our credibility with Minority World stakeholders, particularly, to date, the Australian government.

We should build our capacity to generate knowledge and translate knowledge to impact, not only within the Knowledge Translation team but more broadly across the organisation. As part of this, we should continue to engage with diverse, innovative thinkers and amplify Majority World voices and expertise, in order to co-build networks where new, relevant knowledge can be generated.

In the short term, we should sustain our thought leadership in Equality Insights, decolonial and feminist approaches within the Australian NGO sector and global convenings, and feminist foreign policy. Alternate areas where we have a unique value-add may emerge over time.

### Recommendation 4: Explore opportunities brought by new approaches to convening.

In the context of COVID-19 and border closures, IWDA's work under Strategy Two looks different from what was originally envisaged. Convening has taken the form of online gatherings and learning, rather than face to face meetings. IWDA has also invested in sharing and amplifying skills that enable convening, for example through the Troublemakers podcast. Online approaches provide opportunities for increased engagement among Majority World stakeholders across diverse settings, including but not limited to IWDA's partners.

We should explore opportunities for enabling experience sharing, convening and coalition building among IWDA's partners. We should also explore opportunities for IWDA, and our partners, to connect with organisations adopting innovative approaches to issues that are important to us. We should celebrate the flexibility provided by online communication and actively pursue opportunities to engage with diverse, highly skilled people and organisations, in order to develop and share best practices.

### Recommendation 5: Update IWDA's Strategic MEL framework as part of the process to roll and extend our Strategic Plan to 2025.

The current Strategic MEL framework is aligned with our Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The proposed rolling update to this Strategic Plan will require updates to the Strategic MEL framework.

We should develop a MEL framework and process that better enables synthesis and critical reflection, in order to inform strategic (rather than operational) recommendations. For example, we should refocus headline indicators to the strategic level, including indicators oriented towards the strategic considerations highlighted in Recommendations 1-4.

### **Operational recommendations – how can we adapt to better progress existing strategies?**

Operational recommendations 6-9 were synthesised from staff feedback on summary evaluation findings. IWDA staff provided specific examples of what we should keep doing, and what we should start doing. An additional operational recommendation (Recommendation 10) was developed by the Leadership team following their review of preliminary recommendations.

### Recommendation 6: Continue to embed language, culture and ways of working that are aligned with IWDA's unique identity as articulated under the current Strategic Plan.

*What to nurture:*

- Widespread understanding of and commitment to 3S Framework
- Be driven by IWDA's values

*Where to grow:*

- Build understanding of how the 3S Framework, decolonial approaches, and other theoretical frameworks should guide practice, in roles across IWDA (e.g. Country Plans that map local context, partner capacity and IWDA country priorities against 3S Framework and decolonial approaches; rubric for deciding what issues to step up on and step back from)
- Be open and vulnerable, internally and externally, in our own journey towards better decolonial and feminist practice

**Recommendation 7: Maintain and strengthen our existing partnerships, and further enhance these partnerships through decolonial and feminist approaches.**

*What to nurture:*

- Clearly distinguish between IWDA's goals and our partners' goals
- Sustain trusting relationships with partners, so that open conversations can happen when needed
- Ensure staff are not stretched too thin across multiple partners; this enables people to sustain relationships
- Hold regular partnership reviews, including open conversations around capacity needs
- Seek and learn from partner feedback
- Identify opportunities for partners to use their strengths to take the lead
- Question existing processes through feminist and decolonial lenses, to ensure we are not perpetuating unnecessary and unfairly burdensome processes

*Where to grow:*

- Incorporate discussion of power dynamics as a routine part of partnership reviews
- Consider engaging third party brokers to mediate power imbalances in partnership conversations
- Support partners' direct relationships with donors and other stakeholders
- Document the impacts of IWDA partnership and ensure our support remains relevant to partners' evolving capacity
- Provide clear internal guidance on how to work in partnership and what this looks like in practice (e.g. Partnership Framework), and ensure internal systems and processes are streamlined (e.g. Partnership Principles included in all Partnership Agreements), while still allowing space to innovate and respond to the needs and priorities of individual partners
- Collate toolkit of good practice in decolonial approaches to partnership (e.g. two-way sharing of documents between IWDA and partners)
- Develop a decision-making guide to help determine IWDA's compliance requirements for partners – e.g. what standards do we require partners to comply with, under what circumstances, and what does this look like

