Stewardship for Queensland kids



Better than we found it

A Living Guide for Systems Weavers

Queensland Kids Partnership
every child thriving

every child thriving
aracy

Contents

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we live and work, and their deep and continuing connection to Country, kin, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Systems Weaver experience is built on the belief that different perspectives, experiences and ways of knowing make everything stronger. We are committed to creating a community where every identity, culture and experience is genuinely welcomed, respected and valued.

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The work of Systems Weavers

Queensland Kids Partnership has a big vision: every child in Queensland thriving - within one generation. We are calling out to Systems Weavers.

Queensland Kids Partnership (QKP) recognises that children and young people are shaped by multiple systems - social, cultural, ecological and intergenerational. These systems can enable thriving or adversity.

The work of Systems Weavers is to influence these systems so they enable more young Queenslanders to thrive.

The work of Systems Weavers has never been more needed.

The systems shaping children and young people are increasingly complex and unstable. The resulting challenges don't arrive one at a time - they connect, overlap and build on each other. They can deepen harm and widen inequality, especially for children and young people who are already carrying the weight of systems that weren't built for them.

- **Social** — the connections that come from people and communities.
- **Cultural** — from identity, history and ways of knowing.
- **Ecological** — from the natural world and place.
- **Intergenerational** — from the relationships between generations, past, present and future.



Systems Weavers recognise children and young people as active participants in systems, not passive service users or recipients of adults' decisions.

They include children and young people as change makers: not to fix each challenge as it arises, but to influence the systems that create the challenges in the first place.

Systems Weavers shift systems towards thriving.

QKP is calling out to Systems Weavers. We are creating a place for Systems Weavers to gather – to find each other, connect, learn and grow, and take action. Together, Systems Weavers can create the systems needed for all young Queenslanders to thrive.

Systems are living and evolving webs of relationships shaped by history, culture, power and place

Systems are webs of relationships that are constantly growing, changing and responding — like a forest, or a reef. When we use this phrase, we mean that children don't grow up inside a fixed structure.

They grow up inside something alive — shaped by and shaping the people, places, cultures, histories and the natural world around them. And just like in nature, when one part of that web is damaged or missing, it affects everything else.

What systems need to become to enable all young Queenslanders to thrive

The Living Guide is informed by the NEST Wellbeing Framework* which describes six interconnected domains that all children and young people need to thrive: healthy; valued, loved and safe; material basics; learning; participation; and positive sense of identity and culture.

This Guide is oriented towards creating systems that have the following qualities:

Safe — grounded in trusting and accountable relationships (NEST: Valued, loved and safe)

Healthy — grounded in care and healing (NEST: Healthy)

Inclusive — power and responsibilty is shared and centres young Queenslanders (NEST: participating)

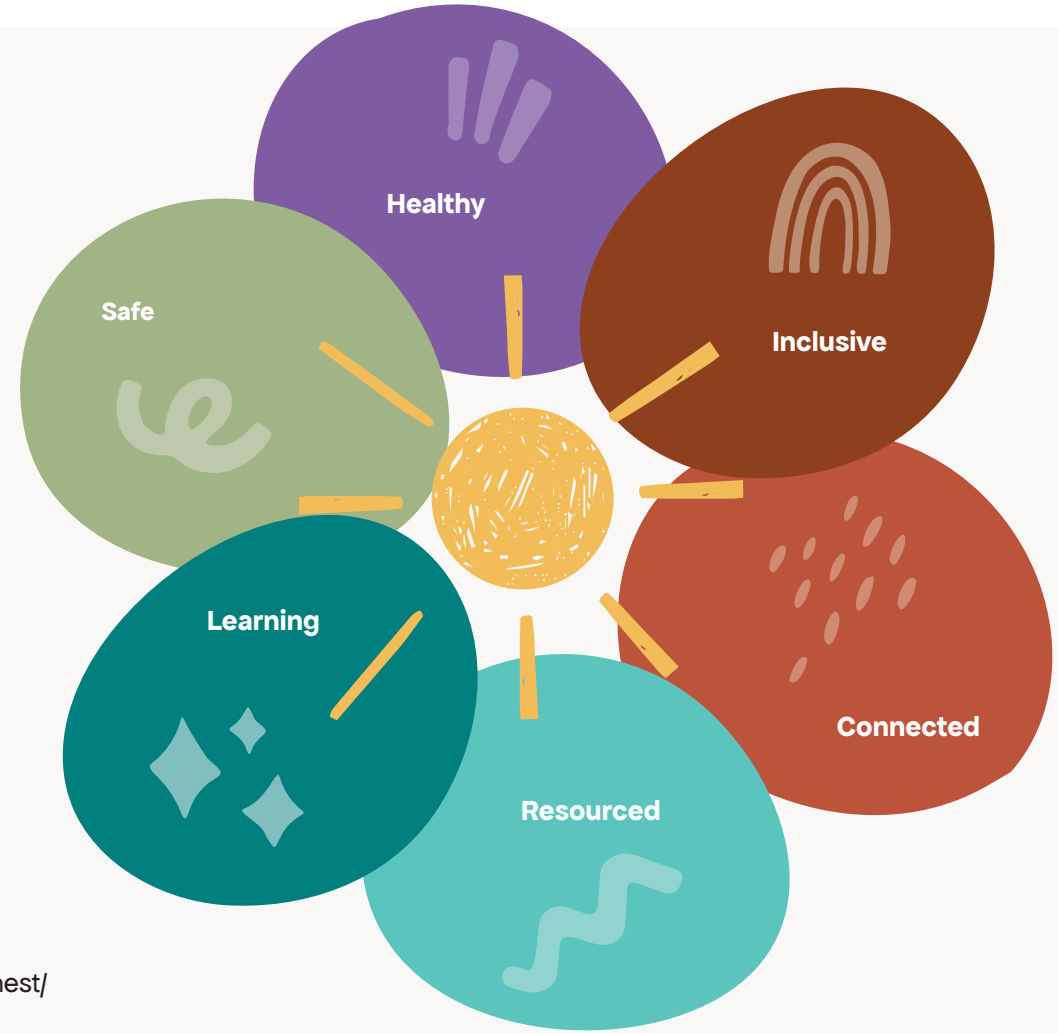
Connected — weaving relationships across identities, cultures, places and systems (NEST: Identity and culture)

