

## Enhancing Climate Justice and Resilience in WA Community Services

### An overview of the funded partnerships

A funded partnership involves co-designing and implementing a project that infuses climate justice and disaster resilience into your organisation's operations, policies, programs, and/or practices. A condition of the partnership is to work with researchers from ECU to collaboratively design, implement, evaluate, and document the organisation's journey through the project.

Your project will help to co-create outputs (such as stories, resources, tools and templates) that can be shared publicly in the online [Climate Justice and Resilience Toolkit](#). This is important because the opportunities, insights and challenges your organisation learns along the way can help other organisations in WA as we all prepare and respond to the different ways climate impacts communities, health, wellbeing and Country.

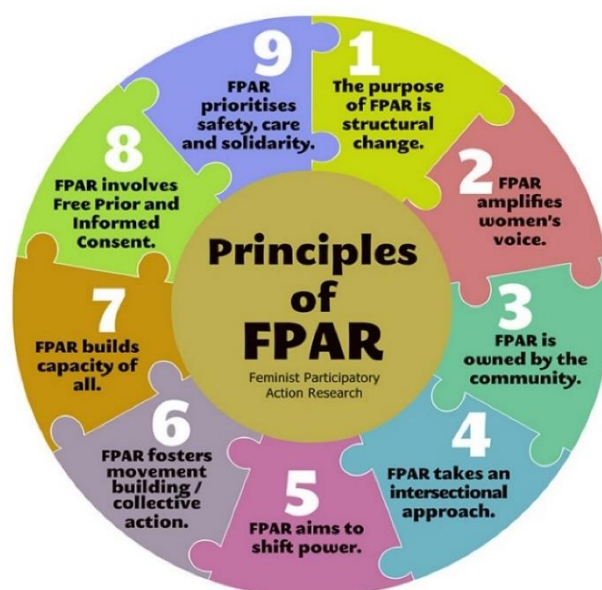
The ownership of any outputs arising from this project will be negotiated, especially where Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) is involved. The projects should align with any governance, research and ICIP processes the organization has. Nothing will be created or shared without Free Informed Prior Consent, and if necessary, agreed-upon outputs can be deidentified and modified before sharing.

### What makes this 'research'?

The researchers involved in this project use an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is not a traditional research process – it is a tool for social justice and transformative social and organisational change. In a PAR process, people work together to address a collectively identified problem by undertaking a project together – everyone involved becomes a co-researcher (rather than a participant) as we collectively decide on the question/problem we want to address and how we want to go about it in a way that creates *learnings and actions*!

PAR is a process for collective social inquiry done *with* and *by* a community, not *on* them. At the heart of PAR is the recognition that all people can observe the world around them, asking meaningful questions, gathering information, and making sense of complex issues – not just academic researchers. Our approach to PAR values lived experience, cultural knowledge, self-determination, two-way learning and many other principles (see Figure 1). Therefore, our partnership will aim to be an inclusive and equitable process grounded in the lived realities of people (communities, staff or volunteers) who are facing the impacts of climate injustice.

**Figure 1.** Principles of Feminist-PAR which are similar to other kinds of PAR like Youth-PAR, Decolonial-PAR, Community-based-PAR. (Source: [Godden, N.J.; Macnish, P.; Chakma, T.; Naidu, K. Feminist participatory action research as a tool for climate justice. \*Gender and Development\*. 2020, 28, 593–615.](#))



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### What each partner brings to the Participatory Action Research process



Centre for People,  
Place & Planet  
Strategic Research Centre

#### Organisation Contributions:

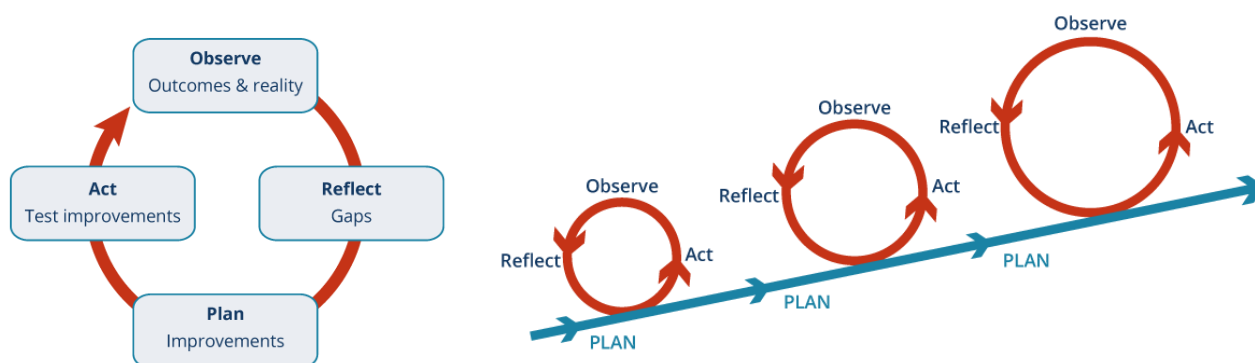
- Organisational and local knowledge.
- Aboriginal cultural governance and/or advisory group/process for the project.
- Lived Experience advisory group/process from people who access services and/or have relevant Lived Experience.
- Staff and practitioner experiences, insights, and relationships with community and organisations in the local area. Place-based stories of climate injustices and how these affect Country, community, and staff.
- Negotiating Research and ICIP protocols and agreements.
- Informing and following an ethical process.
- Collaborating in documentation and reviewing resources and outputs created.
- In-kind contributions, including staff, volunteers, and matched funds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ What else?

