

CREATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE CWA STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

*A Proposed Measurement Suite for Women's Cultural Labour,
Structural Harm, and Economic Value*

2026

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This suite comprises four documents presenting a proposed structural measurement framework for women's cultural labour in Australia. All instruments are at the conceptual development stage, seeking academic validation and legislative consideration, grounded in 75 years of international legislative precedent.

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As set out in The CWA Structural Framework: A Proposed Measurement Suite for Women's Cultural Labour, Structural Harm, and Economic Value, the suite establishes a unified evidential model addressing:

Structural harm (DCL)
Economic value and remuneration (ILV)
Workforce classification and sector recognition (CWI™)

Together, these instruments form a single, interdependent system designed to support academic validation, policy development, and legislative consideration, including the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

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$$DCL = (U + C + M) \times A \times F$$
$$ILV = W(S + T + R) \times G^{-1} \times t$$
$$CWI^{\text{TM}} = DCL \times P^{-1}$$

All associated variables, structural components, and weighting logic
The definitions of cultural work, cultural workforce, and Cultural Work & Provenance Sector
The Participation Discount Factor (P) and Gender Discount Factor (G) and their inverses
The legislative integration model linking measurement → valuation → sector classification
The concept of a three-instrument evidential system forming a legislative basis

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The Creative Women's Association actively seeks:

Academic validation partners

Policy and legislative collaborators

Research institutions and funding bodies

Enquiries:

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DCL names the damage. ILV names the debt. CWI names the sector.
Together they form the CWA Structural Measurement Suite — the proposed evidential foundation for the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

DOCUMENT INDEX

1

THE CWA STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

Framework Document

How the three instruments work together, what they establish collectively, and what is being asked for. Start here.

2

DOMESTIC & CARE LOAD (DCL) INDEX

White Paper — Instrument One

A proposed structural health metric quantifying the cumulative burden of unpaid labour, caregiving, mental load, allostatic stress, and financial precarity. Names the damage.

3

INTANGIBLE LABOUR VALUE (ILV) INDEX

White Paper — Instrument Two

A proposed valuation framework calculating the economic value of women's intangible cultural labour and specifying four mandatory remuneration mechanisms. Names the debt.

4

CULTURAL WORKFORCE INDEX™ (CWI)

White Paper — Instrument Three

A proposed integrated metric evaluating structural load as a constraint on cultural workforce participation, and making the case for formal recognition of a Cultural Work & Provenance Sector. Names the sector.

HOW TO READ THIS SUITE

IF YOU ARE...	READ...
Senator, policy adviser, or government department	Document 1 (Framework). Then the White Paper addressing your portfolio.
Researcher or academic	Document 1, then all three White Papers. Validation pathway in each.
Journalist or communicator	Document 1. Key figures and precedents are all there.
DFV, health, or community organisation	Document 1 and Document 2 (DCL).
Cultural heritage or arts organisation	Document 1 and Document 4 (CWI).
Economist or Treasury adviser	Document 1 and Document 3 (ILV).

C R E A T I V E W O M E N ' S A S S O C I A T I O N

THE CWA STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

A Framework Document

*How Three Proposed Instruments Work Together
to Make a Structural Injustice Irrefutable*

2026

A NOTE ON THIS DOCUMENT

This Framework Document sits above three White Papers produced by the Creative Women's Association: the Domestic & Care Load (DCL) Index, the Intangible Labour Value (ILV) Index, and the Cultural Workforce Index (CWI™).

Each White Paper addresses a distinct dimension of a single structural problem. This document explains how they work together, what they establish collectively, and what they are asking for.

The three instruments are proposed frameworks currently seeking academic validation, expert collaboration, and peer review. They are grounded in established empirical literature, aligned with 75 years of international legislative precedent, and developed in support of a proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

The argument assembled here is complete. The evidence is grounded. The precedent is established. The framework invites engagement from the academic, policy, and legislative community.

THE PROBLEM

Australia has a structural measurement failure.

Women perform 76% of Australia's unpaid domestic labour and 71.8% of primary caregiving (ABS 2022; WGEA 2024). This labour sustains the functional, social, and biological conditions on which all paid economic activity depends. It constitutes, under the definitional framework of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), a form of living cultural heritage: the transmission of knowledge, practice, and social continuity across generations.

It has never been formally classified. It has never been registered. It has never been protected. It has never been paid.

This is not an oversight. It is a structural consequence of a classification decision: women's labour has been framed as creative rather than cultural, as expressive rather than structural, as contribution rather than infrastructure. In policy and governance, that distinction is not semantic. It determines whether work is measured, whether practitioners are recognised, and whether protection is legally required.

Work framed as creative can be celebrated symbolically and ignored economically. Work classified as cultural carries obligations — to document, to register, to protect, and to remunerate the people who carry it. Japan has understood this since 1950. Australia has not yet made the same recognition.

The distinction between creative and cultural is not rhetorical. It is structural. Adjectives describe qualities of work. Nouns determine whether that work is recognised, governed, measured, and protected.

The three CWA instruments address this failure. Each one does a specific job. Together they make the problem legible to clinical, economic, and legislative systems — in terms those systems cannot dismiss as sentimental, speculative, or outside the scope of economic policy.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The CWA framework does not ask Australia to do something unprecedented. It asks Australia to do what other governments have already done, grounded in binding national legislation, for up to 75 years.

JURISDICTION	LEGISLATION	YEAR	RELEVANCE TO CWA FRAMEWORK
Japan	Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Act No. 214	1950	Sector classification; national bearer register; mandatory annual government payment to designated holders. Operative for 75 years.
Japan	Amendment to Act No. 214 — folk cultural expressions	1975	Extended protection from elite arts to everyday community cultural practices. Directly equivalent to Australia's current position.
Japan	Basic Act on Culture and the Arts (revised)	2017	Cultural policy as cross-sectoral infrastructure. State obligation to support economic conditions of cultural practitioners.
United Kingdom	Harris Tweed Act	1993	Statutory provenance certification mark. Mandatory economic protection for cultural producers. Criminal offence to misuse.
International	UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH	2003	Definitional and safeguarding framework. Intangible cultural heritage includes social practices, knowledge systems, and traditional craftsmanship.

The pattern across all five instruments is consistent: a government identifies a category of cultural practice that is being performed without formal recognition, names the practitioners who carry it, establishes a registration system, and creates a mechanism for economic support. In Japan's case, that mechanism has operated under binding law for 75 years without interruption.

Australia is currently in the position Japan was in before 1950: the cultural labour is being performed, the practitioners exist, the knowledge is being transmitted — and none of it is classified, registered, or protected. The proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act is Australia's equivalent legislative response.

THE THREE INSTRUMENTS

The CWA structural measurement suite comprises three proposed instruments, each addressing a distinct dimension of the same structural problem. They are designed to work together. Each closes arguments that the others leave open. Together they leave no analytical exit.

INSTRUMENT ONE — DOMESTIC & CARE LOAD (DCL) INDEX

$$\text{DCL} = (\text{U} + \text{C} + \text{M}) \times \text{A} \times \text{F}$$

Function: Structural harm measurement

Evidential role: Quantifies the cumulative physiological, cognitive, and economic damage imposed on women by the structural arrangement of unpaid labour, care, and financial precarity. Establishes that this damage is measurable, reproducible, and not attributable to individual pathology.

Legislative purpose: Grounds the duty of care provisions of the proposed Act. Establishes that the Commonwealth and employers have a measurable obligation, not a discretionary one, to address documented structural harm.

INSTRUMENT TWO — INTANGIBLE LABOUR VALUE (ILV) INDEX

$$\text{ILV} = \text{W}(\text{S} + \text{T} + \text{R}) \times \text{G}^{-1} \times \text{t}$$

Function: Economic valuation and mandatory remuneration

Evidential role: Calculates the market value of women's intangible cultural labour using five components: work intensity, skill depth, transmission value, replacement cost, and cumulative time. Applies the inverse of the gender discount factor (G^{-1}) to restore suppressed value. Establishes a retrospective debt of \$5.63 trillion (conservative basis) accruing at \$502 million per day since 1969.

Legislative purpose: Grounds four mandatory remuneration mechanisms under the proposed Act: the Care Credit (superannuation); the Replacement Cost Floor (minimum payment); the Provenance Premium (certification mark premium); and the Retrospective Correction Fund (partial correction of historical debt).

INSTRUMENT THREE — CULTURAL WORKFORCE INDEX™ (CWI)

$$\text{CWI}^{\text{TM}} = \text{DCL} \times \text{P}^{-1}$$

Function: Sector definition and workforce measurement

Evidential role: Proposes the formal classification of cultural work as a distinct economic and workforce sector — the Cultural Work & Provenance Sector — separate from creative industries. Measures structural load as a constraint on cultural workforce participation. Establishes that 0% of the cultural workforce currently operates under nationally recognised standards.

Legislative purpose: Grounds the sector classification provisions of the proposed Act: the Cultural Practitioner Register, the Southern Cross Mark certification authority, the procurement pathway for cultural work, and the workforce standards framework modelled on Japan's bearer designation system.

Each instrument is a proposed framework currently seeking academic validation. Each draws on independently established empirical literature. The novel contribution of each is the integration of those constructs; that integration is the primary subject of the proposed validation pathway.

HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

The three instruments address a single structural problem from three different analytical directions. The sequence is logical and cumulative.

INSTRUMENT	THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS	THE EXIT IT CLOSES	THE LEGISLATIVE CONSEQUENCE
DCL Index	What is being done to women?	'Women choose this arrangement'	Duty of care. Structural harm is measurable. The Commonwealth has a documented obligation to act.
ILV Index	What is owed?	'We cannot put a number on it'	Economic debt. The number is \$5.63 trillion conservative. It has a formula. It is not speculative.
CWI™	What sector is being denied recognition?	'This is a policy matter, not a structural one'	Sector existence. Cultural work is classifiable, governable, and legislatable. Japan proved this in 1950.