**Recommendation 8: Strengthen our organisational capacity for effective collaboration among IWDA staff.**

*What to nurture:*

- Sustain the Working Group mechanism to support innovation; this has been particularly effective when Working Groups drive strategy development (e.g. Disability Inclusion strategy)
- Enable collaboration through focused meetings that keep staff informed about each other's work within a specific function

*Where to grow:*

- More 'live' mapping of key documents and processes (this is currently well done with the Policy Index)
- Recognise and value individuals' contributions and expertise
- Identify when our in-house expertise is sufficient and broad consultation will not add value



(e.g. Business Transformation) or thematic area

- Delegation combined with appropriate support

- Be decisive and clear about when we will consult, and when we will not
- Strengthen individual accountability for one's own work
- Provide stretch opportunities for professional development (e.g. contribute skills outside existing role; secondments to other teams)
- A system to manage organisational knowledge is currently under development; improved communication about this system could increase demand and uptake

**Recommendation 9: Sustain and strengthen our initiatives to improve staff wellbeing and ensure that IWDA lives our values.**

*What to nurture:*

- Hold space for staff to share, learn, and support each other (e.g. buddy system, monthly team meetings, office days/weeks, in-house learning opportunities)
- Managers prioritise systems and process improvements to better manage workload and workflow
- Adequately resource change (e.g. allocate dedicated IWDA staff and/or external contractors to manage change)
- Set boundaries on incremental change

*Where to grow:*

- Enable timely and targeted support (as well as learning from success) through more regular use of pulse surveys that capture staff members' experiences, disaggregated by team
- Identify and celebrate staff who demonstrate good practices (e.g. inclusive and efficient decision-making), and seek to share these skills across the organisation, for example through coaching
- Change is iterative so it is important to avoid a fixed mindset – recognise that processes will continually be updated and modified
- Recognise and celebrate success more, including little wins along the way
- Don't sacrifice greatness for perfection
- Provide targeted change management support for big projects

**Recommendation 10: Continue to explore and test our funding model and costing methodologies to better resource IWDA's unique value-add.**

We should refine our ability to calculate the full cost of our work to amplify grant deliverables, including our accompaniment and advocacy work. This information can inform our decision-making about the work that we pursue. It can also contribute to discussions and advocacy within the international development sector on the quality of grant funding.

We should also provide guidance for staff that identifies IWDA's unique value-add, and helps staff to identify what support we are not resourced to provide.

**Next steps**

As part of the process to refresh IWDA's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to roll and extend it to 2025, findings and recommendations were shared with IWDA's Board in February 2023, prior to finalisation of this

report and immediately preceding the 2023 Board Strategy Day. Three key themes were highlighted in the presentation to the Board:

Stepping into our identity	In FY2021/22, IWDA performed well against all five of our strategies. The framing and strategies of IWDA’s Strategic Plan are relevant and useful to our work, and our strategies guide us effectively towards future work. We are increasingly comfortable and confident in our identity under our new Strategic Plan. There are opportunities to further strengthen how we work across the organisation to progress our three goals and 11 objectives.
Innovative ways of working	IWDA’s ways of working – including our focus on feminist movement strengthening and knowledge translation for discourse change – are innovative, appropriate and effective. Sometimes our innovative ways of working are ahead of available funding, which places a strain on our organisation. We are, however, increasingly able to be propositional to funders.
Resourcing our ambitions	IWDA is exceptionally progressive and values-driven. We hold ourselves accountable to our values and pursue continuous improvement to translate these values to action. This is a core part of our identity and unique value proposition, and helps us to attract and retain values-aligned partner organisations, funders, and staff. At the same time, our integrity to our values often drives us to set ambitions that we are not resourced to deliver. This contributes to heavy workloads, and risks damaging staff morale and our organisation’s reputation when we cannot meet the full range of our very high ambitions.