Resourced — enabling knowledge, attention, effort and resources to flow where they are needed (NEST: Material basics)

Learning — enabling collective inquiry, reflection and adaptation over time (NEST: Learning)

These qualities are not a blueprint or a fixed destination, but a guide for a direction of travel (they are a compass not a map).

Systems Weavers can continually check in with while also remaining open to evolving them in different contexts or as our understanding deepens.



*To learn more about the NEST Wellbeing Framework visit https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest/

Systems Weaving

Systems Weaving is a way of leading that is suited to complexity. It's about being in an accountable, caring relationship with the systems that children and young people are part of — and working to leave them better than we found them.

Systems are not machines to be fixed or controlled. They are living, evolving webs of relationships, shaped by history, culture, power and place.

Changing the systems Queensland kids rely on doesn't happen on its own. It emerges through the conditions we create and the actions we take together — through care, trust, honesty, courage and the willingness to learn.

Systems Weaving is grounded in:

- Leaving systems better than we found them.
- Enabling the rights and agency of children and young people.
- Acting with care toward children, communities, Country and the natural world, and future generations.
- Acknowledging and addressing systemic harms.
- Recognising that stewardship is collective and intergenerational.
- Approaching this work as an expression of love, care and responsibility.

Systems Weaving and leadership — what's the difference?

Systems Weaving can be understood as an evolution of leadership — what leading becomes when working within complexity. It is often called stewardship.

Where leadership often focuses on improving the status quo, systems weaving focuses on tending the conditions that allow children, families, communities and the natural world to thrive — now and into the future.

It shifts the focus from leading change to being accountable for what must be sustained and renewed across generations.

'A Systems Weaver is someone who chooses to work with systems – to re-weave them – to help create something better for young Queenslanders. Like fibre gathered from Country, the strands they work with come from different sources – a policy, a family's story, a piece of knowledge carried for generations.'

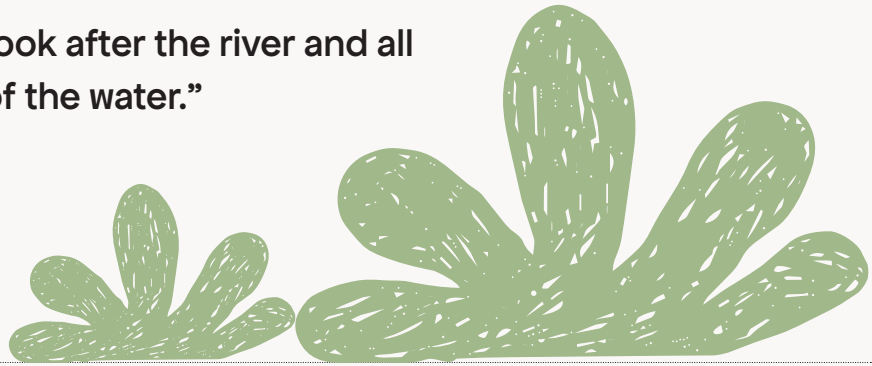
Jane Yettica, Systems Weaver

“Stewardship is like caring for a river that belongs to everyone. You show up, you keep the water healthy, you clear what blocks the flow and tend to the banks that surround the river.

This means the kids who are here now and the ones who haven’t reached the river yet can enjoy a healthy river. That’s what this work is. You’re not in charge of the river. You’re in relationship with it.

You must use your power and influence to look after the river and all that contributes to the health of the water.”

Mark Yettica Paulson



The Living Guide and who its for

Purpose of this Guide

This Guide offers a starting set of conditions and capabilities to explore further that may support systems that surround Queensland kids to become healthy, inclusive, connected, resourced and always learning.