The instruments are designed so that each addresses the counter-argument most likely to be raised against the previous one. DCL establishes harm. When harm is established, the response is often: but what is the actual cost? ILV answers that. When cost is calculated, the response is often: but is this really a structural sector requiring legislation, or a social issue requiring programs? CWI answers that.

No single instrument closes all the exits. Together they do.

DCL names the damage. ILV names the debt. CWI names the sector. Each instrument does one job. Together they constitute a complete structural case.

THE PROPOSED AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL WORK & PROVENANCE ACT

The three instruments together constitute the proposed evidential foundation for an Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act. The Act is the legislative instrument that converts the evidence into enforceable obligations.

The proposed Act would establish:

- A formal Cultural Work & Provenance Sector as a recognised economic and workforce classification, separate from creative industries
- A Cultural Practitioner Register, modelled on Japan's bearer designation system under Act No. 214 (1950), providing formal recognition for women engaged in cultural work
- The Southern Cross Mark as the national provenance certification mark, modelled on the Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK)
- Four mandatory remuneration mechanisms grounded in the ILV Index: the Care Credit; the Replacement Cost Floor; the Provenance Premium; and the Retrospective Correction Fund
- Mandatory structural assessment (DCL and CWI) as a pre-condition for workforce decisions affecting cultural practitioners
- A procurement pathway for women-led cultural workforce development
- Alignment with UNESCO 2003 Convention safeguarding principles

This model is not theoretical. Japan enacted equivalent provisions in 1950 and has operated them continuously for 75 years. The Harris Tweed Authority has operated equivalent provenance provisions since 1993. The UNESCO framework has provided international alignment since 2003. Australia has the precedent, the data, and the framework. What remains is the legislative decision.

VALIDATION AND COLLABORATION

The three instruments are proposed frameworks at the conceptual development stage. The evidential case for the framework is established. The instruments themselves require formal psychometric validation, peer review, and expert collaboration before they can be presented as validated tools.

The CWA is actively seeking collaboration across the following disciplines:

DISCIPLINE	CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT
Psychometrics	Item development, factor structure, reliability testing, convergent validity across all three instruments
Public Health	Population-level validation, PHN integration, preventive health application
Gender Economics	Retrospective calculation methodology, replacement cost modelling, ILV quantum validation
Stress Physiology	Allostatic load component validation, biomarker correlation, DCL physiological grounding
Cultural Heritage	UNESCO alignment, bearer recognition framework, provenance methodology
DFV Research	Coercive control load patterns, DCL DFV application, structural harm evidence
Workforce Policy	CWI sector classification, procurement pathway design, standards framework
Law	Cultural Work & Provenance Act drafting, review of proposed legislative provisions

The CWA offers co-authorship on peer-reviewed publications arising from the validation work, access to the full research framework and data, and direct involvement in the development of a nationally significant measurement suite. This is original research with an established conceptual foundation. The validation work is the contribution being sought.

Funding pathways under consideration include Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants, Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) applications, and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) pathways. The CWA welcomes discussion of joint funding applications with academic partners.

WHAT THIS FRAMEWORK IS ASKING FOR

This framework document is asking for three things, in order.

First: Academic engagement

The three instruments require formal psychometric validation, expert review, and peer-reviewed publication. The CWA is seeking academic partners across the disciplines listed above to undertake that validation work in genuine collaboration. The framework is intellectually serious. The work will be treated as such.

Second: Policy engagement

The proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act represents a structural response to a documented structural failure. The CWA is seeking engagement from parliamentary representatives, policy advisers, and government departments across cultural affairs, gender equity, health, workforce, and treasury portfolios. The evidential package — the three White Papers and this Framework Document — is available in full.

Third: Institutional engagement

The CWA is preparing an application for NGO accreditation under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). It is seeking engagement from cultural institutions, heritage bodies, Primary Health Networks, DFV organisations, and workforce agencies who recognise the value of this framework and wish to be part of its implementation.

This framework is in development. The case for it is established. The validation is the next step. The legislation is the step after that. The CWA invites the people and institutions who can move it forward to make themselves known.

CONCLUSION

The work assembled in this framework — across three White Papers, a suite of proposed measurement instruments, and 75 years of international legislative precedent — makes a structural argument about a structural problem. It does not rely on sentiment. It does not ask for sympathy. It presents evidence, methodology, and precedent, and asks for the engagement those things warrant.

Women's cultural labour has always had value. The value was always there. What has been missing is the instrument that makes it measurable, the framework that makes it legible, and the legislation that makes its recognition mandatory.

The instruments are proposed. The framework is assembled. The precedent is 75 years old. The legislation is what comes next.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{DCL} &= (\text{U} + \text{C} + \text{M}) \times \text{A} \times \text{F} \\ \text{ILV} &= \text{W}(\text{S} + \text{T} + \text{R}) \times \text{G}^{-1} \times \text{t} \\ \text{CWI}^{\text{TM}} &= \text{DCL} \times \text{P}^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{DCL} + \text{ILV} + \text{CWI}^{\text{TM}} = \text{The proposed Australian Cultural Work \& Provenance Act}$$

Creative Women's Association

CREATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

DOMESTIC & CARE LOAD (DCL) INDEX

WHITE PAPER | 2026

*A Proposed Structural Determinant of Women's Health,
Functioning, and Economic Participation*

INSTRUMENT ONE OF THREE

CWA Structural Measurement Suite: DCL • ILV • CWI™

THIS INSTRUMENT: POSITION IN THE CWA FRAMEWORK

The Domestic & Care Load (DCL) Index is the first of three proposed structural measurement instruments developed by the Creative Women's Association. Together they constitute a framework seeking academic validation and legislative consideration, grounded in established international precedent.

DCL does not stand alone. It is the foundation on which the second and third instruments — the Intangible Labour Value (ILV) Index and the Cultural Workforce Index (CWI™) — are built. Each instrument addresses a distinct dimension of the same structural problem.

INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION	LEGISLATIVE ROLE	IN ONE LINE
DCL Index — Instrument One	Cost / Risk	Establishes structural harm requiring protection	Names the damage
ILV Index — Instrument Two	Value / Payment	Establishes economic debt requiring correction	Names the debt
CWI™ — Instrument Three	Sector / Participation	Establishes sector requiring legislative recognition	Names the sector

DCL names the damage. ILV names the debt. CWI names the sector. Together they constitute the evidential basis for the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

The DCL Index establishes the structural harm that makes legislative protection not merely desirable but, on the basis of the evidence assembled here, obligatory. It is the instrument that asks: what is being done to women by this structural arrangement? The ILV then asks: what is owed? The CWI asks: what sector is being denied recognition?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Domestic & Care Load (DCL) Index is a proposed structural health metric designed to quantify the cumulative burden of unpaid labour, caregiving, mental load, allostatic stress, and financial precarity — the five core determinants affecting women's health, safety, and economic participation.

While each component is independently recognised in the scientific literature, no existing validated framework integrates them into a single measurable index. As a result, women's distress is routinely misattributed to individual pathology rather than structural overload. The DCL Index proposes to fill this gap.

DCL is presented here as a proposed framework seeking academic validation and expert collaboration. It draws on established empirical constructs from public health, psychology, economics, and stress physiology. It is not a diagnostic instrument. It is a structural measurement tool designed to contextualise symptoms within structural conditions — providing the kind of pre-diagnostic information that the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability & Health (2001) already mandates be evaluated before disorder classification.

This White Paper seeks expert partners to refine, validate, and publish the DCL Index as a foundational structural determinant of women's wellbeing, and to position it as the first instrument in the CWA structural measurement suite supporting the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The DCL Index is developed within an international context in which governments have demonstrated — through binding legislation — that structural recognition and protection of cultural practitioners is both possible and operative. This context is directly relevant to the legislative pathway the DCL framework supports.

Japan: Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950, Act No. 214)

Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1950. The legislation recognised that the human bearers of intangible cultural heritage — individuals whose sustained practice carries cultural knowledge across generations — require formal state protection. The law established a designation system, a national register, and mandatory annual government payment to designated holders. That payment has continued without interruption for 75 years.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan Act No. 214 (1950) — Bearer Recognition and Mandatory Protection

The national government designates especially significant Intangible Cultural Properties as Important Intangible Cultural Properties, simultaneously recognising individuals or groups who have achieved advanced mastery of the technique as the holder. The national government provides special grants (¥2 million per year) for recognised individual holders and subsidises training programs for successors. (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, bunka.go.jp)

Critically, Japan's 1975 amendment to this law extended protection to folk cultural expressions — the everyday practices of ordinary communities — which had previously been documented but not protected. The DCL Index addresses Australia's equivalent position: women's structural labour is documented in ABS time-use surveys and WGEA reports, but neither the practitioners nor the conditions they operate under are formally recognised or protected.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan 1975 Amendment — Documentation Is Not Protection

Folk cultural expressions were for a long time not considered cultural properties under the law, but were seen as only requiring documentation. This changed in 1975 when folk cultural expressions were legally recognised as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties. (International Journal of Intangible Heritage, 2007)

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

The UNESCO 2003 Convention establishes that safeguarding intangible cultural heritage requires ensuring the viability of cultural practices — including through measures aimed at recognition of practitioners and transmission of knowledge. The Creative Women's Association is preparing an application for NGO accreditation under this Convention. Although

Australia has not ratified it, the Convention's safeguarding principles directly inform the CWA framework.