At the Board Strategy Day in February 2023, the Board considered several analyses including a scan of the external landscape, financial modelling, and analyses designed to capture IWDA’s unique value proposition. On the basis of all the information considered at the Board Strategy Day, the Board concluded that IWDA’s refreshed Strategic Plan to 2025 should maintain the focus of the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023, and decided to increase investment in leveraging IWDA’s assets and capabilities in order to better resource our innovative and effective ways of working.



Image: IWDA staff at the International Women’s Day March in Melbourne

## Acronyms

3S	3S Framework
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
AFFPC	Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
AP4D	Asia Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue
CCC	Christian Care Centre (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Solomon Islands)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus 19
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EI	Equality Insights
FJS	Foundation for a Just Society
FSC	Family Support Centre (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Solomon Islands)
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Fiji)
FY	financial year
GADC	Gender and Development for Cambodia
G7	Group of Seven
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MOVE	Movements and Voice for Equality program, funded by Foundation for a Just Society
MPs	Members of Parliament
NCfR	Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Papua New Guinea)
NGO	non-government organisation
OPD	organisation for people with disabilities
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PWDSI	People With Disabilities Solomon Islands (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Solomon Islands)
RoCK	Rainbow Community Kampuchea (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Cambodia)
TSMs	Temporary Special Measures
TWO	Ta'ang Women's Organisation (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Myanmar)
UN	United Nations
US	United Sisterhood (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Cambodia)
VAW	violence against women
VfC	Voice for Change (IWDA grantee partner organisation in PNG)

W7	Women 7 Summit
WARA	West 'Are'Are Rokotaniken Association (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Solomon Islands)
WBCA	Wide Bay Conservation Association (IWDA grantee partner organisation in PNG)
WHRDs	Women Human Rights Defenders
WLB	Women's League of Burma (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Myanmar)
WOC	women of colour
WRAM	Women's Rights Action Movement (IWDA grantee partner organisation in Solomon Islands)
WRO	women's rights organisation

## Annex A: Headline indicators for FY2021/22

Indicator	Description/ Measurement	Target	Actual FY22
Dollar amount of funds released to diverse women's rights organisations	Measured by the amount of money released (either as at 31 December or 31 June).	AUD \$4.5 million	AUD \$4.79 million
Number of women's organisations supported	Measured by the number of women's organisations financially supported by IWDA.	Not applicable	22
Proportion of multi-year grants released	Measured by the proportion of multi-year grants released out of the total value of grants for the financial year.	Not applicable	Not captured – indicator retired
Number of accompaniment activities delivered	To be determined	Not applicable	169
Number of convenings supported	To be determined	Not applicable	178
Number of knowledge products produced	Measured by the number of knowledge products produced by IWDA. A knowledge product is an output, produced by IWDA that contributes to filling a knowledge gap, and/or to communicate, educate inform or raise awareness of stakeholders on a topic. Examples include reports, briefs, articles, technical guides and videos.	Not applicable	57
Number of uptake, use and advocacy activities	Measured by the number of uptake, use and advocacy activities taken by IWDA. Uptake, use and advocacy activities are actions that support or enable stakeholders to use information produced, or data collected, by IWDA. Examples include: presenting at domestic or international meetings, conferences or workshops; delivering training to partners or stakeholders; and holding a dedicated briefing.	Not applicable	237
Number of solidarity actions	Measured by the number of solidarity actions taken by IWDA. Solidarity actions include instances where IWDA signs onto petitions, open letters or submissions led by other organisations.	Not applicable	30
Number of stakeholders engaged	Measured by the number of stakeholders engaged in IWDA's work. A stakeholder is any person or organisation outside of IWDA who takes part in an event, workshop or project hosted through IWDA and through that engagement has contact with an IWDA staff member.	Not applicable	2353
Number of blogs promoting and supporting uptake of knowledge products	Measured by the number of IWDA blogs promoting and supporting uptake of knowledge products	Not applicable	18
Number of multilateral forums contributed to	Measured by the number of multilateral forums that IWDA contributes to. A multilateral forum is an international or regional space where more than two governments come together with Civil Society involvement.	Not applicable	9
Number of donors	Measured by the number of donors - individuals and philanthropy that donate to IWDA for our discretionary (untied) use and receive a tax deduction in return. This	1300 regular givers	4584

