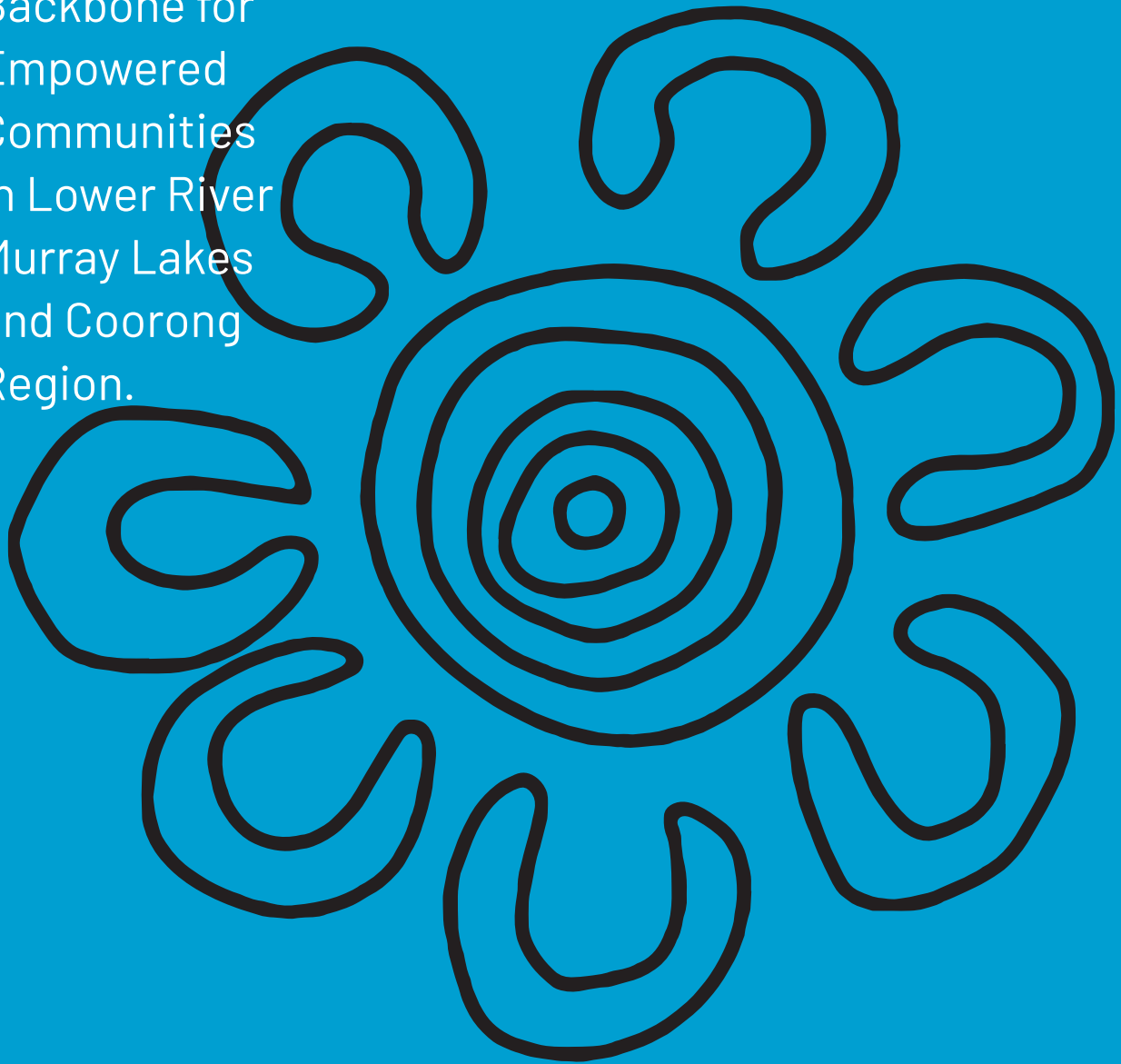


Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Empowered Communities

# Regional Development Agenda 2022-2023

Backbone for  
Empowered  
Communities  
in Lower River  
Murray Lakes  
and Coorong  
Region.



