



ChangeFest Statement

An evolution

An outcome of the 2018 ChangeFest event is the **ChangeFest Statement** – a declaration that unites and directs the efforts of all communities that believe in the outcome we’re describing. The ChangeFest movement is focused on communities, their children and intergenerational change, to benefit all Australians.

How the ChangeFest Statement has evolved:

Section 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

At ChangeFest18

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who participated in ChangeFest 2018 at Logan in Queensland created the ChangeFest18 statement. In that statement they called for all ChangeFest 2018 participants to:

- Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the First Peoples and recognise their land, sea and water rights in the Australian Constitution; and
- Endorse the May 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart and the requirement it be enacted in all relevant statutes in Local, State, Territory and Federal jurisdictions.

They reminded ChangeFest18 participants it is non-negotiable that any national movement designed to create a more equitable and inclusive Australia must act consistently with the Uluru Statement from the Heart to ultimately:

- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are empowered and enabled to be at the forefront of all system change design and delivery;
- Result in Aboriginal-led and Torres Strait Islander-led local control of services and programs;
- Support and strengthen the treaty process in States and Territories.

They called for ChangeFest18 participants to empower, support and enable ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders-led consensus building of these statements.

In response, all ChangeFest18 participants endorsed the ChangeFest18 statement.

At ChangeFest19

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who participated in ChangeFest 2019 at Mt Druitt in NSW recognised and endorsed the ChangeFest18 Statement



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At ChangeFest21

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who participated in ChangeFest 2021 at Palmerston in Northern Territory recognised and endorsed the ChangeFest18 statement. They also agreed that the ChangeFest18 Statement must grow with every ChangeFest. Elders from Logan and Mt Druitt, with endorsement from the Larrika Elders, began the process of growing the ChangeFest18 Statement into this ChangeFest21 Statement.

All ChangeFest Participants

ChangeFest participants believe and acknowledge that any movement of change must recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders People and the ChangeFest statements in order to create a better future for all Australians.

Section 2: Principles

For this to happen, communities, government, philanthropy, the not-for-profit sector and business need to agree to own and act according to the following core principles:

- Shifting the balance of power and responsibility to communities through trust, respect and relationships
- Communities determining shared goals and solutions.
- Working with families and communities to improve whole-of-life outcomes through strong foundations in the early years of life.
- Changing the system with communities deciding the rules that work for them.
- Making long-term commitments to change.
- Collaborating and sharing power and accountability.
- Evaluating and learning together based on data sovereignty, respect and deep listening



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Section 3: Vision

Our vision is a future for all people where communities thrive and all children and families have a safe home, are healthy, are educated and have a strong sense of identity and belonging.

All ChangeFest participants support a movement to advance communities that are tackling adversity and inequality:

- By giving children the best start in life
- With the people in the community leading and driving the change
- Through two-way learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and evidence-based efforts that are integrated and tailored to local needs
- Working together with government, philanthropists, non-governmental organisations, research, and business

We are creating a movement of people that come together to create a better future for all Australians by focussing on communities as the focal point for empowerment, change and development. Now is the time for government, philanthropy, business and the community sector to prioritise and enable community-led change.

Despite Australia's global economic success story, there are still too many communities where families feel excluded, and community members feel isolated and disempowered – daily we face entrenched and complex adversity as a result of historic, institutionalised injustice and inequality. This has significant societal and financial implications for all Australians and, without change, will prevent us from reaching our full potential.

Across Australia, many communities have long-term community-led initiatives that generate greater social and emotional health and well-being, cultural connections, and life opportunities for children and adults alike. These communities know that place-based, community-led and integrated efforts get results. They are demonstrating that real lasting change is possible when people from all cultural and professional backgrounds collaborate with the leadership of First Nations Peoples.

Community-led change is a disruption of what currently is. Communities are making progress, but many systems do not support communities to make this change. We need to transform these systems. We need more integrated approaches to funding, services and infrastructure, more tailoring to local diverse contexts, as well as more long-term investment in building community capacity to take greater responsibility for their own futures.



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Section 4: Call to Action

ChangeFest participants call on political leaders, community organisations, philanthropists, businesses, and others to

Invest in community-led change

- Invest in community-led and Aboriginal-controlled organisations and groups
- Support communities to build accountable community-led governance to make decisions and guide investment
- Strengthen and build capabilities and capacity (for collaboration, data analysis, evaluation, community mobilisation, service design and commissioning etc) through specialist organisations and intermediaries
- Resource coordination and collaboration with local, state and national teams and share learnings
- Invest in community-led change for a minimum of 10 years

Enable governments to wrap-around community-led change

- Respect and respond to community-led change and the authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and leaders
- Ensure all levels of government have the skills and authority to wrap community-led way (e.g., through a government capability building program to change the culture and capabilities).
- Tackle systemic barriers identified by community-led change i.e., power-sharing with community-led governance, pooled or integrated funding and participatory budgeting, and data sharing

Increase accountability to communities

- Enable all stakeholders to invest in and protect trust and relationships
- Deal with conflict in ways that create safety and require deep listening
- Support the authority, role and effectiveness of community governance
- Ensure accountability of governments and funding providers to communities and vice versa (e.g., community access to a combined team of relevant State regional directors and Commonwealth representatives)



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Reward and celebrate communities driving change

- Support communities to capture their story of change and impact through access to data and co-creation of evaluation
- Celebrate and share community-led successes and impact

2024 NAIDOC Theme: Keep the fire burning! Blak, Loud & Proud

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.