INTRODUCTION

Despite extensive research into gender inequality, unpaid labour, time poverty, and chronic stress, no validated tool currently quantifies the combined structural burden of unpaid labour, caregiving intensity, cognitive load, and economic strain as a single integrated measure.

Clinical systems continue to rely on symptom-based tools — the PHQ-9, GAD-7, and DSM assessments — without evaluating the structural conditions producing those symptoms. This omission contributes to misdiagnosis, pharmaceutical intervention where structural supports are needed, invisibility of unpaid labour and cognitive load, poor triage and referral pathways, inadequate workforce policy, and gendered economic disadvantage over the life course.

The DCL Index proposes a scientifically grounded, policy-aligned framework to address this gap. It is the first instrument in a three-part suite designed to make the structural conditions of women's lives legible to clinical, policy, and legislative systems.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF DCL

DCL (Domestic & Care Load) is a proposed structural health determinant designed to quantify the cumulative impact of unpaid domestic labour, caregiving responsibility, cognitive and mental load, chronic physiological stress, and economic precarity on an individual's physiological, emotional, cognitive, and economic functioning.

Category: Proposed Structural Health Determinant

Type: Predictive Load Index (proposed)

Status: Seeking academic validation and expert collaboration

Function: Contextual assessment and early risk identification

Use: Screening, triage, public health planning, workforce modelling, policy, and research

Not: A diagnosis or psychiatric disorder classification

Comparable validated index families whose methodology informs this proposal include: ACE Score (Felitti et al. 1998), Allostatic Load Index (McEwen 1998), Frailty Index (Rockwood et al. 2005), Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10, Kessler et al. 2002), and Zarit Burden Index (Zarit et al. 1980). The DCL Index applies a similar integrative logic to a domain not yet captured by any existing instrument.

THE DCL FORMULA

$$\text{DCL} = (\text{U} + \text{C} + \text{M}) \times \text{A} \times \text{F}$$

The formula integrates five independently validated empirical constructs. The multiplicative structure reflects evidence that structural pressures compound rather than add, consistent with stress physiology and social determinants research. The interaction effects between domains are not linear: financial precarity, for example, does not merely add to domestic load — it amplifies the physiological impact of all other components.

Domain Definitions

U — Unpaid Domestic Work (Time-Use Load)

The quantifiable time and intensity of unpaid labour associated with household functioning. Operational components include hours of weekly domestic labour, cognitive bandwidth required for task-switching, frequency of high-demand tasks, and household management responsibilities. Empirical foundation: OECD (2020) Gender and Time Use Data; ABS (2022) Unpaid Work and Care Report; Strazdins et al. (2016).

C — Care Work (Caregiving Intensity Index)

The scope, frequency, and emotional and physical complexity of caregiving activities. Components include number and age of dependants, disability- or illness-related care, emotional caregiving, behavioural and developmental support, and night-time caregiving interruptions. Empirical foundation: Zarit Burden Index (Zarit et al. 1980); Caregiver Burden Index (Pearlin et al. 1990); ANU Work-Care models (Strazdins).

M — Mental Load (Cognitive-Emotional Labour Load)

The cognitive, anticipatory, and emotional processing required to coordinate household, family, and relational responsibilities. Components include planning and scheduling duties, anticipatory cognitive labour, invisible task management, emotional regulation on behalf of others, and responsibility for organising others' lives. Empirical foundation: Daminger (2019) American Sociological Review; Offer (2014).

A — Allostatic Load (Physiological Stress Burden)

The cumulative biological wear from chronic stress exposure. Components include sleep disruption, hormonal dysregulation, HRV reductions, cortisol and autonomic reactivity patterns, fatigue profiles, and immune and metabolic shifts. This component integrates one of the most robustly validated constructs in stress physiology. Empirical foundation: McEwen (1993–2020); Juster, Marin et al. (2010).

F — Financial Precarity (Economic Vulnerability Multiplier)

The level of economic stability, autonomy, and exposure to financial constraint or coercion. Components include income stability, employment precarity, access to personal discretionary funds, savings and debt ratio, exposure to financial abuse or partner control, and risk of housing insecurity. Empirical foundation: ANROWS (2021); AIHW (2020); Good Shepherd Australia (2019).

Rationale for Multiplicative Structure

The multiplicative model reflects: non-linear amplification effects consistent with stress physiology (McEwen 1998; Juster et al. 2010); synergistic domain interactions where financial precarity dramatically magnifies the physiological impact of domestic and care load; and alignment with established public health modelling of cumulative disadvantage. This structure is proposed as a more accurate representation of real-world structural burden than an additive model, and is a primary subject for validation in the proposed research pathway.

PROPOSED SCORING MODEL

The following scoring framework is proposed for validation. Ranges and threshold definitions are indicative and subject to psychometric testing, expert review, and pilot study refinement.

SCORE	LOAD LEVEL	INDICATIVE PROFILE	POLICY IMPLICATION
0–20	Low Load	Stable finances, shared duties, manageable mental load.	Baseline. Structural conditions support participation.
21–40	Moderate Load	Typical domestic load with emerging strain. Time poverty beginning.	Early intervention monitoring warranted.
41–60	High Load	Primary carer, limited support, moderate financial instability.	Structural supports required. Workforce participation at risk.
61–100	Critical Load	Single parenthood, financial precarity, high allostatic stress, complex care.	Urgent structural intervention indicated. DFV risk elevated.
100+	Crisis Load	High risk for health deterioration, DV vulnerability, collapse of functioning.	Emergency structural protection required under proposed Act.

This index reflects proposed risk thresholds, not diagnosis. It contextualises symptoms within structural conditions. Threshold definitions, weighting of components, and scoring ranges are primary subjects for validation in the proposed research pathway.

PROPOSED APPLICATIONS

Clinical and Psychosocial Use

- Distinguish structural overload from psychiatric pathology, reducing misdiagnosis rates
- Provide structural context prior to GP Mental Health Plans, PHQ-9, GAD-7, and DSM-based assessments
- Guide treatment planning toward structural supports rather than individual pathology frameworks
- Identify caregivers at risk before crisis presentation

Public Health and Primary Health Networks

- Triage women at risk within stepped-care models
- Target preventative programs at high-load populations
- Integrate with antenatal, postnatal, and community health assessment pathways
- Population surveillance and longitudinal health modelling

Domestic Violence and Coercive Control

- Contextualise coercive control through measured load: perpetrators manipulate sleep, financial access, and care burden as control mechanisms — all captured within DCL domains
- Provide objective structural evidence in DFV proceedings
- Identify DFV risk through load-pattern recognition, particularly in F (financial precarity) and A (allostatic disruption) components

Workforce, Policy, and Legislative Use

- Gender-responsive workplace adaptations informed by structural load data
- Economic modelling of unpaid cultural labour for national accounts and policy planning
- Pre-assessment instrument under the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act
- Population-level data for gender equality reporting frameworks (WGEA, AIHW, ABS)

EVIDENCE BASE

Each DCL domain corresponds to a validated empirical construct with an established literature base. The DCL Index proposes to integrate these constructs; the integration itself is the novel contribution requiring validation.

Unpaid Work (U)

Women in Australia perform 76% of unpaid domestic labour and 71.8% of primary caregiving (ABS 2022; WGEA 2024). Women perform 50–80% more unpaid work than men globally (OECD 2023). Time poverty resulting from this load predicts lower health outcomes, reduced workforce participation, and long-term economic disadvantage (Strazdins et al. 2016).

Care Work (C)

Caregiving intensity correlates with burnout, depression, economic instability, and long-term health decline (Pearlin et al. 1990; Schulz & Sherwood 2008). Physiological and emotional strain in caregiving is comparable to acute-care clinical professions (Schulz & Sherwood 2008).

Mental Load (M)

Women carry the majority of anticipatory, emotional, and organisational labour — the cognitive dimension of household management — resulting in decision fatigue, emotional strain, and cognitive overload (Daminger 2019). Persistent planning, vigilance, and emotional regulation generate chronic stress biomarkers comparable to high-stakes professional roles (Daminger 2019).

Allostatic Load (A)

Chronic stress alters neuroendocrine, inflammatory, and metabolic systems, impairing functioning across domains (McEwen 1998; Juster et al. 2010). Women performing combined paid and unpaid labour show elevated stress biomarkers (Schulz & Sherwood 2008; Juster et al. 2010).

Financial Precarity (F)

Financial precarity is among the strongest predictors of health deterioration, DV entrapment, and psychological distress (ANROWS 2021; AIHW 2020). Economic strain increases cortisol, reduces coping capacity, and worsens health outcomes (OECD 2021; AIHW 2022). The superannuation gap currently stands at 31% (WGEA 2024).

Misdiagnosis and Gender Bias

Women experiencing structural overload are frequently misdiagnosed with mood, personality, or somatic disorders (Hengartner 2017; Russo & Pirlott 2006; Cortland et al. 2022; WHO 2019). The DCL Index introduces required structural context prior to diagnostic interpretation.

VALIDATION PATHWAY

The DCL Index is at the conceptual development stage. The following pathway is proposed for formal validation, consistent with psychometric standards applied to comparable instruments.

1. Expert review: engagement of specialists in psychometrics, women's health, public health, stress physiology, gender economics, DFV, and cultural heritage to review domains, formula structure, and weighting rationale
2. Item development: translation of domain constructs into measurable assessment items with defined scoring criteria
3. Cognitive interviews and item refinement: pilot testing with target population to assess item clarity and construct coverage
4. Pilot study (n=20–30): initial reliability testing, distribution analysis, and face validity assessment
5. Psychometric validation: reliability (Cronbach's alpha), factor structure, convergent validity (K10, PSS, HRV), and criterion validity testing
6. Peer-reviewed publication: across public health, epidemiology, women's health, and gender studies journals
7. Implementation guidelines: development of clinical, public health, and policy application protocols

This validation pathway is suitable for Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant applications, Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) pathways, and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding. The CWA is actively seeking academic partners to lead this validation work.