# Kungun Ngarrindjeri

## Yunnan

(Listen to what Ngarrindjeri People  
have to say)

Our Lands, Our Waters,  
Our People, All living  
things are connected.

As citizens of our Nation, we entreat people to respect our Ruwe (Country) as it was created in the Kaldowinyeri (the Creation). We long for sparkling, clean waters, healthy land and people, and all living things. We long for the Yarlumar-Ruwe (Sea Country) of our ancestors.

We long for our people to feel safe and healthy in our communities, have meaningful community spaces, appropriate housing, health, and education support and services, and for our children and youth to be supported as the next and future generation of leaders.

Ngarrindjeri Empowered Communities (NREC) is supporting and strengthening community connections in building collaboration with our service organisations and to enhance the capability of these services to reach out and connect to all. The NREC Board supports Ngarrindjeri leaders to create the best outcomes for the Ngarrindjeri nation, the Ngarrindjeri Empowered Communities region and for all Indigenous people living on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe.

We will have a future where our history and our achievements as a First Nation are celebrated with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Together we will lead the initiatives that enable our First Nation communities to determine our economic, cultural, political, and spiritual development.

Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe (lands, waters, spirit, people, and all living things) is the Country of the Ngarrindjeri Nation. Yarluwar-Ruwe includes the waters of the rivers, lakes, Coorong, the coastal waters, groundwaters and the sky. Ngarrindjeri Ruwe (Lands) is the home to the South Australian regional centres of Murraylands, Lower Lakes, Southern Fleurieu and the Coorong.

In 2007, the Ngarrindjeri Nation established the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) as the nation's new peak body. The NRA has received regional, national, and international recognition for its political, social, cultural, environmental, and economic achievements.

**The NRA led the way in:**

- brokering agreements with non-Indigenous governments and organisations,
- representing the Ngarrindjeri Nation in ground-breaking Treaty negotiations, and
- developing the Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement Taskforce.

The NRA worked closely with non-Ngarrindjeri people living on Ruwe, government and partners, in delivering significant social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

In 2019 Empowered Communities (EC) recognised the remarkable work of the Ngarrindjeri Nation and invited the NRA to be a part of Empowered Communities. Ngarrindjeri accepted and Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Empowered Communities (NREC) was established.

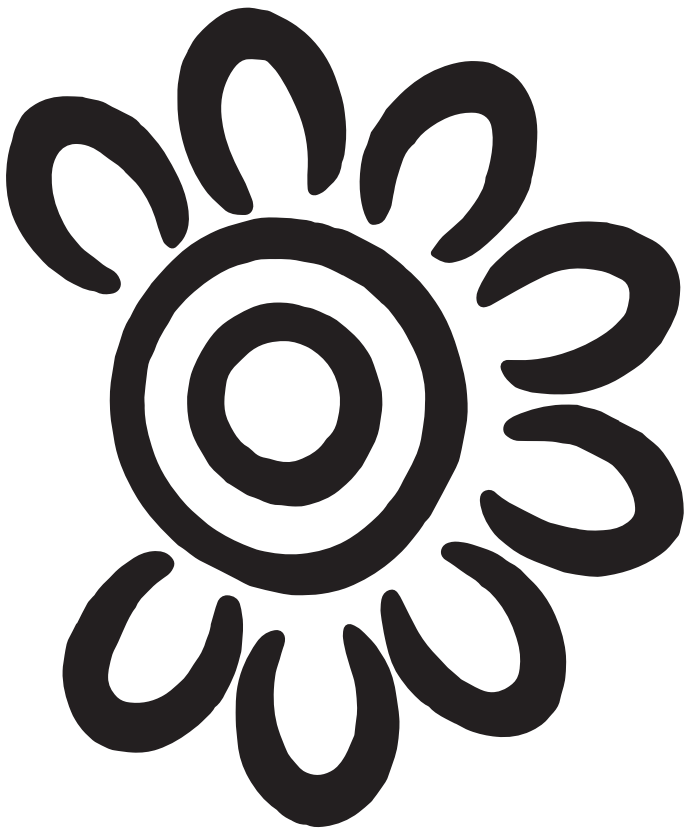
NREC's vision is the Ngarrindjeri vision, and we are working together as a Nation to create and deliver a regional development agenda that will strengthen opportunities for our children now and into the future, maintain our culture and create stronger relationships within our community and its partners.