This is not a finished framework. The conditions and capabilities are a starting point to be tested, questioned and adapted through practice.

As we learn together about what supports Systems Weaving in different contexts, the Guide will continue to evolve.

Who this Guide is for

Systems Weavers are people working in their communities, organisations and networks to improve conditions for children and young people and supporting others to do the same. They influence the systems that surround children towards thriving.



How capability emerges

This guide starts by asking **"What conditions are people working and learning in and what might be possible (or not) within those conditions?"**

Rather than starting with capabilities, the Guide recognises that capabilities are not simply skills or attributes that can be delivered to people. They are ways of knowing, doing and being that become more available as conditions improve.

This means the work is not only about developing Systems Weavers. It is also about tending to the conditions around them so that new ways of thinking, relating and acting can emerge and be sustained in practice.

The capabilities in this Guide are not a checklist or a set of outcomes to achieve. They are a starting point for noticing what might become possible, what conditions may be supporting or constraining, and what we might learn by working through the possibilities and conditions over time.

Building shared language



Language shapes how we think, and how we think shapes what we do. This guide uses some specific words and phrases — some may be new, others you may already know. Either way, it can help to have definitions that we shape and share together over time.

The definitions here are offered as a starting point. Different generations, cultures and communities may understand these ideas differently.

Systems Weavers are encouraged to notice where these definitions resonate with their own experience, where they don't, and to adapt them as needed in their own context.

These are words worth knowing, sharing and returning to throughout this work.

Systems Weaving

A way of leading in complexity that emphasises care, responsibility and relationship over control and compliance. It is often called stewardship.

Systems Weaving means being in an accountable, caring relationship with children and the systems we are part of — and taking responsibility to leave them better than we found them.

It recognises that systems are shaped by social, cultural, ecological and historical forces. Systems Weaving involves acknowledging and responding to harm, while tending the relationships and conditions that help children and young people to thrive.

It is grounded in a duty of care to current and future generations — and approached as an expression of love and responsibility.

Systems change

Shifts in the patterns of relationships, people, power, meaning and action that all shape how a system works.

Systems change is an ongoing, non-linear process. It includes shifts in relationships, power dynamics, assumptions, identities and ways of making sense of the world — alongside changes to structures, policies and practices.

It rarely happens in a straight line, and it is rarely the result of one person or one action. It emerges over time, through collective effort and learning. This means we can orient towards the five qualities that our systems need to have for all young Queenslanders to thrive.

Conditions

Systems create conditions that either enable thriving or create adversity for children. The role of Systems Weavers is to shift systems so they create conditions for children to thrive.

But Systems Weavers are also shaped by the conditions around them, including relationships, power dynamics and cultural norms. When those conditions are enabling, Systems Weavers are better able to shift systems towards thriving.

This illustration shows how enabling conditions for Systems Weavers and for children build on each other.

In the first circle, Systems Weavers influence the conditions around them. For example, they increase their authorisation to act, develop relationships of accountability with children and young people, and build a culture of learning in their organisation, community or network. These enabling conditions result in Systems Weavers and others having more capability and capacity to act.

In the second circle, Systems Weavers use that greater capability and capacity to begin shifting the systems they live and work in, so they become more safe, healthy, inclusive, connected, resourced and learning (see page 4).

In the third circle, these shifted systems create better conditions for more children to thrive.

In the fourth circle, as more Systems Weavers become more influential and effective, more systems change, and thriving becomes possible for all young Queenslanders.

Enabling conditions build, circle by circle

Read from the centre outwards: each circle builds on the one inside it











Capabilities

The ways of thinking, doing and being that become more available and possible as conditions surrounding Systems Weavers become enabling.

Capabilities are not fixed qualities that individuals either have or don't have. They can be strengthened through experience and learning. How capabilies are strengthened depends on the conditions Systems Weavers are working and living within.

This guide focuses on influencing the conditions from which capabilities can grow, rather than assuming they can simply be taught or transferred.

Practices

How capabilities are expressed in action — what people do, notice and make possible.

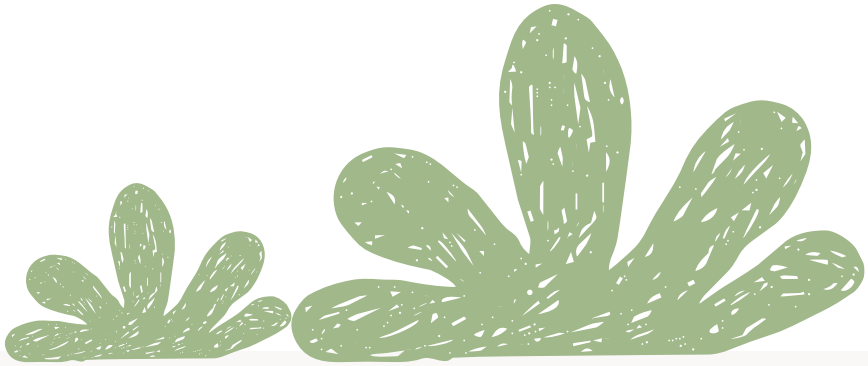
Practices are the observable ways that Systems Weavers show up, interact and make choices that have an impact on children and young people. They are repeatable — things that can be returned to and built on over time.