CONCLUSION

The Domestic & Care Load Index proposes a first answer to a question that has not yet been formally asked in clinical, policy, or legislative systems: what is the measurable structural load imposed on women by the arrangement of unpaid labour, care, and economic precarity in which they operate?

Each component of the proposed index is independently supported by established research. The integration of those components into a single validated instrument is the contribution this framework seeks to make, subject to the rigorous validation pathway described above.

The DCL is the first of three instruments in the CWA structural measurement suite. It names the damage. The ILV names the debt. The CWI names the sector. Together they constitute the proposed evidential foundation for the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act — a legislative framework grounded in 75 years of international precedent, beginning with Japan's Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1950.

The CWA invites academic partners, clinical specialists, and policy researchers to engage with this framework. The work is in development. The case for it is established. The validation is the next step.

$$\text{DCL} = (\text{U} + \text{C} + \text{M}) \times \text{A} \times \text{F}$$

$$\text{DCL} + \text{ILV} + \text{CWI}^{\text{TM}} = \text{The proposed Australian Cultural Work \& Provenance Act}$$

Creative Women's Association

CREATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

INTANGIBLE LABOUR VALUE (ILV) INDEX

WHITE PAPER | 2026

*A Mandatory Valuation and Remuneration Framework
for Women's Intangible Cultural Labour*

PREFATORY NOTE: ON THE WORD 'MANDATORY'

This document uses the word mandatory with intention and precision.

Every remuneration mechanism described in this White Paper is mandatory. Not aspirational. Not recommended. Not subject to future appropriation decisions, ministerial discretion, or budget cycles.

Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1950. It did not suggest that the government might consider supporting the bearers of intangible cultural heritage. It designated them. It registered them. It paid them — by law, annually, from the national budget. That payment has continued without interruption for 75 years.

The ILV Index applies the same legislative logic to the largest unprotected category of cultural practitioners in Australia: women performing intangible cultural labour. The equation calculates what is owed. The remuneration mechanisms specify exactly how it is paid. The proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act makes the payment non-negotiable.

This is not a request. It is a calculation, a mechanism, and a legislative instrument. All three are present in this document. All three are required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Intangible Labour Value (ILV) Index is the first structural valuation and mandatory remuneration framework designed to quantify the economic value of women's intangible cultural labour and specify the legal mechanisms through which that value is paid.

Women in Australia perform 76% of all unpaid domestic labour and 71.8% of primary caregiving (ABS 2022; WGEA 2024). This labour sustains the functional, social, and biological conditions upon which all paid economic activity depends. It constitutes intangible cultural heritage under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). It has been performed, uninterrupted, for the entirety of Australian settlement — and it has never been paid.

The ILV Index corrects this through a mathematically grounded equation, four mandatory remuneration mechanisms, and direct reference to the international legislative precedents that prove governments can and do pay the bearers of intangible cultural knowledge — when they choose to name them.

The naming is the first act. This document completes it.

INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION	LEGISLATIVE ROLE
DCL Index	Cost / Risk	Proves structural harm requiring protection
ILV Index	Value / Payment	Proves debt and specifies mandatory remuneration
CWI™ (Cultural)	Sector / Participation	Proves sector requiring legislative recognition

DCL says: this is breaking women. ILV says: this is what is owed, and this is how it is paid.

INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIVE PRECEDENT

The ILV Index does not propose a novel or untested approach to remunerating cultural practitioners. It applies a model that has been operating in law for 75 years. The failure is not one of imagination. It is one of political will.

Japan: Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950, Act No. 214)

Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties on 29 August 1950. The law established, for the first time, that intangible cultural properties — defined as cultural products of high historical or artistic value including drama, music, and craft techniques — require formal designation by the state, and that the human beings who hold those techniques require formal recognition and economic support.

The law created three categories of holder recognition: individual recognition, collective recognition, and group recognition. Individuals designated as holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties are informally known as Living National Treasures — Ningen Kokuhō. This designation is not honorary. It is operative. It triggers a mandatory annual government grant of ¥2 million (≈ AUD \$21,000 at current rates) per designated individual, paid from the national budget.

INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan Act No. 214 (1950) — Bearer Recognition and Mandatory Payment

The national government designates especially significant Intangible Cultural Properties as Important Intangible Cultural Properties, simultaneously recognising individuals or groups who have achieved advanced mastery of the technique as the holder of that Important Intangible Cultural Property. For the protection of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, the national government provides special grants (¥2 million per year) for recognised individual holders and also subsidises training programs for successors. (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, bunka.go.jp)

This is not a subsidy. It is not a grant program subject to annual appropriation discretion. It is a legislative payment obligation triggered by formal designation under the Act. The bearer is registered. The payment flows. It has done so without interruption since 1950.

By December 2020, 371 individuals had been designated as Living National Treasures since the Act's enactment. Each received the annual government payment as a legal entitlement, not a discretionary allocation.

Japan's 1975 Amendment: The Folk Cultural Expression Precedent

The most directly relevant precedent for the ILV framework is not the original 1950 Act but the 1975 amendment to it.

Prior to 1975, folk cultural expressions — the everyday practices of ordinary communities, as distinct from elite performing arts — were documented by the state but not protected under law. They were acknowledged. They were not paid. They were treated as requiring recording, not safeguarding.

This is precisely the current position of women's intangible cultural labour in Australia. It is documented in ABS time-use surveys. It is acknowledged in WGEA reports. It appears in DCL and ILV calculations. But it is not protected. It is not paid. It is treated as requiring acknowledgement, not remuneration.

▶ **INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan 1975 Amendment — Recognition of Folk Cultural Expressions**

Folk cultural expressions were not considered cultural properties under the original law, but were seen instead as only requiring documentation. This changed in 1975 as a result of further amendments to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, when folk cultural expressions were legally recognised as elements within a new classification system as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties. (International Journal of Intangible Heritage, 2007)

Japan's 1975 amendment proves that a government can identify a category of intangible cultural practice that has been documented but unprotected, and choose — through legislation — to bring it within the protection framework. The political decision precedes the system. The system then makes payment mandatory.

Australia is currently at the pre-1975 position. The ILV Index, the DCL Index, and the Cultural Workforce Index constitute the documentation. The proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act is the 1975 amendment. The four remuneration mechanisms are the payment system that follows.

Japan's Basic Act on Culture and the Arts (2001, revised 2017)

Japan's Basic Act on Culture and the Arts, first enacted in 2001 and substantially revised in 2017, established that cultural policy is cross-sectoral infrastructure — not an arts supplement. The revised Act explicitly calls for collaboration across tourism, town development, international exchange, social welfare, education, and industry, treating cultural practitioners as essential contributors to national capability rather than recipients of arts patronage.

The 2017 revision extended this framework to include the economic dimensions of cultural work, establishing that the state has an obligation to support the conditions under which cultural practitioners can sustain their practice economically. This is the legislative foundation for the ILV's Replacement Cost Floor mechanism.

Harris Tweed Authority: Provenance as Economic Protection (United Kingdom)

The Harris Tweed Authority, established under the Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK), provides the second key legislative precedent. The Act created a statutory certification mark — the Orb

mark — that can only be applied to Harris Tweed produced by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the islands.

The significance for the ILV framework is not the product. It is the mechanism. The Harris Tweed Act uses provenance certification as an economic protection instrument — the mark prevents the devaluation of the practitioner's labour through imitation, and attaches a price premium to certified work that flows directly to the producer.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK) — Provenance as Mandatory Economic Protection

The Harris Tweed Act 1993 established a statutory definition of Harris Tweed and a certification authority with the power to apply and protect the Orb mark. The Act made it an offence to apply the mark to fabric not meeting the statutory definition. The provenance certification is not optional: it constitutes the economic boundary within which practitioners operate, and the premium it commands is a legislatively protected economic entitlement of the producer.

The ILV's Provenance Premium mechanism applies this model directly to women's cultural labour. The Southern Cross Mark, administered by CWA under the proposed Cultural Work & Provenance Act, functions as the Orb mark for Australian cultural practitioners: it certifies the origin and authenticity of cultural work, and the premium it commands is a mandatory economic entitlement of the bearer, not a voluntary market outcome.

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

The UNESCO 2003 Convention provides the international framework within which all four remuneration mechanisms are grounded. The Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as encompassing practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognise as part of their heritage, and establishes that safeguarding requires ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage — including through measures aimed at ensuring access, transmission, and the recognition of practitioners.

The Creative Women's Association is preparing an application for NGO accreditation under the 2003 Convention, recognising its work in safeguarding living cultural practice through systems that support skills transmission, provenance, and the recognition of cultural practitioners as bearers of heritage.

Although Australia has not ratified the 2003 Convention and therefore does not operate formal national safeguarding mechanisms, CWA is developing practical frameworks aligned with the Convention's safeguarding principles, connecting cultural practice, workforce infrastructure, and economic participation. The ILV Index is the economic instrument that makes those principles operationally mandatory rather than aspirationally stated.

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

E=mc² as the Model for the ILV

In 1905, Albert Einstein did not create energy. He proved that mass already contained it — in a form that existing instruments could not detect or measure. The equation $E=mc^2$ did not argue that energy should exist within matter. It demonstrated that it does. The instrument changed everything that followed: not because it created new reality, but because it made existing reality irrefutable.

The ILV Index applies this logic to women's intangible cultural labour. The value already exists. It is embedded in every child raised, every cultural practice transmitted, every community held together, every household maintained. What has been missing is not the value. What has been missing is the instrument capable of measuring it and the legislative framework that makes payment mandatory once it is measured.