NREC are in the process of negotiating an empowerment model that will bring our community into the national joint decision-making process: joint decision making by an empowered Ngarrindjeri Ruwe community.



# Our Vision

NREC's vision is for all Ngarrindjeri people to care, share, know, and respect the lands, the waters, and all living things of our Yarlular-Ruwe. We pay respect to the courage, resilience, creativity, and leadership of past generations (the Old People).



Our goal is that Ngarrindjeri are empowered to control the decisions that impact our lives and will exercise our cultural responsibility to respect and support all Indigenous people living on our Ruwe.

We will influence and make decisions at every touch point of our life: governance, health, education, business, employment, country, housing, wellbeing, culture, and language – a healthy country with healthy people.

Our aim is to be an empowered Nation (community) that produces creative, healthy, confident people and to respect and support other Indigenous people living on Ruwe.

Together we will create education and career pathways which will help keep our people on Country and build leaders. We will also build strong relationships with our Ngarrindjeri people living away from Country.

By creating these pathways, we will be investing in our children – our future leaders and in our own regional development, securing our sovereignty for present generations and all the generations to come.

Our approach to co-design with Commonwealth, State and Local Governments will be informed by the experience and wisdom of our community, our leaders, our strategic planning, and our Nation's vision.

NREC values and respects the voices of our Nation and our communities. The decisions that impact Ngarrindjeri people must rest with the Ngarrindjeri people. Ngarrindjeri are bound by cultural responsibility to respect and value the voices and experience of other Indigenous people living on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe.

We see a future where Ngarrindjeri have negotiated a Treaty with settler Australians. A future where we control our destiny and have respectful partnerships with non-Indigenous governments.



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# Joint Decision Making Framework

NREC, acting as a neutral convenor, will work with regions, government, corporates, and other key stakeholders to implement the region's strategic vision and goals through a well-designed and all-encompassing Joint Decision Making (JDM) framework. This framework will support collaborative decision making to ensure the strategic use of non-Indigenous government investment to best support community needs and wants.

Our First Nation led decision-making process will identify programs and service providers to support long-term, sustainable community development in Ngarrindjeri Ruwe.

The JDM community panels will assess proposed programs and initiatives which significantly impact on our community. This will ensure strong connections to the priorities in our Regional Development Agenda.

The JDM framework will align with the Ngarrindjeri Nation vision and goals. It will be co-designed by the Ngarrindjeri Nation, the NREC Board, the Ngarrindjeri Ruwe community and non-Indigenous government agencies. Our board consists of well-respected Ngarrindjeri leaders who bring the voices of the people to the decision-making table. This will strengthen broad community input into what is invested into the region.

Community panels will be assembled to ensure organisations and individuals with relevant expertise and skills are included.



NREC has commenced the scoping of a Regional Prosperity Plan to support economic growth and prosperity.

## Stakeholder Network





# Opt-In Organisations and Partnerships

NREC relies on partnerships with organisations in the community to be able to identify priorities and opportunities, and influence policy and social reforms. These organisations are known as Opt-In Organisations, which are registered Aboriginal-controlled service organisations, committed to working with NREC to co-design initiatives and actions for empowerment within the community.

Our Opt-In Organisations are vital in bringing the voice of Ngarrindjeri and other Indigenous people living on Ruwe to the table to assist us in joint decision-making processes. This helps ensure that all initiatives are centred around broad community priorities.

Currently, we have five Opt-In Organisations who have partnered with NREC to empower our communities and are in discussion with further groups.