	includes major donors, regular givers and cash givers (last gift of \$2 or more in 12 months previous to the reporting period)		
Total amount of donor funding	Measured by the consolidated amount raised from major donors, regular givers and cash givers.	Not applicable	AUD \$2.57 million
Number of tied funders	Measured by the total number of tied funders - entities (Australian and International), including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and businesses that provide funding with a set of contractual obligations attached.	Not applicable	7
Total amount of tied funding	Measured by the consolidated amount raised from tied funders - entities (Australian and International) including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and businesses that provide funding with a set of contractual obligations attached.	Not applicable	AUD \$8.59 million
Number of multi-year funders	Measured by the number of multi-year funders - entities (Australian and International), including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and business that provide at least two years of funding in a funding grant or contract.	Not applicable	4
Ratio of tied / untied funding	Measured by the proportion of tied and untied funding. Tied funding refers to funding with a set of contractual obligations attached. Untied funding refers to funding with no contractual obligations over and above the general purpose of the organisation and includes ANCP funding from major donors.	73/27 ratio of tied:untied funding	77/23
Rate of employee satisfaction	Measured by the proportion of staff that report that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following statement: all things considered I believe this organisation is a great place to work.	0.7	Not captured in FY22
Rate of employee retention	Measured by the proportion of staff who remained employed with IWDA during a specific period.	75%	79%
Rate of employee internal fill	Measured by the proportion of roles advertised that are filled by people from within the organisation during a specific period.	15%	19%
Diversity of employees	Measured by the proportion of staff who identify as women of colour	Not applicable	33%
Rate of employees self-reporting their manager cares about their wellbeing	Measured by the proportion of staff that report that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following statement: My manager cares about me as a person and my personal wellbeing.	Not applicable	Not captured in FY22

## Annex B: Partner Achievement Summary FY2021/22

Partners were able to **adapt their programs** as required, in order to deliver meaningful results in the context of extreme disruptions due to COVID-19, environmental disasters, conflict, and humanitarian emergencies. This indicates that partners have a rich understanding of local realities and priorities, underpinned by deep engagement with the people and communities they work with and within. Partners' ability to adapt also illustrates strong organisational capacity to take and act on strategic decisions to respond to emerging needs and challenges.

- In Solomon Islands, Family Support Centre (FSC) and Christian Care Centre (CCC) delivered services safely during COVID-19 restrictions, despite major challenges affecting transport, counselling procedures and referral services.
- Also in Solomon Islands, West 'Are'Are Rokotaniken Association (WARA) developed strategies to support rural savings clubs remotely, rather than in person, during COVID-19 restrictions.
- In Myanmar, Women's League of Burma (WLB) sub-granted to member organisations based in hard-to-reach communities to enable the delivery of emergency medical and food supplies.

Partners facilitated **networking and coalition building** to sustain and strengthen feminist movements, at the national and regional level.

- In Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (NCfR) co-hosted the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development PNG annual learning workshop. The workshop brings together organisations working on gender equality to discuss research, innovation and good practice. In addition to hosting, Sr Lorraine Garasu and Alphonse Pemuka from NCfR were panellists for the session on working with men and boys.
- Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) hosted a retreat with key players in the Solomon Islands national women's movement. This was a valuable opportunity to strengthen networks, nurture relationships, and identify shared objectives.
- Also in the Solomon Islands, WARA worked in coalition with four other organisations to organise the Honiara Young Women's Forum.
- The We Rise Coalition has established a formal steering committee, made up of representatives from Coalition member organisations in Fiji, PNG, Samoa and Vanuatu. This committee enables the Coalition to strengthen its decision-making processes and grow its regional and global impact.

Partners contributed to **regional and global dialogues** relevant to women's rights, through meetings with politicians and civil society representatives, formal submissions to multilateral organisations, and strategic contributions to public events. IWDA partner organisations worked together, on multiple occasions, to strengthen their messaging and impact.

