Working with Women Alliance

GENVIC GENDER EQUITY VICTORIA

WEAVING CHANGE 2026

# A STATEMENT ON WEAVING CHANGE 2026

On 24 April 2026, 110 gender equity practitioners gathered at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne for Weaving Change – a national unconference held alongside Women Deliver 2026, and convened by Gender Equity Victoria and the National Women's Equality Alliance. Practitioners came from community, corporate, government, education, health and advocacy settings. There was no pre-set program. The participants set the agenda.

What emerged over the day was not a list of new findings. It was something more useful: a shared, structural analysis of where the work sits, where it is stuck, and what it will take to move it.

Across ten thematic sessions – **Intersectionality, Burnout, Disability, Economic Security, Gender-Based Violence, Leadership, Migrant Women, Sex and Gender, Tech IT and AI, and Collective Action** – alongside conversations on Climate as a frontier issue, participants made the same move again and again: from individual framings to structural ones, from inclusion language to power language, from naming problems to interrogating the systems that produce them.

We were clear with each other:

- **Intersectionality is a power analysis, not a vocabulary of identity.** It is not a synonym for diversity, and when it becomes one, it loses its analytical force.
- **Inclusion is not the goal.** Across multiple sessions, participants rejected inclusion as the frame. The work is redistribution of power, voice and authority – not addition of seats at an unchanged table.
- **Burnout is structural.** Workforce attrition in the gender equality sector is a collective, systemic risk, not a private failure. Short-term funding, perfectionism as cultural norm, and the inherent demands of values-driven work are the drivers.
- **Fragmentation is the binding constraint.** The sector is rich in analysis, relationships and commitment. It is poor in coordinating infrastructure – and current funding models actively reinforce that fragmentation.
- **The infrastructure for collective action is missing.** Participants named the need for a "feminist Town Square" – shared spaces, sector mapping, mechanisms to find each other and to act together.

# WHAT EMERGED?

The evaluation of the day reinforces this picture. Practitioners overwhelmingly valued the unconference format, with networking and cross-sector learning identified as its standout strengths. They left energised, with new collaborators and a sharper sense of the breadth of work being done across the field. They also left clear about what is still needed: deeper collaboration, sustained resourcing, genuine intersectional practice, and attention to underserved issues – particularly climate, AI, migrant and refugee women, and gender-based violence.

## What participants said in the closing circle is what we want to say now:

> ***We know what we want. We just don't know how to do it.***

> ***The unconference does not end today. It restarts tomorrow with all of us.***