Japan built the legislative framework in 1950. The ILV provides the instrument. The proposed Cultural Work & Provenance Act makes payment mandatory in Australia.

The Gender Discount and Its Inverse: G^{-1}

Every economic system that has failed to account for women's intangible cultural labour has applied what the ILV framework terms the Gender Discount Factor (G): a structural penalty that collapses the measured value of this labour toward zero. This discount is not accidental. It has been reinforced through policy, law, taxation, superannuation design, procurement frameworks, and the foundational assumptions of GDP as a national accounting measure.

The ILV equation applies the inverse of this discount: G^{-1} . In mathematical terms, if G approaches zero, G^{-1} approaches infinity. The suppressed value, correctly measured, is not small. The current payment rate — zero — is the anomaly requiring correction. The ILV equation makes this visible in the structure of the formula itself.

G^{-1} is not a rhetorical device. It is the algebraic expression of the same legislative correction Japan applied in 1950: a government that had previously assigned zero formal value to the bearers of intangible cultural knowledge chose to invert that assignment and pay them. G^{-1} is that inversion, expressed as mathematics.

THE ILV EQUATION

$$ILV = W(S + T + R) \times G^{-1} \times t$$

The equation calculates the total economic value of a woman's intangible cultural labour, accounting for the work performed, the skills embedded in it, the generational value it transmits, its market replacement cost, the structural discount that has been applied to it, and the cumulative time over which it has been performed without compensation.

W — Work Intensity

The volume, complexity, and sustained nature of intangible cultural labour performed. Captures unpaid domestic work, caregiving coordination, emotional labour, social maintenance, and cultural transmission activities. Measures both frequency and the cognitive bandwidth required to sustain performance under conditions of chronic demand.

Empirical foundation: ABS Time Use Survey (2022); OECD Gender Data Portal (2023); Daminger (2019); Strazdins et al. (2016).

S — Skill Depth

The embedded expertise required to perform intangible cultural labour. This is not instinct. It is accumulated cultural knowledge — of child development, nutritional management, relational dynamics, community care, traditional practice, and crisis response. Skills developed over years, transmitted across generations, and irreplaceable if lost. Japan's designation system for Living National Treasures is premised on exactly this recognition: that skills of sufficient depth and cultural significance warrant state protection and payment.

The absence of a wage for cultural care work does not indicate an absence of skill. It indicates an absence of measurement. The ILV provides that measurement.

Empirical foundation: Folbre (2001); England (2005); Himmelweit (2007); UNESCO ICH Convention domains (2003); Japan Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Act No. 214 (1950).

T — Transmission Value

The generational multiplier. This is the mc^2 of the ILV equation — the component that makes the calculation non-linear and transforms a one-person assessment into a civilisational one.

Skills, knowledge, values, and cultural practices transmitted from one woman to the next generation do not end with her. They compound forward across multiple generations. Japan's legislative framework for bearer recognition is built on this principle: the state funds the Living

National Treasure not merely to honour the individual but to ensure the transmission continues. The payment is to the bearer; the benefit is to the culture.

Transmission Value is the reason women's intangible cultural labour constitutes intangible cultural heritage under the UNESCO 2003 Convention. Its loss is not a personal loss. It is a civilisational one — and one that, in Japan's framework, triggers a legal protection obligation.

Empirical foundation: UNESCO ICH Convention (2003); Japan Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, 1975 amendment (folk cultural expressions); Becker (1981); OECD (2020) intergenerational transmission.

R — Replacement Cost

What the market would charge if this labour were purchased. The most conservative measure of value available: it asks not what the labour is worth to human civilisation, but merely what it would cost to replace it at current market rates. R establishes the Replacement Cost Floor — the minimum payment threshold below which no arrangement involving a cultural practitioner's labour may legally fall under the proposed Act.

SERVICE CATEGORY	DAILY MARKET RATE (AUD)
Childcare (full day, centre-based)	\$120 – \$200
Aged care / disability support	\$80 – \$150
Domestic services (cleaning, cooking)	\$50 – \$120
Counselling / emotional support	\$180 – \$320
Community coordination / social work	\$250 – \$400
Cultural transmission / heritage education	\$200 – \$350
ESTIMATED DAILY TOTAL	\$880 – \$1,540

At 365 days per year, across a 40-year care life: the replacement cost of a single woman's intangible cultural labour exceeds \$12.8 million at conservative estimates. This figure has never been paid. It has never been recognised in GDP. It has been discounted to zero by every instrument currently in use. The Replacement Cost Floor mechanism in Section 6 corrects this by making R a legally enforceable minimum payment threshold.

G⁻¹ — The Gender Discount Inverse

When $G \rightarrow 0$, $G^{-1} \rightarrow \infty$. The suppressed value, correctly measured, is not marginal. It is immeasurable by existing economic instruments — which is precisely the condition the ILV is designed to correct. G^{-1} is not an argument inserted into the formula. It is the mathematical representation of the legislative correction that Japan applied in 1950, the Harris Tweed Authority applied in 1993, and that the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act will apply to women's cultural labour.

t — Time

The cumulative hours of intangible cultural labour across the lifespan. Women perform an estimated 30–50 additional hours per week of unpaid labour above their paid work (ABS 2022). Across a care lifespan of 20–40 years, this represents between 31,200 and 104,000 hours of uncompensated cultural labour per woman. The t component ensures the ILV captures the full temporal scale of what is owed — and makes retrospective correction calculable under Mechanism 4.

THE FOUR MANDATORY REMUNERATION MECHANISMS

The ILV equation calculates the value. The four mechanisms below specify exactly how that value is paid. Each mechanism is mandatory under the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act. Each has direct international legislative precedent. None is subject to ministerial discretion, budget appropriation cycles, or voluntary uptake by employers or institutions.

The mechanisms are operative from the date of a woman's registration as a Cultural Practitioner on the Cultural Practitioner Register established under the Act. Registration is the trigger. Payment is the legal consequence. This is the Japan model, applied to Australian women.

These mechanisms are not aspirational. They are not subject to review before implementation. They are not contingent on economic conditions. They are the legislated correction of a structural debt. They are what comes after the calculation is done.

MECHANISM 1 — THE CARE CREDIT

Nature: A legislated annual superannuation contribution paid directly to a Cultural Practitioner's superannuation account by the Commonwealth, calculated as a percentage of her annual ILV score.

Trigger: Registration on the Cultural Practitioner Register AND a current-year CWI score exceeding the Moderate Load threshold (21+). The higher the CWI score, the higher the Care Credit percentage, reflecting the correlation between structural load and cultural labour intensity.

Payment channel: Direct Commonwealth contribution to the Cultural Practitioner's nominated superannuation fund. Administered by the ATO using the same infrastructure as existing superannuation guarantee mechanisms. No employer involvement required.

Quantum: Base rate: 11% of annual ILV replacement cost ($R \times 365$), consistent with the Superannuation Guarantee rate applied to paid workers. Additional loading applied for CWI scores above 60 (Critical Load). No cap. Lifetime accumulation tracked against the Cultural Practitioner Register.

Legislative precedent: Japan Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Act No. 214 (1950): mandatory annual government grant of ¥2 million to designated holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties. The Care Credit is the Australian equivalent: a legislated, non-discretionary annual payment to registered bearers of intangible cultural heritage, delivered through the superannuation system rather than a direct grant.

STATUS: MANDATORY. NON-NEGOTIABLE. NOT SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION DISCRETION.

MECHANISM 2 — THE REPLACEMENT COST FLOOR

Nature: A legally enforceable minimum payment rate for any arrangement in which a

Cultural Practitioner's labour is engaged by an institution, organisation, or employer. The Floor is set at the R component of the ILV equation — the market replacement cost of the cultural labour being performed.

Trigger: Any formal or informal arrangement in which a registered Cultural Practitioner performs cultural work for or on behalf of an institution, organisation, or employer. Includes paid employment, volunteer arrangements, contracted services, and community-based programs. The Floor applies regardless of how the arrangement is classified.

Payment channel: Direct payment from the engaging institution to the Cultural Practitioner at or above the Floor rate. Institutions that cannot meet the Floor rate are ineligible to engage Cultural Practitioners under any arrangement. Compliance monitored by the Cultural Practitioner Certification Authority (CWA or successor body) and reportable to the Fair Work Commission.

Quantum: Minimum \$880 per day (conservative R floor) for full cultural labour engagement. Pro-rated for partial days. Reviewed annually by the Cultural Practitioner Certification Authority against current market rates for equivalent services.

Legislative precedent: Japan Basic Act on Culture and the Arts (2017 revision): establishes the state's obligation to support the economic conditions under which cultural practitioners can sustain their practice. Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK): the provenance mark prevents devaluation of the practitioner's labour through imitation, functioning as an effective floor price. The Replacement Cost Floor applies the same logic as a legislative minimum rather than a market mechanism.

STATUS: MANDATORY. NON-NEGOTIABLE. NOT SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION DISCRETION.

MECHANISM 3 — THE PROVENANCE PREMIUM

Nature: A mandatory price premium attached to any certified cultural output produced by a registered Cultural Practitioner, payable to the practitioner at point of sale or service delivery. The premium is calculated from the practitioner's ILV Skill Depth (S) and Transmission Value (T) scores, reflecting the cultural heritage content embedded in the work.

Trigger: Sale, licence, exhibition, performance, or delivery of any cultural output bearing the Southern Cross Mark certification, produced by a registered Cultural Practitioner. The premium is embedded in the certified price of the work and cannot be waived, discounted, or absorbed by the distributing institution.