By building our partnership base with organisations on our Country, we will be better prepared in our work with non-Indigenous government bodies and other stakeholders to address our priorities and make the most of opportunities.





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# Ngarrindjeri Nation and broader Indigenous community priorities

In 2019 NREC talked with citizens of the Ngarrindjeri Nation, Ngarrindjeri organisations and with Indigenous people living and working on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe. Our Regional Development Agenda is based on seven priorities emerging from these discussions.

The Regional Development Agenda is a living strategy, and we will continue to listen, engage, and respond to our community's voice.

We will establish effective and responsive community engagement and communication mediums. Continuous input and joint decision-making with our leaders, organisations and community are essential to ensure that we are always focused on Ngarrindjeri priorities.

Our NREC Regional Development Agenda builds on the strategic planning of our Ngarrindjeri leaders and Elders and closely aligns with the strategic goals of our Opt-In Organisations.

Extensive community engagement is underway to revisit priorities and develop programs for actions aligned with our objectives. Additionally, we will be working in conjunction with community to collaborate on programs for action and implementation.

"Stitch by stitch, circle by circle, weaving is like the creation of life. All things are connected."

Auntie Ellen Trevorrow



# Our 7 Priorities



# Regional Development Agenda Action Plan

The Regional Development Agenda Action Plan will include strategies, actions and deliverables that consider important developments in local, national, and international contexts. This includes the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the proposed Voice to Parliament, and the new South Australian Government's support for the reinvigoration of a treaty process. NREC will work closely with community, our opt-in organisations, stakeholders, corporations and relevant government agencies.

The JDM framework will support our collaboration with our people, ensuring that their voices are heard throughout each action delivered and communicated in conjunction with our organisations and community.

The Action Plan is live and interactive, meaning that it is constantly in flux with opportunities for change, adaption and creation of new objectives and priorities as we work towards our goal and vision for our Nation, our region, people and Ruwe.

## Our key priority areas are:

**1. Healthy Country:** a healthy country and waters that supports positive intergenerational & personal well-being and cultural connection to country, driven by Ngarrindjeri Ruwe led initiatives.

**2. Healthy People:** Healthy bodies and minds, with a focus on access to culturally safe, physical, and mental health services and support that meet the social, emotional, and physical well-being needs of Ngarrindjeri Ruwe people of all backgrounds and abilities.

### **3. Future Generation Leadership:**

- a. Leadership development with a focus on building capability, inclusion and creating long term opportunities.
- b. Building stronger educational pathways and academic acknowledgement from early childhood development to school (R-12) through to tertiary education.

**4. Bring Community Together:** development, implementation, and maintenance of robust community engagement frameworks (including feedback pathways).

**5. Economic Empowerment:** Increase job growth opportunities, with a focus on increasing number of Ngarrindjeri Ruwe owned business, activating community own assets to create opportunities and acquisition of assets for further development, to ensure long term economic sustainability and security.

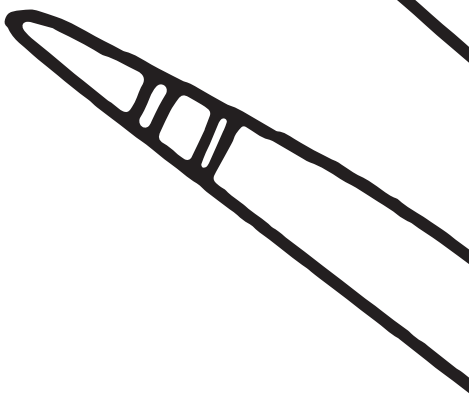
**6. Liveable Homes & Community Places:** vibrant and liveable homes and community places including recreational and cultural spaces that support ongoing well-being, place, and cultural connection.

**7. Kungan Nukkan Yunnan (listen, see and speak):** dynamic and effective communication platforms to encourage active community engagement and networking across the region, for community to have a place to listen, see and speak – having a voice.