#### ECU Contributions:

- General knowledge of climate justice and disaster resilience issues and responses.
- Experience in PAR process and activities.
- Aboriginal and Lived Experience Governance.
- Negotiating Research and ICIP protocols and agreements
- Organising and following ethics process approved by the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee.
- Support for documenting information and translating learnings (as agreed) into accessible resources for the organisation and for the sector, including tools in the Toolkit, videos, reports, publications, policy advocacy, presentations, etc.
- Connection with other organisations on similar journeys.
- Funding up to \$50k and researchers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ What else?

### What does the Participatory Action Research process look like?

PAR often involves cycles of collectively identifying a problem, planning an action, undertaking that action, observing what happens, then reflecting on and making sense of the cycle before to inform the next cycle. These cycles continue until the problem is solved or the desired outcome is achieved (See Figure 2)



**Figure 2:** PAR cycle and cycles over time. Source: DHHS 2012, cited by [Australian Institute of Family Studies](https://www.aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/participatory-action-research) 2015 [aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/participatory-action-research](https://www.aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/participatory-action-research)

# Possible Pathway



## STEP 01

### Agree

Expression of Interest leads to Research Partnership Agreement + Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property agreement  
Research agreement co-developed and approved by all partners.



## STEP 02

### Organise

Assemble a team/working group of people who will be leading the project, ensuring diversity of perspectives and levels of influence. Decide how we will organise ourselves - how often to meet, how etc)



## STEP 03

### Define

Collectively define the problem, identify a 'research' question and aim to guide the project and process.



## STEP 04 (REPEAT)

### Action and reflection

Engage in iterative cycles of plan, act, observe and reflect. These can be embedded in existing activities or inform new ones. Continue until aims are met or the group decides.



## STEP 05

### Share

Decide which learnings to share and how (this can happen along the way too).



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### Possible pathway for the Climate Justice projects



- 1) **Collaboratively develop an agreement** – After the EOI process, establish a Research Partnership Agreement and an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property agreement. It is preferred that IP sits with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and the Community. Examples and templates are available on request.



- 2) **Assemble a team/working group of people who will be leading the project, ensuring diversity of perspectives and levels of influence. Decide how we will organise ourselves.**

Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
*E.G. key staff, key cultural and lived experience advisors, a senior/executive, ECU researchers.*

How often, when and where we meet: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations for a successful relationship:  
*E.G. guiding principles, values etc*



- 3) **Collectively define the problem, identify a 'research' question and aim to guide the project and process. Involves shared planning, joint design, and mutual learning.**

**Problem:**

**Questions:**

**Aims:**

#### **Example 1:**

**Problem:** Some of our projects seem to demonstrate strong community leadership for disaster resilience but others may not be meeting community needs and we don't have a process for collaborating with people with Lived Experience to finding out why or what to do.

**Question:** How, if at all, do our services and programs demonstrate climate justice and resilience? What are the barriers and enablers in each and how can these learnings be applied to deepen, improve or re-design programs/services to reduce climate injustices and disaster risks.

**Aim:** Collaboratively evaluate up to 4 programs and services through a climate justice lens with community members and staff, use insights to create recommendations, and plan a process to advocate for and implement changes.

#### **Example from the overarching project:**

**Problem:** Climate change and related disasters worsen social injustices and inequalities that some communities already face. Community service organisations play a crucial role in supporting communities to prepare and adapt so no one gets left behind. However, many organisations do not feel they have the knowledge, capacity, or capability to do so.

**Question:** How can Climate Justice and resilience be meaningfully infused into the WA community service sector?

**Aims:** 1) Document and share the journey (including challenges and opportunities) of how organisations infuse climate justice into their operations. 2) Progress towards and demonstrate disaster risk reduction and community resilience.

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### 4) Engage in iterative cycles of plan, action, observation and reflection. These can be embedded in existing activities or inform new ones

- **Planning and action** phases of cycles involve deciding on and then undertaking activities for example:
  - *Reviews of the organisation/programs – see the toolkit for ideas.*
  - *Desktop research on policies*
  - *Workshops with staff and community – see the toolkit for ideas.*
  - *Yarning and consultation with key people and groups*
  - *Evaluation activities*
- **Observation** phases involve documenting the actions, for example, by:
  - *Mapping or drawing local observations, networks or feelings*
  - *Recording stories, workshops, meetings or yarns (scribing or sound recording)*
  - *Collecting feedback surveys online or on paper*
  - *For more ideas see Oxfam (2024) Toolkit of Methods for Feminist Participatory Action Research. <https://asia.oxfam.org/latest/publications/toolkit-methods-feminist-participatory-action-research>*
- **Reflection** phases involve setting aside time throughout the process to collectively reflect on the journey and activities undertaken. Reflection is how we ‘analyse’ or make sense of the journey, asking what has been changing or challenging (and why), what to do about it, and what’s next. Reflection activities can involve:
  - *Yarning circles or paired yarns either during existing meetings/processes or setting aside new times and places to talk.*
  - *Making sense of what we observed during the previous cycle eg such as evaluations, surveys, or workshops and looking for important themes. EG examples of how change is or isn’t happening at a personal, organisational or community level.*
  - *Recording reflections via that are voice recordings, notes, reports, journals or any other creative or storytelling methods.*
  - *The same people leading the project or invite new perspectives, particularly from community members and workers.*

#### Cycle one:

Given the problem and question we want to address, **what actions** should we undertake and who should be involved? \_\_\_\_\_

As we **undertake actions**, how will our **observations** be recorded or measured and who will do this? \_\_\_\_\_

How should we make sense of what we did, experienced and observed and who (else) should be involved? How should we document our **reflections** (learnings, findings, recommendations) and what should we do with them (share, report, another cycle)? \_\_\_\_\_



### 5) When the aims are met or the group decides wrap up with a final reflection. Decide which learnings to share and how (this can happen along the way too).