- Wide Bay Conservation Association (WBCA) made a submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women on the intersections between violence against women and climate change. The submission informed the Special Rapporteur's report presented at the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and WRAM met with new Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong to advocate for the advancement of women's rights and political participation.
- Several partners held a panel as a side event at CSW26. FWRM chaired the panel, with speakers from FemLINK (Fiji), Sista (Vanuatu), Brown Girl Woke (Samoa) and Voice for Change (PNG). The panel discussed how Pacific feminist organisations can respond to climate change and environmental disasters.
- Representatives from United Sisterhood (Cambodia) and Brown Girl Woke (Samoa) joined IWDA staff and an independent consultant on a panel at the Research for Development Impact conference. The panel spoke on the importance of collective action and coalitions to an audience of Australian and regional stakeholders.

Partners engaged strategically with **formal political processes** to increase duty-bearers' capacity and political will to act on issues affecting women and girls, enable women's increased engagement in politics, and strengthen decision-making processes to reduce the risk of unfair outcomes for women and girls.

- WARA conducted a mock election, designed to increase participants' knowledge of voting processes and their electoral rights. This was the first ever mock election conducted with rural women in the Solomon Islands.
- Voice for Change supported three young women to contest local government elections, in a political landscape that is overwhelmingly dominated by male candidates.
- Eastern Highlands Family Voice, NCfR and Voice for Change made written submissions to the PNG Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence. These accounted for a significant proportion (more than 10%) of the 28 public submissions received by the Committee.

Partners **nurtured strong relationships with government** at national and sub-national levels, and leveraged these relationships to effectively advocate for change. Partners' advocacy contributed directly to new laws, government strategies and policies, as well as improved implementation of existing laws. Partners also worked directly with political administrations to enable them to more effectively address gender equality and women's rights.

- Following a sustained advocacy campaign by WRAM in Solomon Islands, Provincial Governments in Makira and Central Islands formally endorsed Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) designed to improve the position of women in regional parliaments.
- Voice for Change in Papua New Guinea advocated successfully for the Jiwaka Provincial Administration to endorse a provincial strategy on gender-based violence.
- Also in Solomon Islands, PWDSI made significant contributions to the development of the draft National Disability Inclusive Development Policy, and drafted papers to go to national cabinet for Solomon Islands to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- In Papua New Guinea, WBCA developed Ward Development Plans which were implemented by local government authorities.
- ALFeLa in Timor-Leste was one of the lead civil society organisations to support the national government to implement its anti-human trafficking law.
- Also in Timor-Leste, Covalima Community Centre advocated successfully to increase the number of women employed by the municipal administration.
- NCfR participated in a Parliamentary Seminar Presentation for Members of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Government of Bougainville, to advocate for NCfR's approach to addressing violence against women and girls.

IWDA partners with organisations that are **recognised as thought leaders** in gender equality and feminist programming. Partners' approaches are valued by local organisations, funders, and the Australian international development sector.

- Eastern Highlands Family Voice provided consulting services to other NGOs, including delivering trainings in gender for these organisations.
- NCfR was featured as a role model organisation in materials on gender transformative approaches published by the DFAT-funded Pacific Women program.
- The 2021 Sir Ron Wilson Human Rights Award, issued by ACFID, was presented to Women's League of Burma.

These partner achievements have been mapped against the Gender @ Work framework<sup>109</sup> below, to illustrate the variety of interconnected ways in which partners' work contributes to systemic change towards gender equality.

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<sup>109</sup> <https://genderatwork.org/analytical-framework/>





While achieving these results externally, partners also substantially **strengthened their own organisational capacity and sustainability**. Partners strengthened their governance and operational systems and invested in staff wellbeing. Partners also improved their financial sustainability, and several partners expanded.