# Regional Development Agenda: Our Data

Regional Development Agenda 2022-2023



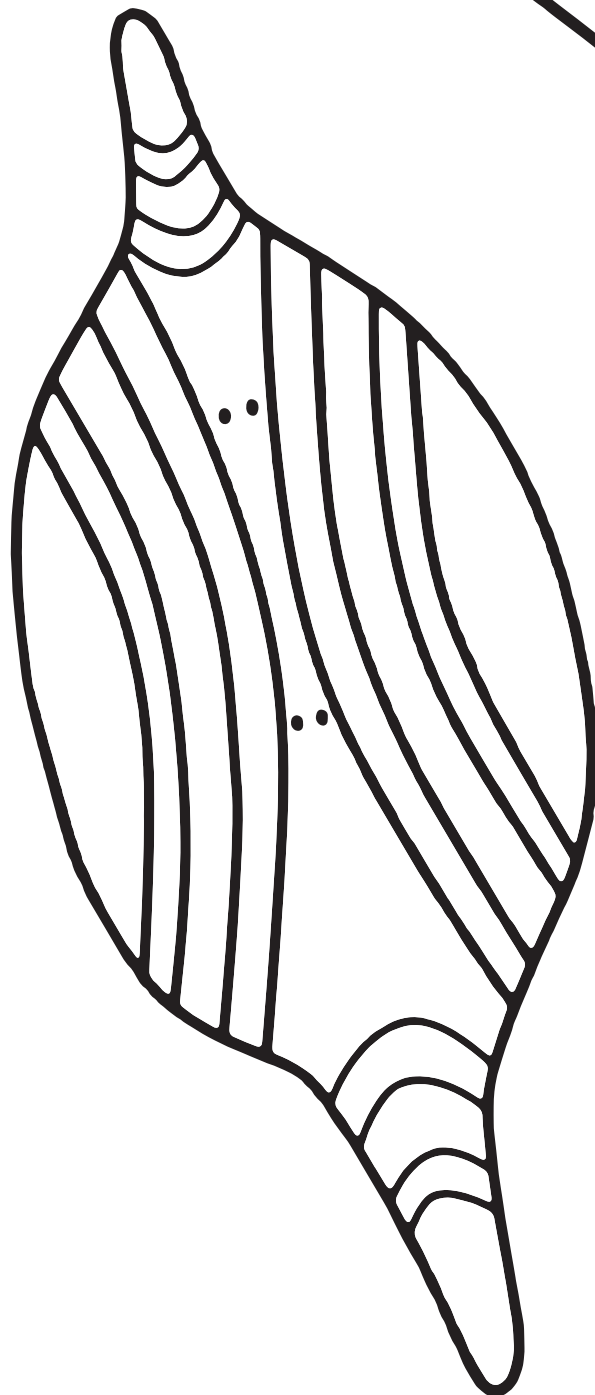
Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Empowered Communities (NREC) as the backbone organisation for Empowered Communities in the Lower River Murray, Lakes, and Coorong region (Ngarrindjeri Ruwe) has a responsibility to collect, collate, and as necessary, report relevant and meaningful data to decision-makers for the Ngarrindjeri Nation and communities.

#### **We do this through:**

- Accessing baseline data (ABS Census 2016)
- Obtaining and analysing current systems and services
- Mapping and tracking the use of government funding
- Building frameworks and engagement opportunities to fill relevant data and evidence gaps

We are working with key stakeholders, partners, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to establish our baseline data. This will be vital, as we move forward with our development agenda to ensure that we are able to build and report on evidence-based priorities and activities within the community.

Our goal for data in our region is to develop clear priorities, establish clear data sets that represent and show evidence of the work, we and our opt-in organisations are doing for our region, people and Yarlular-Ruwe.