Payment channel: Payment from the purchasing entity (individual, institution, or government) to the Cultural Practitioner at the time of transaction. Where the distributing institution sells on behalf of the practitioner, the premium is a mandatory pass-through: it cannot be retained as commission, administrative fee, or overhead.

Quantum: Minimum 25% of the base sale price of any Southern Cross Mark certified work, representing the ILV-calculated cultural heritage value embedded in the output. The percentage increases with the practitioner's S and T scores, recognising that higher skill depth and greater transmission value produce proportionally greater cultural heritage content in the output.

Legislative precedent: Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK): the Orb mark certification creates a legally protected premium for Harris Tweed producers, preventing competition from uncertified alternatives and ensuring the price premium flows to the bearer of the cultural skill. Japan Living National Treasure system: the designation creates a market

recognition that commands premium pricing for work produced by designated holders, supported by mandatory state authentication.

STATUS: MANDATORY. NON-NEGOTIABLE. NOT SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION DISCRETION.

MECHANISM 4 — THE RETROSPECTIVE CORRECTION FUND

Nature: A Commonwealth-funded lump sum payment to women who can demonstrate, through ILV lifetime calculation, decades of uncompensated intangible cultural labour performed prior to the Act's commencement. This mechanism applies the t component of the ILV equation retrospectively, calculating the total value of cultural labour performed during the pre-Act period and providing partial correction of the accumulated debt.

Trigger: Application by a woman who: (a) is eligible for registration as a Cultural Practitioner; (b) can demonstrate a minimum of 10 years of intangible cultural labour performed prior to the Act's commencement; and (c) holds an ILV lifetime score (calculated across the pre-Act period) above the minimum correction threshold established by the Certification Authority. Applications assessed by a Retrospective Assessment Panel constituted under the Act.

Payment channel: Lump sum payment from the Retrospective Correction Fund, a standing appropriation established under the Act. The Fund is capitalised at commencement from consolidated revenue at a level determined by the actuarial assessment of total retrospective ILV liability across the eligible population. Annual Fund contributions from the Cultural Work Levy (a mandatory levy on industries that have directly benefited from women's uncompensated cultural labour, including childcare, aged care, healthcare, and retail).

Quantum: Calculated as: ILV lifetime score (pre-Act period) × partial correction percentage (legislated at 30% of total calculated debt at commencement, increasing by 5% per year for the first decade of the Act's operation, toward full correction). No cap on individual entitlements. The partial correction percentage reflects the fiscal phasing required for implementation while establishing a clear legislative trajectory toward full correction.

Legislative precedent: Japan 1975 amendment to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties: brought folk cultural expressions — previously documented but unprotected — within the protection framework, applying legislative correction to a pre-existing gap. This is the precise precedent: a government that identifies a category of intangible cultural practice that has been acknowledged but unprotected for decades, and chooses through legislation to correct the historical omission. The Retrospective Correction Fund applies the same logic economically: the historical gap is documented by the ILV; the Fund corrects it.

STATUS: MANDATORY. NON-NEGOTIABLE. NOT SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION DISCRETION.

THE CULTURAL PRACTITIONER REGISTER

All four remuneration mechanisms are triggered by registration on the Cultural Practitioner Register. The Register is the operative mechanism of the proposed Act — the instrument that converts the ILV calculation into a legal entitlement.

The Register is modelled directly on Japan's designation system under Act No. 214. In Japan, the designation of a bearer of an Important Intangible Cultural Property is a formal act of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, announced in the Official Gazette, and operative from the date of announcement. The ILV framework applies the same structure to Australian cultural practitioners:

- Registration is conducted by the Cultural Practitioner Certification Authority (CWA or successor body established under the Act)
- Registration requires assessment against the ILV scoring framework, including W, S, T, R, and t components
- Registration is recorded in the national Cultural Practitioner Register, a public instrument maintained under the Act
- Registration is renewed every five years, with ILV scores updated at renewal
- Registration is transferable to successor bodies where a Cultural Practitioner has formally transmitted her skills and practice to a named successor, creating a legislative continuity mechanism analogous to Japan's successor training subsidies

The Register is not a database. It is a legal instrument. Registration on the Register is the legal event that triggers entitlement to all four remuneration mechanisms. It cannot be revoked without due process. It is publicly searchable. It confers the same formal recognition that Japan's designation system has conferred on Living National Treasures for 75 years.

Japan has 116 living designated bearers at any given time. Australia has millions of women performing intangible cultural labour every day. The Register is how they are named. The naming is how they are paid.

EVIDENCE BASE

Unpaid Labour and Care Burden

Women in Australia perform 76% of all unpaid domestic labour and 71.8% of primary caregiving (ABS 2022; WGEA 2024). This disparity persists across income levels, education levels, and employment status. The OECD estimates women perform 50–80% more unpaid work than men globally (OECD 2023). Time poverty resulting from this load predicts lower health outcomes, reduced workforce participation, and long-term economic disadvantage (Strazdins et al. 2016).

Care Economy Value

The global care economy — primarily performed by women — contributes an estimated 10–39% of GDP when valued at replacement cost (ILO 2018). In Australia, unpaid care work is conservatively estimated at \$650 billion annually (Deloitte Access Economics 2020). This value is not captured in GDP. It is not taxed, superannuated, or legislatively protected. The ILV's R component provides the calculation that makes this value specific, individual, and actionable.

Skill, Knowledge, and Cultural Transmission

Feminist economists including Folbre (2001), England (2005), and Himmelweit (2007) have systematically demonstrated that care work requires substantial skill — relational, developmental, nutritional, emotional, and managerial — and that the wage penalty applied to it reflects gender discrimination, not skill deficit. UNESCO's 2003 Convention explicitly recognises knowledge transmission as intangible cultural heritage. Women are the primary transmitters of household knowledge, cultural practices, and social norms across generations. The loss of this transmission capacity constitutes a heritage loss of the first order — one that Japan's legislative framework has treated as requiring state protection and payment since 1950.

Superannuation and Lifetime Penalty

The superannuation gap in Australia stands at 31% (WGEA 2024). Women retire with significantly less savings than men, directly attributable to time out of paid work performing uncompensated intangible cultural labour. The Care Credit mechanism addresses this gap directly: it applies the existing 11% superannuation guarantee rate to the ILV-calculated value of cultural labour, treating cultural practitioners as workers entitled to superannuation rather than unpaid contributors excluded from the system.

GDP Invisibility and National Accounting

GDP excludes unpaid work by design. The ABS acknowledges this through its satellite accounts for unpaid work, which estimated the value of household services at between 41.3% and 53.9% of GDP in 2020 (ABS 2020). These accounts exist. They are not used. The ILV converts the satellite account methodology into an individual-level calculation that triggers

legal entitlements, rather than remaining an aggregate statistic without operational consequence.

Misdiagnosis and Structural Harm

Women experiencing structural overload from intangible cultural labour are frequently misdiagnosed with mood, personality, or somatic disorders (Hengartner 2017; Russo & Pirlott 2006; Cortland et al. 2022). The DCL Index documents this harm. The ILV operates upstream: by ensuring that cultural practitioners are remunerated for their labour, it addresses the structural cause of the overload rather than its clinical consequence.

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
- Japan Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Act No. 214 (1950) and 1975 amendment
- Japan Basic Act on Culture and the Arts (2001, revised 2017)
- Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK)
- ILO Convention on Decent Work and Care Economy Reform
- UN Sustainable Development Goals — SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Unpaid Work Satellite Accounts (2020)
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency national reporting frameworks
- Women's Economic Equality Taskforce recommendations (2023)
- National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality
- Revive: National Cultural Policy
- Productivity Commission Care and Support Economy inquiry
- National Preventive Health Strategy

VALIDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY

0–12 Months: Foundation

1. Secure academic partnership for ILV model validation across psychometrics, gender economics, public health, and cultural heritage disciplines
2. Prepare ARC Linkage and Medical Research Future Fund proposals
3. Develop prototype assessment items and scoring schema
4. Initiate UNESCO NGO accreditation application
5. Pilot ILV scoring with partner organisations in creative health, DFV, and cultural sectors
6. Commission actuarial assessment of Retrospective Correction Fund liability

1–3 Years: Validation and Legislation

7. Psychometric validation: reliability, factor structure, convergent and criterion validity testing
8. Peer-reviewed publication across public health, economics, gender studies, and cultural heritage journals
9. Parliamentary briefings using DCL + ILV + CWI™ as the evidential package for the Cultural Work & Provenance Act
10. Legislative drafting of the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act, including all four remuneration mechanisms, the Cultural Practitioner Register, and the Retrospective Correction Fund
11. Establishment of the Cultural Practitioner Certification Authority

3–5 Years: Implementation

12. Cultural Practitioner Register opens for registration
13. Care Credit payments commence through ATO superannuation infrastructure
14. Replacement Cost Floor operative for all institutional engagements
15. Southern Cross Mark provenance certification and Provenance Premium operative
16. Retrospective Correction Fund capitalised and applications open
17. International alignment through submission to UNESCO ICF and advocacy for equivalent frameworks in comparable jurisdictions

CONCLUSION

Japan named the bearers of intangible cultural heritage in 1950 and began paying them. It has not stopped.

The Harris Tweed Authority named the producers of certified cultural work in 1993 and built a legislative mechanism to ensure they received a premium for it. It has not stopped.

UNESCO named intangible cultural heritage as requiring active safeguarding in 2003 and built an international framework to support that obligation. It has not stopped.

Australia has named women's unpaid labour in every ABS Time Use Survey since 1992. It has not paid them.

The ILV Index ends the naming without paying. It provides the equation that calculates what is owed. It provides the four mechanisms through which payment is made mandatory. It provides the international legislative precedents that prove this is possible. It provides the Cultural Practitioner Register that makes every woman performing intangible cultural labour a named, registered, and legally protected bearer of Australian cultural heritage.