Practices are not techniques to follow or tick off a list. They are opportunities to learn, act and relate differently, again and again, in different contexts.

Ideas for bringing it to life

What conditions are present in my context?
What capabilities might become available as these conditions shift?
What practices could help these capabilities be expressed?

Principles for our work



These guiding principles are intended to support a shift in how Systems Weaving is understood and practised across Queensland.

The five principles below are orientations — ways of thinking and being that support thoughtful, context-sensitive engagement with this work to enable all Queensland kids to be thriving.

Accountability to children first, always

What surrounds us shapes us

We shape what we are part of

We are stronger together

Understanding power changes everything.

This is not an Indigenous guide and does not seek to represent Indigenous knowledge.

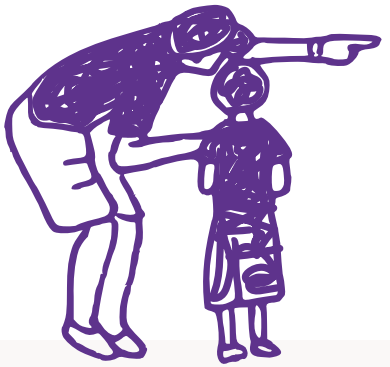
The guide has been developed by practitioners working primarily within Western institutional contexts, drawing on systems thinking, adaptive leadership, child development and trauma-informed practice — alongside a growing engagement with Indigenous, relational and ecological ways of knowing. This means the framework carries assumptions and ways of working shaped by these knowledges.

While the guide seeks to learn from First Nations worldviews and to reference Indigenous knowledge sources wherever possible, it has not been shaped from within First Nations knowledge systems. It is better understood as a starting point for learning and dialogue — one that can support greater attention to relational, ecological and community-grounded ways of working over time.

Using these principles well means holding them with that awareness — and actively seeking out the knowledge, perspectives and leadership that this guide does not yet fully hold.

Its ongoing development should be shaped by what is learned through relationship, practice and engagement with First Nations people, children and young people, communities and others whose perspectives can deepen and challenge the work.

Accountability to children first, always



Children first — now and into the future

What this means

Everything in this Guide starts with children. Children and young people are not just people who receive services or support — they are active participants in the systems that shape their lives, with their own knowledge, rights, voice and agency.

This responsibility extends to future generations and the environments children and young people will inherit — the communities, systems and relationships that today's decisions will leave behind.

Why it matters

It's easy for systems to lose sight of children — to get caught up in processes, programs and organisational priorities. This principle is a constant anchor.

It asks Systems Weavers to keep asking: who is this for, and how does this decision affect children, programs and policies — now and in the future?

How are we accountable to children and young people for the roles we play in their lives? It also recognises that caring for children means caring for Country and the natural world they are part of.

Ideas for bringing it to life

To what extent are children and young people genuinely present in my thinking or in the work?

How might what I do affect children today — and what might it mean for future generations?

How might we become accountable to children and young people for the changes we are seeking to make?



What surrounds us shapes us

People can do more when the conditions enable them

What this means for Systems Weavers

This principle flips a common assumption about how people grow and change. It says that capabilities — ways of thinking, doing and being — don't come from training alone. They emerge when the conditions are enabling.

Just as a tree needs good soil, water and light to bear fruit, Systems Weavers need relational, cultural and organisational conditions to bring their best to this work.

What this means for children and young people

When Systems Weavers influence conditions around power, relationships, culture and context to have children and young people at the centre, thriving is possible. When conditions are constraining and Systems Weavers are stuck, harm to children and young people can continue and children struggle.

Why it matters

This changes where we look when a capability is difficult to access. Instead of asking "what's missing in this person?", we can ask "what might be happening around them that is making this harder?"

It takes the focus off individual deficit and puts it onto the environments we are all responsible for creating together.

This does not mean individuals have no agency or that development doesn't matter. It means capability is shaped by the relationship between the person and their environment. Influencing conditions that surround Systems Weavers can make new ways of thinking, relating and acting more possible.

Ideas for bringing it to life

What is enabling people to show up as Systems Weavers — and what is getting in the way?

When someone is struggling to show up as a Systems Weaver, what conditions might be making that harder — and what might I be able to shift?

We shape what we are part of



We are not powerless — systems influence us and we influence systems

What this means

Systems Weavers are not outside observers of the systems they work in — they are part of them. Every interaction, decision and relationship shapes the systems in some way, and systems shape them in return.

Recognising that conditions shape what's possible doesn't mean waiting for change to happen. Systems Weavers can notice what's happening around them, name it, and act to shift it — even within systems that feel stuck or resistant to change. Agency doesn't require permission. It requires awareness and intention.