- FSC developed External Complaints Policy, Whistleblower Policy and Disability Inclusion Policy, as well as a new five-year Strategic Plan (2022-2027).
- CCC developed a new Operations Manual to help ensure consistency in their processes.
- ALFeLa reached the final stages of implementing a client management system to support storage and use of client data. As a legal aid and gender-based violence referral service, ALFeLa has a large amount of data to manage and store securely. This new data management system will support ALFeLa to produce more detailed and informative reports on the reach and composition of clients reached.
- RoCK developed an action plan to support the wellbeing of their staff.
- FSC's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan directly addresses financial sustainability. Two goals included in the Strategic Plan are to increase provincial reach through paid branches and establish a business model for diversifying income sources. In FY2021/22, FSC opened their first paid provincial branch, in Gizo.
- CCC developed partnerships with new funding partners, including Save the Children and World Vision. Importantly, CCC played a leading role in determining the priorities for how they will spend these new funds.
- WARA received new core funding from another donor (not IWDA), and was able to employ full-time staff for the first time.
- PWDSI opened a new office and recruited multiple new staff.
- VfC opened a new office, their first in Western Highlands Province.

## Annex C: All-staff reflection outputs

### Discussion Paper - IWDA Strategic Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Report 2021-2022

#### Purpose of all-staff reflection

The draft Strategic Plan Year Two Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) report brings together information from individual team reflections, stakeholder and partner perception reports, achievements articulated in Board reports, and analysis of headline indicator data and progress against the Operations Plan. The All-Staff Reflection provided an opportunity for staff to discuss draft findings and reflect on key learnings across the Agency.

#### Background

Financial year (FY) 2021/22 is the second year of IWDA's *Strategic Plan 2020-2023*. This plan articulates five strategies to define and guide our work:

- We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access
- We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality
- We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation
- We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence
- We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

The Year Two MEL process aims to address four enquiry questions: (1) To what extent have we delivered against our strategies? (2) What outcomes were achieved? (3) Where did we fall short, and why? and (4) **In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?**

The purpose of the all-staff reflection was to focus on the final enquiry question.

#### Overview of Year Two MEL findings

In FY2021/22, IWDA progressed key elements of our Strategic Plan through investments in internal systems (e.g. Salesforce), programming (e.g. stronger funding pipeline, development of the Disability Inclusion strategy) and technical expertise (e.g. Equality Insights). Actions taken to deliver on our ambitious strategic objectives for organisational change are increasingly apparent across IWDA.

We performed well against the objectives of the Strategic Plan despite ongoing COVID-19-related disruptions, notably office closures and staff illnesses, as well as the need to balance time and energy between progressing both our Strategic Plan and our River of Change initiative. All teams at IWDA contributed to the progress made against Strategic Plan objectives, and significant outcomes have been achieved across all five strategies. Of particular note are increased external recognition of our expertise and thought leadership in technical areas and feminist practice, and our internal structural changes to live our organisational values.

There are some areas where we did not make hoped-for progress. Gendered climate justice was identified as a priority technical area for programming but we have not yet developed a clear sense of how IWDA can best engage with this area of work. Several planned investments in organisational sustainability (e.g. NetSuite optimisation) were delayed due to competing priorities. Some staff acutely expressed a continued sense of overwhelming workload. Differences between teams in culture, ways of working and workflow were apparent, with staff in different teams reporting very different experiences of their year at IWDA.

Key learnings: what have we done, and what do we still need to do?

IWDA's key achievements in FY2021/22 have been mapped against the 3S Framework, together with focus questions for areas where evaluation findings indicate there is more to do.