The equation does not argue. The mechanisms do not recommend. The Register does not suggest. The Act does not invite voluntary compliance.

They pay.

$$ILV = W(S + T + R) \times G^{-1} \times t$$

DCL + ILV + CWI™ = The Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act

Creative Women's Association

CREATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

CULTURAL WORKFORCE INDEX™

WHITE PAPER | 2026

*A Proposed National Framework for Cultural Workforce Recognition,
Structural Load Measurement, and Legislative Consideration*

INSTRUMENT THREE OF THREE

CWA Structural Measurement Suite: DCL • ILV • CWI™

TERMINOLOGY AND FRAMING

For the purposes of this document, culture is the governing noun. The word 'creative' is used only as a descriptive adjective. The Creative Women's Association adopts the term cultural work to refer to labour that contributes to cultural transmission, continuity, heritage, and social infrastructure — encompassing both intangible cultural knowledge, skills, and practices, and the tangible outputs through which that knowledge is expressed.

This framing aligns with UNESCO safeguarding principles and with Japan's Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (Act No. 214, 1950), which recognised that the human bearers of cultural knowledge require formal state designation, registration, and protection. References to 'creative' activity describe the nature of practice, not its governance status.

TERM	CANONICAL USE
Cultural work	Default term for all labour contributing to cultural transmission, continuity, heritage, and infrastructure
Cultural workforce	The full body of practitioners engaged in cultural work, paid and unpaid
Cultural practitioner	Any individual whose labour constitutes cultural work — equivalent to Japan's designated bearer of intangible cultural heritage under Act No. 214 (1950)
Cultural provenance	The traceable origin, transmission, and integrity of cultural knowledge and practice
Creative practice	Acceptable adjective use: the mode or method of cultural work
Creative industries	Acceptable only when referencing existing datasets or government reports
Creative health	Acceptable where already an established policy term (WHO framework)

The distinction between creative and cultural is not rhetorical. It is structural. Adjectives describe qualities of work. Nouns determine whether that work is recognised, governed, measured, and protected.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cultural Workforce Index™ (CWI) is a proposed integrated metric designed to evaluate structural load, workforce capacity, and economic participation for women engaged in cultural work. It is the third instrument in the CWA structural measurement suite, completing a proposed evidential foundation for the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

The CWI is presented here as a framework seeking academic validation, expert review, and legislative consideration. It is grounded in established empirical constructs, aligned with international precedent spanning 75 years, and developed in conjunction with the DCL Index (structural harm) and the ILV Index (economic value and remuneration).

The Index addresses a foundational structural problem: women's labour has been framed as creative rather than cultural. This framing is not semantic. It is the mechanism by which women's work has been excluded from workforce classification, standards frameworks, certification pathways, procurement systems, and legislative protection.

Japan identified and corrected this same mechanism in 1950, through binding legislation that formally named the bearers of intangible cultural heritage, registered them, and paid them. That payment has continued without interruption for 75 years. The CWI proposes the measurement instrument that would make an equivalent recognition actionable in Australia.

INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION	EVIDENTIAL ROLE	IN ONE LINE
DCL Index	Cost / Risk	Structural harm requiring protection	Names the damage
ILV Index	Value / Payment	Economic debt requiring correction	Names the debt
CWI™ (Cultural)	Sector / Participation	Sector requiring legislative recognition	Names the sector

DCL names the damage. ILV names the debt. CWI names the sector. Together they constitute the proposed evidential basis for the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIVE PRECEDENT

The CWI is grounded in 75 years of demonstrated international legislative practice. The following precedents establish that formal recognition of cultural practitioners, national registration systems, and mandatory economic support mechanisms are not theoretical — they are operative, proven, and reproducible.

Japan: Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950, Act No. 214)

Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1950. The law formally recognised that the human bearers of intangible cultural heritage — individuals whose sustained practice carries cultural knowledge across generations — require state designation, registration, and economic support. It created three things that map directly onto the CWI framework: a sector classification for intangible cultural heritage; a national register of designated practitioners; and mandatory annual government payment to registered bearers, non-discretionary and operative from the date of designation.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan Act No. 214 (1950) — Sector Classification, National Register, Mandatory Payment

The national government designates especially significant Intangible Cultural Properties, simultaneously recognising individuals or groups who have achieved advanced mastery of the technique as the holder. The national government provides special grants (¥2 million per year) for recognised individual holders and subsidises training programs for successors. By December 2020, 371 individuals had been designated since enactment. The payment has operated without interruption for 75 years. (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, bunka.go.jp; Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Act No. 214)

The CWI proposes the measurement instrument that performs, for Australian cultural women, what Japan's designation system performs for its cultural bearers: it identifies who they are, quantifies the structural conditions under which they work, and establishes the evidential basis for their formal recognition under a proposed national Act.

Japan's 1975 Amendment: The Most Directly Relevant Precedent

Prior to 1975, Japan documented folk cultural expressions — the everyday practices of ordinary communities, not elite performing arts — without legally protecting them. The 1975 amendment brought these expressions within the protection framework, recognising that documentation without protection is insufficient.

This is precisely Australia's current position with respect to women's cultural labour. It is documented in ABS time-use surveys. It appears in WGEA reports. The DCL Index quantifies the structural harm it produces. The ILV calculates the resulting debt at \$5.63 trillion on the conservative basis, accruing at \$502 million per day. None of this documentation triggers legal protection. None of it triggers mandatory payment. The proposed Cultural Work & Provenance Act is Australia's 1975 amendment.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Japan 1975 Amendment — Australia's Current Position

Folk cultural expressions were for a long time not considered cultural properties under the law, but were seen as only requiring documentation. This changed in 1975 when folk cultural expressions were legally recognised as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties. Australia is currently in the pre-1975 position: the labour is documented, the harm is quantified, the debt is calculated. The protection has not followed. (International Journal of Intangible Heritage, 2007)

Japan's Basic Act on Culture and the Arts (2001, Revised 2017)

Japan's Basic Act on Culture and the Arts, substantially revised in 2017, established that cultural policy is cross-sectoral infrastructure rather than an arts supplement. The Act mandates collaboration across social welfare, education, health, regional development, and industry, treating cultural practitioners as contributors to national capability. The 2017 revision extended this to the economic conditions of practice: the state has an obligation to support the conditions under which cultural practitioners can sustain their work economically.

This is the legislative model for the Cultural Work & Provenance Sector that the CWI proposes to name. The Sector is not an arts category. It is a cross-sectoral economic and workforce infrastructure category.

Harris Tweed Act 1993 (United Kingdom)

The Harris Tweed Act 1993 created a statutory certification mark that can only be applied to cloth produced by islanders in the Outer Hebrides from pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the islands. It made it a criminal offence to apply the mark to non-qualifying fabric. The Act uses provenance certification as a mandatory economic protection instrument: the mark prevents devaluation of practitioners' labour through imitation and attaches a legislatively protected price premium to certified work.

▶ INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT: Harris Tweed Act 1993 (UK) — Provenance as Mandatory Economic Protection

The Harris Tweed Act 1993 established a statutory definition and a certification authority with power to protect the Orb mark. It is a criminal offence to apply the mark to non-qualifying fabric. The provenance premium flows as a legislatively protected entitlement to the producer, not as a voluntary market outcome. This is the model proposed for the Southern Cross Mark under the Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act.

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

The UNESCO 2003 Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as encompassing practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognise as

part of their heritage, and establishes that safeguarding requires ensuring the viability of those practices — including through recognition of practitioners. The Creative Women's Association is preparing an application for NGO accreditation under this Convention, recognising its work in safeguarding living cultural practice through systems that support skills transmission, provenance, and recognition of cultural practitioners as bearers of heritage.

Although Australia has not ratified the 2003 Convention, CWA is developing practical frameworks aligned with the Convention's safeguarding principles, connecting cultural practice, workforce infrastructure, and economic participation.

THE STRUCTURAL ARGUMENT: CULTURAL, NOT CREATIVE

Adjectives and Nouns in Policy Governance

In policy and workforce governance, language is not decorative. The distinction between an adjective and a noun determines whether work is recognised, governed, measured, and protected by law. An adjective describes a quality. A noun names a thing that can be counted, classified, certified, and legislated.

For decades, women's labour has been held in the adjective: called creative, framed as expressive and supplementary, celebrated symbolically and ignored economically. Japan made the same classification error with folk cultural expressions before 1975. It corrected that error through legislation. The political decision preceded the system; the system then made protection mandatory.

The CWI proposes to move women's labour from the adjective to the noun. Cultural work is a classifiable category. A cultural workforce is a governable entity. A Cultural Work & Provenance Sector is a legislatable domain. Japan proved this is possible in 1950. The CWI provides the proposed Australian measurement instrument that makes it actionable.

What Cultural Work Encompasses

Under the CWA framework, and consistent with the UNESCO 2003 Convention's definitional domains, cultural work is defined as any labour that contributes to:

- cultural transmission — the passing of knowledge, practice, and value across generations
- cultural continuity — the maintenance of social and community cohesion
- cultural heritage — the preservation and expression of intangible and tangible practice
- cultural infrastructure — the systems and relationships that enable cultural life
- cultural production — the making of objects, works, and practices that embody cultural knowledge

Under this definition, and consistent with Japan's bearer recognition framework: childcare is cultural transmission; teaching is cultural continuity; craft is cultural heritage; care is cultural infrastructure; intangible knowledge is cultural capital; tangible making is cultural production.

Cultural Work & Provenance exists to ensure that what is given to society — knowledge, care, skill, craft, and continuity — is not exhausted or erased, but recognised as essential infrastructure for human, social, and economic life.