Why it matters

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by the size and complexity of systems Systems Weavers work in. But everyone has some sphere of influence, even if it's smaller than they'd like.

Some conditions can be shifted directly; others require advocacy, collaboration or collective action. Either way, the starting point is the same: keeping children at the centre, noticing what's possible, and choosing to act from that place.

Ideas for bringing it to life

Where do I have influence that I might not be noticing or using?

Where do I need to work with others to shift conditions I can't change alone?

How does my history, identity, experiences and assumptions shape what I notice and see as possible?

We are stronger together



What we create together is always greater than what we can do alone.

What this means

Systems Weaving is not a solo endeavour. Meaningful change in conditions rarely happens through individual action alone. It requires coordination, trust, shared purpose and collective effort — across people, organisations and generations.

Why it matters

Systems are held in place collectively — by shared norms, relationships, histories and patterns of behaviour. Shifting them requires collective action too. For Systems Weavers, this includes listening to and working alongside children and young people as active participants in the systems that shape their lives — not just as recipients of decisions made by adults.

Ideas for bringing it to life

Where am I trying to carry this work alone, when I could be building something together with others?

Who else could I learn, align or act with in service of children thriving - across silos, sectors, generations and communities?

Understanding power changes everything



Power shapes what is possible for kids— and Systems Weaving means paying attention to how.

What this means

Power is always present in systems and relationships. It shapes whose voices are heard, whose perspectives are centred, how decisions are made and how resources flow. But power is not fixed or held by individuals alone. It shifts depending on context, roles, histories and the relationships we are part of.

Being a Systems Weaver involves working with power as a relational force. It is not something to be accumulated or exercised over others, but something to be noticed, shared and directed so that children and young people can thrive.

This includes recognising and weaving in the power of those who are often seen as powerless, especially children. Children hold knowledge, insight and influence about their own lives, and Systems Weavers make room for that power to shape decisions and systems.

Why it matters

When power goes unexamined, it tends to reinforce existing inequities. It concentrates in some places, constrains in others, and shapes outcomes for children and young people that are not as good as they could be.

Systems Weaving requires ongoing attention to how power is operating – in ourselves, in our relationships and in the wider system. It also requires a willingness to question assumptions, make space for multiple perspectives and act to shift flows of power that are causing harm.

Above all, it means weaving in ways that enable children, families and communities to exercise agency in their own lives, so that they are not only affected by systems but help to shape them.

Ideas for bringing it to life

Whose voices are being heard in this space — and whose are missing? What might this tell me about how power is operating?

Where is power concentrated or constrained, and what might I be able to influence — alone or with others?

How this Living Guide can be used to support Systems Weaving

As a shared reference point – to build a common understanding of what Systems Weaving could look like in practice, and to explain the intent of this work to others.

As a collaborative reflective tool – to explore with others the conditions which are enabling or limiting people in a particular context, and to consider what might help. It can also be used to reflect on what shifted through actions and what made that possible.



Reflective questions for Systems Weavers

Start by getting a feel for the context – the pace, the pressures, the power dynamics, and what kinds of conversations feel possible. Understanding what is present and what is possible given the conditions people are experiencing. This is the starting point for everything that follows.

Ask: What might be getting in the way?

Notice which conditions might be making it hard for people to show up fully. For example, urgency can make reflection feel impossible. Performance pressure can make it hard to learn in public. The analysis of the conditions becomes the basis for supporting Systems Weaving.

Ask: What are one or two small things that could shift?

Rather than trying to change everything, focus on one or two conditions within your ability to influence. A little more trust. A slower pace. Permission to not know. Small shifts in conditions can open surprising amounts of space.

Regularly reflect together.