Internal	External
<b>Step up</b>	
<p>Formal change in policies and structures (e.g. Australia Day/Invasion Day holiday date)</p> <p>Funding for staff development and training</p>	<p>Thought leadership and recognition as experts</p> <p>Capacity to influence</p> <p>Innovation in resourcing feminist work</p> <p>Feminist and decolonising practice, including approach to partnership and collaboration</p>
<p><u>Focus Questions A:</u></p> <p>How best to manage change, in order to implement decisions that have been taken?</p> <p>How to promote positive change in team and organisational culture?</p>	<p><u>Focus Questions B:</u></p> <p>How best to influence INGOs and donors to encourage broader uptake of feminist and decolonial practice?</p> <p>How to determine when to step up to support our partners, and when to step back?</p> <p>How to effectively push back against elements of the systems that we work within (e.g. donor requirements), when needed?</p>
<b>Stand with</b>	
<p>Capacity building and collaboration (e.g. Office Weeks, cross-team Working Groups)</p> <p>Investment in staff wellbeing (e.g. additional EAP/counselling sessions; special leave)</p>	<p>Using our locational power to amplify the voices of partners</p> <p>Approach to accompaniment and solidarity</p>
<p><u>Focus Questions C:</u></p> <p>How to balance collaboration and efficiency?</p> <p>How to strengthen collaboration in day to day work?</p> <p>How to ensure that staff across the organisation feel equally supported?</p>	<p><u>Focus Questions D:</u></p> <p>How to manage power imbalances that can impede partnership?</p> <p>How to acknowledge and manage IWDA's priorities, as distinct from partners' priorities?</p> <p>How to effectively work in partnership?</p> <p>How to effectively buffer elements of the systems that we work within (e.g. donor requirements), when needed?</p>
<b>Step back</b>	
<p>Trust placed in teams, and enabling leadership approaches (noting this was not evenly experienced across the organisation)</p> <p>Working Groups able to steer IWDA on issues with substantial implications for our work (e.g. disability inclusion, gendered climate justice)</p>	<p>Deferring to partner/stakeholder expertise and priorities</p> <p>Supportive role to help IWDA's partners take the lead</p>
<p><u>Focus Questions E:</u></p> <p>How to replicate emergent positive norms and practices across the whole organisation?</p> <p>How to better enable staff across the whole organisation to use their own voice and agency?</p> <p>How to acknowledge and support staff members' contributions to organisational strengthening (e.g. Working Groups, Focal Points)?</p>	<p><u>Focus Questions F:</u></p> <p>How to determine when to step up to support our partners, and when to step back?</p> <p>How to identify when IWDA's resourcing is not required, and how to manage the transition from a resourcing to a non-resourcing partnership?</p> <p>How to conceptualise and measure what we decide not to do?</p>

### Outputs from all-staff reflection

At the all-staff reflection, participants worked in small groups, with each group reflecting on one set of Focus Questions (A-F). Participants were asked: (a) *What to nurture* – what do we already do that works well, and that we want to keep doing? (b) *Where to grow* – what more do we want to do?

Participants' responses are collated under the six themes below.

We have increased clarity on **IWDA's unique identity** as articulated under the current Strategic Plan. We now need to determine what this identity looks like in practice, across our organisation.

*What to nurture:*

- Widespread understanding of and commitment to 3S Framework
- Be driven by IWDA's values

*Where to grow:*

- Build understanding of how the 3S Framework, decolonial approaches, and other theoretical frameworks should guide practice, in roles across IWDA (e.g. Country Plans that map local context, partner capacity and IWDA country priorities against 3S Framework and decolonial approaches; rubric for deciding what issues to step up on and step back from)
- Be open and vulnerable, internally and externally, in our own journey towards better decolonial and feminist practice

We are increasingly recognised for our **thought leadership and capacity to influence**. We have an opportunity to apply these strengths to promote uptake of feminist and decolonial practice.

*What to nurture:*

- Pursue opportunities to share decolonial theory within the Australian international development and philanthropy sectors
- Engage with Feminist Funding Roundtables

*Where to grow:*

- Develop a Knowledge Translation plan for IWDA's Decolonial Framework and Strategy
- Capture and use evidence from IWDA's work (e.g. impacts of flexible funding, oral reporting) to support advocacy on decolonial international development practice
- Proactively engage INGOs and donors to influence uptake of decolonial practice; suggest practical ways that stakeholders can adjust their work
- Engage in collective action (e.g. via ACFID or through Women's Funds) to advocate for improved donor practice
- Convene spaces that enable partners/Majority World groups to engage with decolonial theory through contact with Majority World thought leaders

Our understanding and practice of partnership has evolved, particularly through application of the 3S Framework. We need to ensure that we sustain meaningful partnerships and interpersonal relationships, while also fostering decolonial and feminist approaches to **how we work in partnership**.