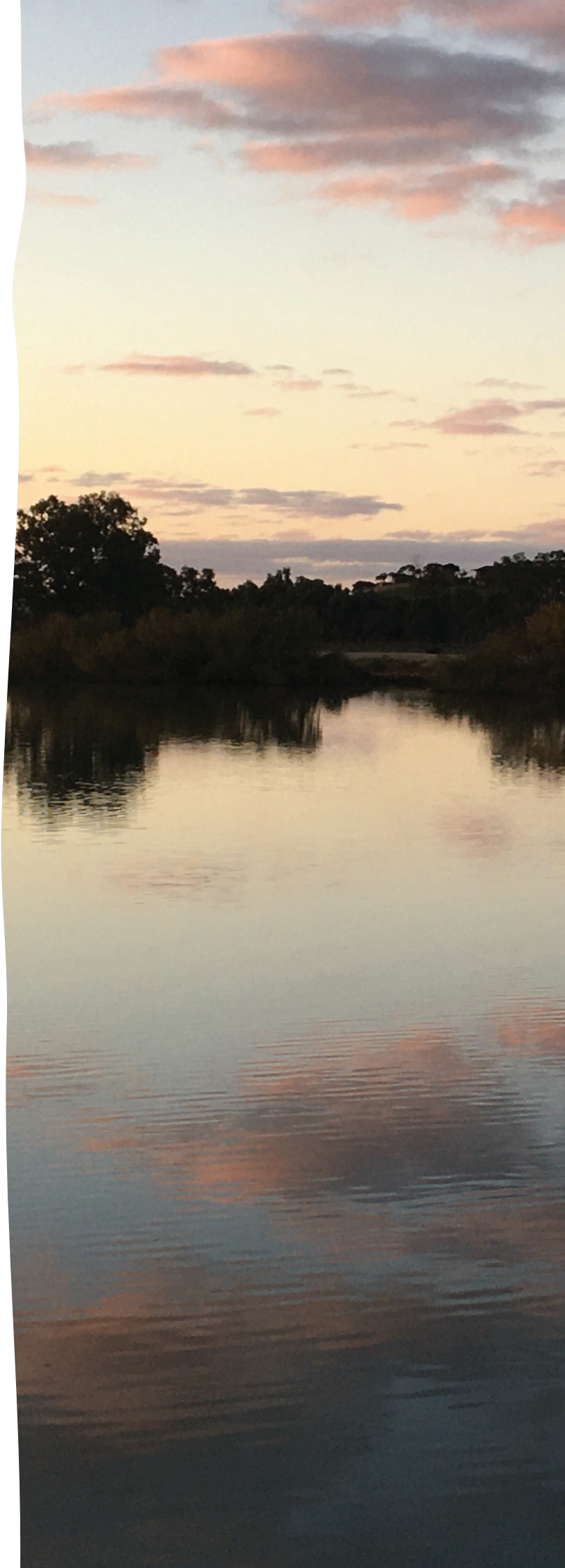
# Regional Development Agenda: Monitoring and Evaluation

The empowerment that we are envisioning for the Ngarrindjeri Nation is an ongoing and long-term process. To be able to evaluate the initiatives and action plans in this document and future ones, in influencing positive change within our community, means that we need to have a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. As part of this process NREC will utilise existing evaluation and monitoring frameworks based on Ngarrindjeri laws and values including the Yannarumi. Such frameworks will form the basis for NREC's monitoring and evaluation of the Regional Development Agenda.

**This framework will need to assess and track:**

- How we build knowledge about 'what works, for whom, and in what circumstances' for our region?
- The contribution programs, actions and initiatives are having (or not having) to the priorities of our nation and communities.
- Information and data to support decision making for programs (including adaption and re-design).
- A Ngarrindjeri oriented evidence base to support decision-making about funding and grant distributions.

We will develop capacity and expertise to collate, manage, research, and use data from across our Ruwe.





As we grow our capabilities as a Nation, we will build our partnerships between our opt-in organisations, governments, and other partners in the region, to create a shared measurement framework and to promote evidence-based decision-making and co-design.



Creative  
Healthy  
Confident  
Empowered  
Ngarrindjeri

**Ngarrindjeri Ruwe  
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