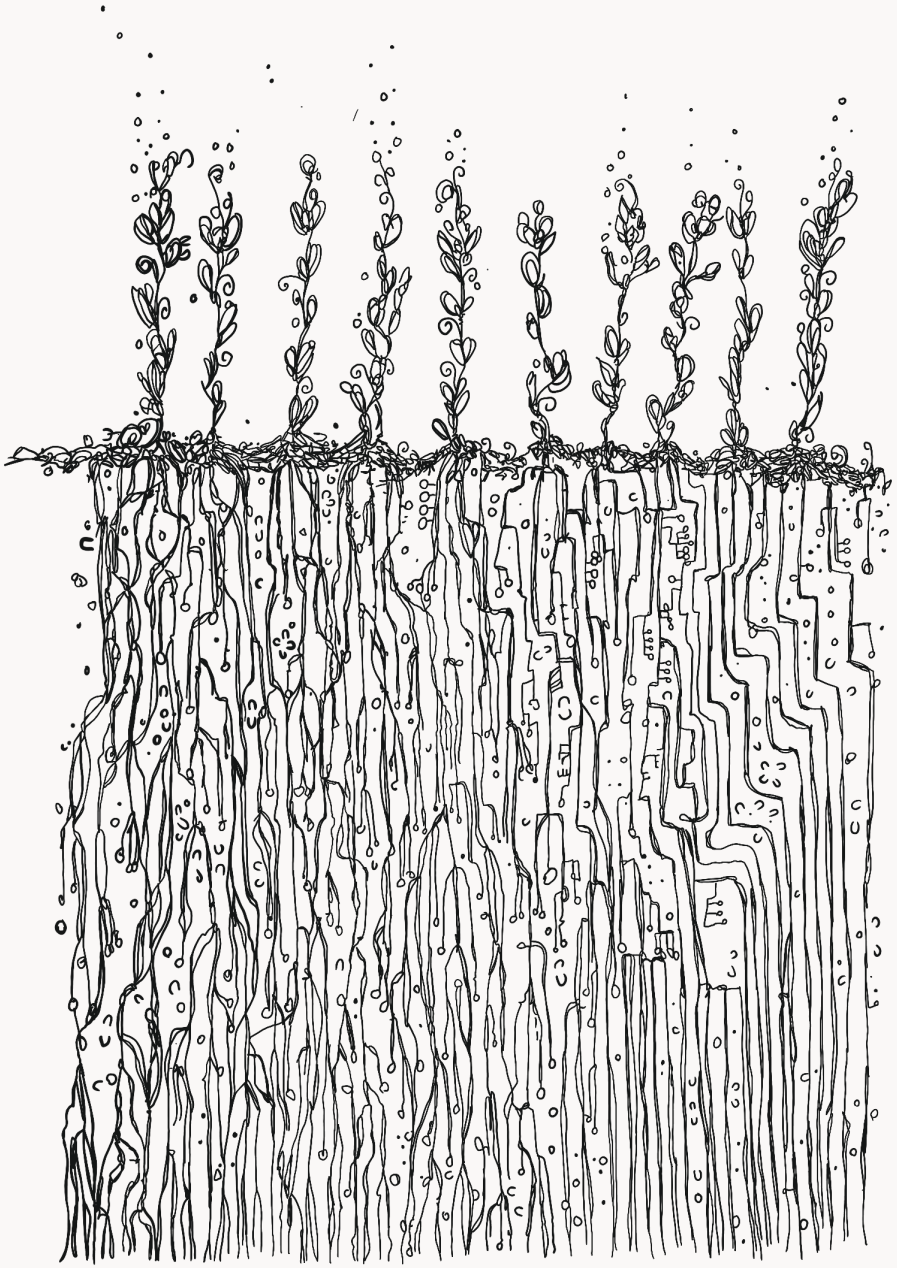
What became possible when conditions shifted? Observe with other Systems Weavers: what changed in how people think, relate and act? Then reflect on: what conditions made that possible?

Artwork Title:
We Are All Just Dancing on the Top Soil (2026)

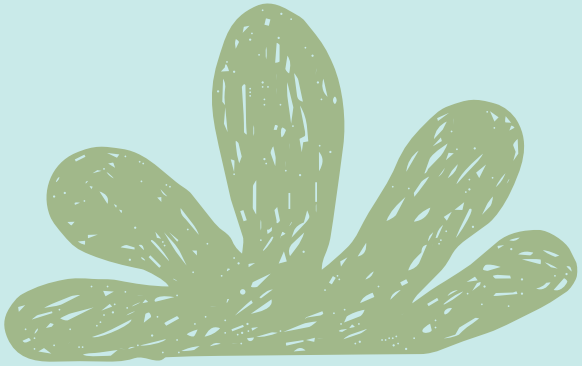
We Are All Just Dancing on theTop Soil was drawn/ scribed during a learning experience design session with Queensland Kids Partnership. Ten seedlings sit above deeproots that move from woven, relational grounds into the straight boxed lines of inherited systems, and each seedling is also a three thousand year old tree, an elder. The work is a map, an invitation to findyourself/ ourselves in, and a timley reminder that we have all grown things.

Artist: Steph Beck, Vice Chancellor of AIME Mentoring's ImaginationUniversity, lead designer for the AIME design residency 2026.

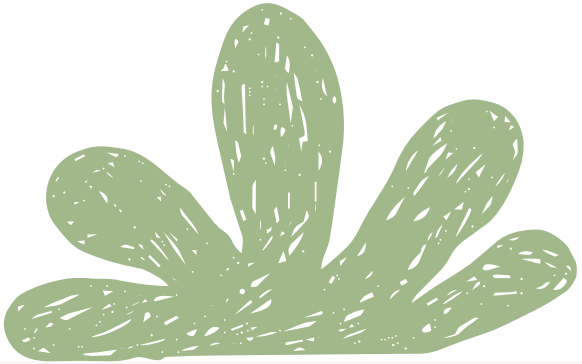
For the full story of this artwork please visit https://qkp.org.au/artworks/



Introducing the conditions and capabilities for Systems Weaving



Interpreting the capabilities



The capabilities in this guide are organised into four parts which shape and influence each other.