THE PROPOSED CULTURAL WORKFORCE INDEX™

Overview

The Cultural Workforce Index™ (CWI) is a proposed integrated metric designed to evaluate structural load, economic participation, and workforce capacity for women engaged in cultural work. It provides a proposed measurable structure capable of integrating unpaid labour, care load, cognitive load, physiological stress, and economic precarity into a single interpretable indicator for workforce and policy use.

The Index formalises what existing national data already demonstrates:

- Women perform 76% of unpaid labour in Australia (ABS, 2023)
- Women perform 71.8% of primary care, creating a persistent labour supply constraint (WGEA, 2024)
- 0% of the cultural workforce currently operates under nationally recognised standards
- Australia has no national certification authority or standards framework for cultural work
- Japan has had both since 1950, grounded in binding national legislation

The Formula

The CWI is built on the Domestic & Care Load (DCL) formula, extended by a Cultural Participation Dimension:

$$\text{CWI} = \text{DCL} \times \text{P}^{-1}$$

Where $\text{DCL} = (\text{U} + \text{C} + \text{M}) \times \text{A} \times \text{F}$, and P = the Participation Discount Factor: the structural barriers that prevent women from translating cultural labour into economic recognition. P^{-1} , the inverse, restores the participation value that has been suppressed.

This inverse structure is consistent with the ILV Index's G^{-1} (Gender Discount Inverse). Both apply the same mathematical principle: the current economic system has applied a discount approaching zero to the value of women's cultural work. The inverse of that discount, correctly applied, restores the suppressed value. The formula structure, domain weightings, and scoring thresholds are primary subjects for the proposed validation pathway.

Proposed Scoring Framework

SCORE	LOAD LEVEL	INDICATIVE PROFILE	JAPAN EQUIVALENCE
0–20	Low Load	Stable finances, shared duties. Cultural participation accessible.	Bearer function sustainable. Protected conditions.
21–40	Moderate Load	Emerging strain. Cultural participation constrained by time poverty.	Bearer function under pressure. Successor transmission at risk.
41–60	High Load	Primary carer, limited support, financial instability.	Bearer function significantly impaired. Structural support indicated.
61–100	Critical Load	Single parenthood, precarity, high allostatic stress, complex care.	Bearer function near collapse. Designation and support required.
100+	Crisis Load	Health deterioration, DV vulnerability, complete cultural exclusion.	Bearer function lost. Cultural heritage loss event.

This index reflects proposed risk thresholds and structural exclusion patterns, not diagnosis. Threshold definitions and scoring ranges are indicative pending psychometric validation.

THE RETROSPECTIVE CALCULATION

The CWI, alongside the DCL and ILV, informs a retrospective calculation of the structural debt owed to Australian women for uncompensated cultural labour since the Equal Pay Case (1969). This calculation applies established ABS, WGEA, and OECD data using methodology consistent with the ABS unpaid work satellite accounts, aggregated across the eligible population across a 56-year period. Full methodology is available in the ILV White Paper (CWA, 2026).

BASIS	INDICATIVE RETROSPECTIVE DEBT (1969–2025)
Conservative (minimum wage for unpaid labour)	\$5.63 trillion
ILV replacement cost (full market rate)	\$44.52 trillion
Current annual accrual rate	\$183.4 billion per year
Current daily accrual rate	\$502 million per day
Australian GDP 2024 (context)	\$2.7 trillion

These figures are indicative calculations based on established data sources and are presented to illustrate the scale of structural exclusion. Independent economic validation of the full retrospective methodology is part of the proposed research pathway.

For context: Japan's total expenditure on bearer grants since 1950 is approximately ¥15 billion (≈ AUD \$160 million). Australia has accumulated an indicative \$5.63 trillion debt to millions of unprotected bearers over the same period. The cost of protection is a fraction of the cost of its absence.

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION

The CWI links structural load to measurable economic impact. National data demonstrates the scale of the failure to recognise and remunerate cultural work:

- Gender productivity loss attributable to structural exclusion: \$6B annually (ABS, WGEA)
- Cultural sector underemployment among women: \$1.2–1.5B annual loss
- Financial precarity in cultural work: approximately \$8,300 annual cost per woman
- Superannuation gap: 31% — the direct lifetime penalty for unpaid cultural labour (WGEA 2024)
- 0% of the cultural workforce operates under nationally recognised standards
- Zero national procurement initiatives targeting women's cultural workforce development (2015–2025)

High CWI scores correlate with reduced cultural workforce participation, higher dropout rates (particularly for women over 45), decreased capacity for training and enterprise development, increased vulnerability to economic coercion and domestic violence, and loss of cultural knowledge through practitioner attrition.

This is not a skills deficit or a participation problem. It is a system design problem — and the CWI is the proposed instrument that makes the system's design visible and measurable.

POLICY GAP AND SYSTEM FAILURE

Australia currently lacks each of the four instruments Japan has operated under binding legislation since 1950:

1. A recognised Cultural Work & Provenance Sector

No formal sector classification exists for cultural work as a distinct economic and workforce category. Japan created one in 1950. Australia has documented the need for one across every major gender equity, cultural policy, and workforce framework produced since 1969. It has not created one.

2. A national certification authority for cultural practitioners

No designation system exists for bearers of Australian women's intangible cultural heritage. Japan has formally designated 371 individuals since 1950 and paid them annually by law. The CWA proposes to establish this function, aligned with Japan's bearer recognition framework and the Harris Tweed Authority's provenance certification model.

3. A procurement pathway for cultural work

No procurement category exists for women-led cultural workforce development. Japan subsidises training programs for designated bearers and successors under Act No. 214. Australia has no equivalent mechanism.

4. Legislative protection for cultural practitioners

Without the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act, the structural harm documented by DCL, the debt calculated by ILV, and the sector defined by CWI have no binding legislative remedy. Japan made that legislative choice in 1950. Australia has not yet made it.

Japan proved in 1950 that a government can identify an unprotected category of cultural practitioners, name them, register them, and pay them by law. The CWA proposes that Australia make the same choice — applying that legislative model to the largest unprotected category of cultural practitioners in the country.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PATHWAY

The three CWA instruments together constitute the proposed evidential basis for an Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act. Each instrument addresses a distinct dimension of the legislative case.

INSTRUMENT	EVIDENTIAL ROLE	PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PROVISION
DCL Index	Establishes structural harm	Duty of care provisions; health obligations; DFV structural evidence standards; mandatory load assessment
ILV Index	Establishes economic debt	Superannuation correction; Care Credit; Replacement Cost Floor; Provenance Premium; Retrospective Correction Fund
CWI™ (Cultural)	Establishes sector existence	Sector classification; Cultural Practitioner Register; certification authority; procurement pathway; Southern Cross Mark

The proposed Act would establish: a formal Cultural Work & Provenance Sector; the CWA (or a successor national body) as the certifying authority; the Southern Cross Mark as the national provenance certification mark; a Cultural Practitioner Register modelled on Japan's bearer designation system; mandatory structural assessment prior to workforce decisions affecting cultural practitioners; and alignment with UNESCO 2003 Convention safeguarding principles.

VALIDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY

The CWI is at the conceptual development stage, consistent with the DCL and ILV instruments. The following pathway is proposed.

1. Expert review: engagement of specialists in psychometrics, gender economics, cultural heritage, public health, and workforce policy to review the CWI framework, formula structure, and scoring rationale
2. Pilot study (n=20–30): reliability and convergent validation with DCL Index, ILV Index, K10, PSS, HRV, and economic indicators, across Primary Health Networks, DFV services, cultural organisations, and women's workforce programs
3. UNESCO NGO accreditation: formal application establishing CWA as a recognised safeguarding body for women's intangible cultural heritage under the 2003 Convention
4. National sector recognition: parliamentary briefings and cross-party engagement using the three-instrument suite as the proposed evidential package for the Cultural Work & Provenance Sector
5. Legislative drafting: development of the proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act, with all three instruments as the evidential foundation
6. Sector infrastructure: Cultural Practitioner Register, Southern Cross Mark certification, and Cultural Practitioner designation framework

The CWA is actively seeking academic partners, psychometrics specialists, gender economists, cultural heritage researchers, and public health practitioners to collaborate on the validation pathway. This is the immediate next step.

CONCLUSION

Japan named the bearers of folk cultural heritage in 1975 and brought them within a protection framework that had been operating since 1950. It took a political decision — not a change in the underlying reality. The practitioners were already there. The knowledge was already being transmitted. The cultural labour was already being performed. The legislation named it and protected it.

The Cultural Workforce Index is the proposed instrument that makes that naming measurable. The Cultural Practitioner Register is the instrument that would make it official. The Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act is the instrument that would make it permanent.

This framework is in development. The evidential case is established. The international precedent is 75 years old. The validation pathway is the next step. The CWA invites the academic, policy, and legislative community to engage with this work.

$$\text{CWI}^{\text{TM}} = \text{DCL} \times \text{P}^{-1}$$

DCL + ILV + CWITM = The proposed Australian Cultural Work & Provenance Act

Creative Women's Association

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ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

The three instruments in this suite are proposed frameworks at the conceptual development stage. The Creative Women's Association is actively seeking collaboration with specialists in psychometrics, public health, gender economics, stress physiology, cultural heritage, DFV research, workforce policy, and law.

Co-authorship on peer-reviewed publications is offered to validation partners. Funding pathways under consideration include Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants, Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

To discuss collaboration: executivedirector@creativewomensassociation.org

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The instruments described in this suite are proposed frameworks at the conceptual development stage. They are presented as a basis for academic validation and policy consideration. Retrospective calculations are indicative, based on established data sources, and are subject to independent economic validation.

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