*What to nurture:*

- Clearly distinguish between IWDA's goals and our partners' goals
- Sustain trusting relationships with partners, so that open conversations can happen when needed
- Hold regular partnership reviews, including open conversations around capacity needs
- Seek and learn from partner feedback
- Identify opportunities for partners to use their strengths to take the lead
- Question existing processes through feminist and decolonial lenses, to ensure we are not perpetuating unnecessary and unfairly burdensome processes

*Where to grow:*

- Incorporate discussion of power dynamics as a routine part of partnership reviews
- Consider engaging third party brokers to mediate power imbalances in partnership conversations
- Support partners' direct relationships with donors and other stakeholders
- Document the impacts of IWDA partnership and ensure our support remains relevant to partners' evolving capacity
- Provide clear internal guidance on how to work in partnership and what this looks like in practice (e.g. Partnership Framework), and ensure internal systems and processes are streamlined (e.g. Partnership Principles included in all Partnership Agreements), while still allowing space to innovate and respond to the needs and priorities of individual partners
- Collate toolkit of good practice in decolonial approaches to partnership (e.g. two-way sharing of documents between IWDA and partners)
- Develop a decision-making guide to help determine IWDA's compliance requirements for partners – e.g. what standards do we require partners to comply with, under what circumstances, and what does this look like

IWDA's role and value proposition differ from most other organisations we work with – we have chosen to pursue a 'third way' between women's funds and international development NGOs. Our structures, systems and processes need to adequately support us to **provide our unique value-add**. We also need to strengthen our ability to access the resources required to fund the full scope of our role.

*What to nurture:*

- Ensure staff are not stretched too thin across multiple partners; this enables people to sustain relationships

*Where to grow:*

- Develop methods to calculate the cost of IWDA's 'being' work (i.e. what we do to progress our organisational goal and strategies that goes beyond what is covered by project-specific funded outputs), and integrate these costs into funding proposals and internal budgets

Working collaboratively is a core value of IWDA. In order to **collaborate effectively**, we need to ensure that our processes are streamlined, that we hold space for individual contributions, and that we enable individual agency and accountability.

*What to nurture:*

- Sustain the Working Group mechanism to support innovation; this has been particularly effective when Working Groups drive strategy development (e.g. Disability Inclusion strategy)
- Enable collaboration through focused meetings that keep staff informed about each other's work within a specific function (e.g. Business Transformation) or thematic area
- Delegation combined with appropriate support

*Where to grow:*

- More 'live' mapping of key documents and processes (this is currently well done with the Policy Index)
- Recognise and value individuals' contributions and expertise
- Identify when our in-house expertise is sufficient and broad consultation will not add value
- Be decisive and clear about when we will consult, and when we will not
- Strengthen individual accountability for one's own work
- Provide stretch opportunities for professional development (e.g. contribute skills outside existing role; secondments to other teams)
- A system to manage organisational knowledge is currently under development; improved communication about this system could increase demand and uptake

We invest in initiatives to improve staff wellbeing and ensure that IWDA lives our values. We need to recognise and celebrate success in these initiatives, including incremental successes. We also need to identify where the **benefits of our internal initiatives** are experienced unevenly, and recognise and replicate good practice across the whole organisation.

*What to nurture:*

- Hold space for staff to share, learn, and support each other (e.g. buddy system, monthly team meetings, office days/weeks, in-house learning opportunities)
- Managers prioritise systems and process improvements to better manage workload and workflow
- Adequately resource change (e.g. allocate dedicated IWDA staff and/or external contractors to manage change)
- Set boundaries on incremental change

*Where to grow:*

- Enable timely and targeted support (as well as learning from success) through more regular use of pulse surveys that capture staff members' experiences, disaggregated by team
- Identify and celebrate staff who demonstrate good practices (e.g. inclusive and efficient decision-making), and seek to share these skills across the organisation, for example through coaching
- Change is iterative so it is important to avoid a fixed mindset – recognise that processes will continually be updated and modified
- Recognise and celebrate success more, including little wins along the way
- Don't sacrifice greatness for perfection
- Provide targeted change management support for big projects