Fundamental — how Systems Weavers see and make sense of the world. These shape how all other capabilities are understood and expressed.

Personal — personal capabilities are not measures of individual wellbeing or self-mastery. They describe ways of noticing and relating that may be accessed when shaped by conditions.

Relational — how Systems Weavers engage with others and the environments around them. This includes how trust, power, culture and collective sensemaking are navigated.

Ecosystem — how Systems Weavers engage with, participate in and influence the broader systems they are part of — including institutions, policies, communities and intergenerational impact.

What you will find in each thread

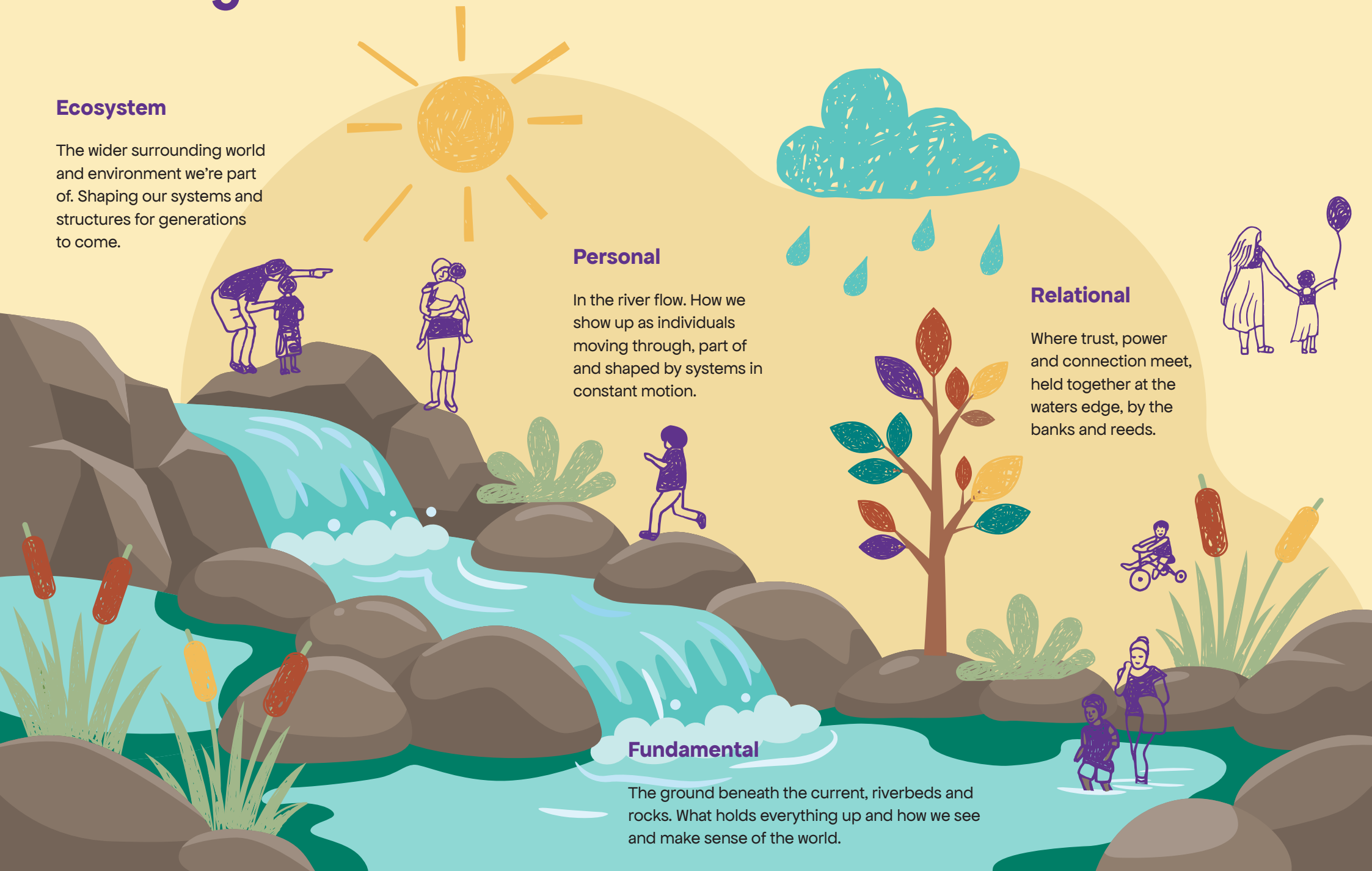
What helps this grow — the conditions and environments that shape what becomes possible.

Capability — the ways of knowing, doing and being that emerge in relationship with the conditions.

What this might look like — The practices are examples of how a capability might show up, not criteria for demonstrating or assessing capability. What is possible in practice will vary with context and conditions.

The relationships between conditions, capabilities and practices are not linear or set in a particular direction. The conditions described are examples of what may support a capability to emerge; they are not a recipe for producing it.

Tending the river so kids can thrive



Ecosystem

The wider surrounding world and environment we're part of. Shaping our systems and structures for generations to come.