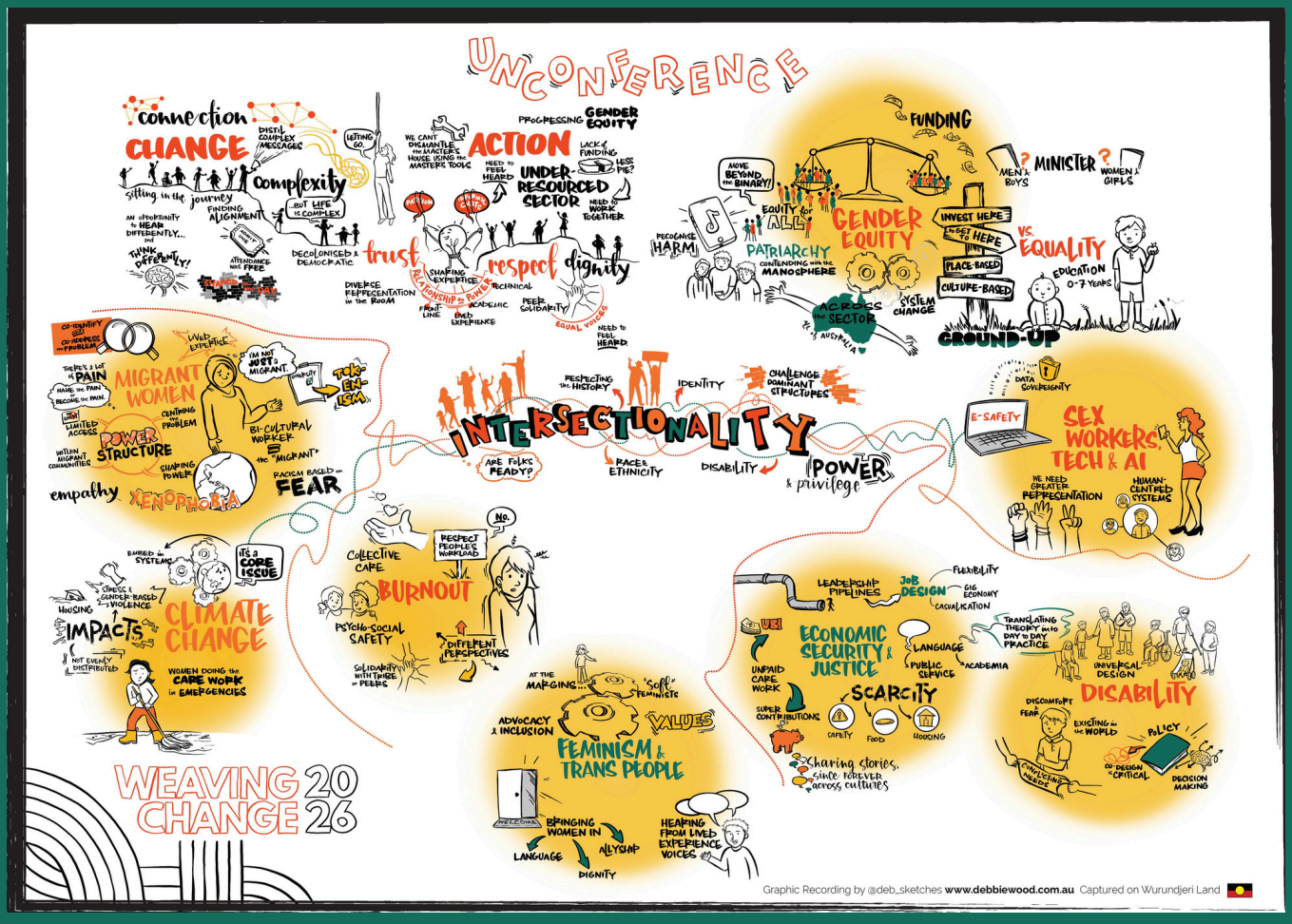
The gender equity sector is analytically mature and structurally constrained. The diagnosis is not the problem. What is needed is infrastructure – funding cycles that allow long-term work, coordination mechanisms that reduce fragmentation, governance frameworks for emerging technologies, structural mechanisms that go beyond gender alone, transformative justice systems, universal design embedded by default, payment for co-design participation, and the relational infrastructure of a movement that knows itself.

**Weaving Change was not an event. It was a beginning. The conversation continues – in our practices, in our coalitions, in the work we now build together.**

**To funders, government and sector leaders:**
the sector has done the analytical work. Resource the infrastructure.

**To practitioners across the country:** keep weaving. The strength of this movement is in its connections, and those connections are now stronger than they were the day before.

**To ourselves:** The work continues.

# SUMMARY REFLECTION STATEMENT ON WEAVING CHANGE 2026

On 24 April 2026, 110 gender equity practitioners gathered at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre for Weaving Change – a national unconference held alongside Women Deliver 2026. There was no pre-set program. The agenda was set by the people doing the work. Across ten sessions on intersectionality, burnout, disability, economic security, gender-based violence, leadership, migrant women, sex and gender, tech and AI, and collective action – together with conversations on climate as a frontier issue – practitioners made the same move again and again: from individual framings to structural ones, from inclusion language to power language. What emerged was a shared diagnosis. The sector is analytically mature and structurally constrained. Fragmentation is the binding barrier, not commitment. The work ahead is infrastructure – funding cycles that allow long-term work, coordination mechanisms that reduce fragmentation, and a feminist "Town Square" that allows the movement to know itself. As one participant put it: "The unconference does not end today. It restarts tomorrow with all of us."