Personal

In the river flow. How we show up as individuals moving through, part of and shaped by systems in constant motion.

Relational

Where trust, power and connection meet, held together at the waters edge, by the banks and reeds.

Fundamental

The ground beneath the current, riverbeds and rocks. What holds everything up and how we see and make sense of the world.

The conditions and capabilities for Systems Weaving

Fundamental, personal, relational and ecosystem conditions and capabilities

Fundamental

Conditions and capabilities

What helps this grow	Capability	What this might look like
Cultures and language that genuinely respect children and young people's voices, agency and rights. Structures that hold people accountable to children and young people, not just to institutions.	**Accountability to young Queenslanders** *Holding accountability to children and young people through all practices.*	Listening to children, young people and families with real empathy. Being clear and honest about boundaries and expectations. Communicating in a way that's honest and treats people as equals.
Time to think without rushing to answers. Space to say "I don't know" or "not yet" without judgement. A culture that values trying things out over having it all figured out.	**Comfort with complexity** *Staying present with uncertainty and contradiction, without rushing to make things simple or certain.*	Noticing when you're reaching for a quick answer just to feel comfortable. Making space to hear different views. Letting understanding take the time it needs.
Low-stakes spaces to acknowledge uncertainty or mistakes. A culture that values learning over feeling the need to have it all sorted. Everyday language that treats different views as normal, not a problem to solve.	**Self-reflection** *An ongoing awareness of how your own history, identity and assumptions shape what you notice and do.*	Regularly asking yourself: where am I seeing and listening from right now? Naming the limits of your own view. Noticing how your presence affects the room.
Workloads that allow real recovery, with clear permission to slow down. Cultures where rest and limits are respected and modelled. Practices shaped by an understanding of trauma and how it affects the body and brain.	**Nervous system awareness** *Sensitivity to how stress, fatigue and safety shape how people think, relate and decide.*	Adjusting your pace, language and expectations when needed. Noticing signs of overwhelm, in yourself and others. Treating rest as part of the work, not a break from it.
Time to consider impact, not just efficiency. A culture that values care as much as delivery. Spaces that make direct, honest conversations possible.	**Acting with care and responsibility** *A focus on responsibility and care, rather than just being "correct" or compliant.*	Making choices with real awareness of their impact on children, communities, land and future generations. Pausing when something feels not right ethically, rather than pushing past it.

What helps this grow	Capability	What this might look like
Funding and evaluation that allow time for genuinely understanding the current context, not just delivering outputs. A culture that makes space for dialogue and sensemaking, including noticing where resistance to loss (real or perceived) is getting in the way. Protected space for learning, sensemaking and reflecting on context.	**Condition-led action** *Taking conditions as the starting point for understanding and enabling change.*	Exploring how current conditions shape what people feel able to do. Talking together about what needs to shift for change to happen. Trying, watching what happens, and adjusting — without overclaiming why something worked.
Time and investment in relationship-building and ongoing cultural learning. Opportunities to learn from First Nations people, knowledge and practice in ways that are locally grounded and appropriately led. Practices and language that honour Indigenous cultures, knowledge and sovereignty. Leaders who visibly respect and uphold Indigenous sovereignty and create space for Indigenous perspectives to influence how the work is understood and done.	**Cultural humility** *An honest, ongoing look at your own culture, identity and assumptions about difference.*	Listening deeply, with openness and respect. Seeking to learn from perspectives and ways of knowing different from your own. Noticing when your assumptions are being challenged, and remaining open to changing your understanding. Owning mistakes or blind spots, and repairing them.
Time and pacing that allows real listening across different worldviews and across our own different ways of knowing. Organisational cultures that treat multiple ways of knowing as equally valid. Protection against tokenism or using culture without giving credit or care.	**Holding multiple ways of knowing** *Recognising there are many valid ways of knowing, and moving between them with curiosity and care.*	Letting your thinking be genuinely shaped by other knowledge systems, including First Nations knowledge and lived experience. Asking whose knowledge is centred, and whose is being asked to translate itself. Taking the time to tune in to information from multiple ways of knowing within ourselves (cognitive, emotional/affectual, embodied/somatic, spiritual, ecological etc).
A learning culture that supports purposeful, specific feedback with clear permission to experiment. Time to build real trust, respect and reciprocity in relationships. Sharing learning through different methods and forums.	**Learning in public** *Being open to being seen as unfinished, still learning, and sometimes wrong. Sharing our learning as we do, not just when we are done.*	Acknowledging mistakes. Asking questions instead of performing expertise. Sharing what you learned, including what didn't work.

Personal

Conditions and capabilities

What helps this grow	Capability	What this might look like
Cultures and processes which involve integrating what your body, emotions and instincts are telling you.	**Embodied self-awareness** *Attunement to your bodily signals, emotions and patterns as sources of information about the wider system.*	Noticing tension, fatigue or avoidance and treating it as information. Using your body as a source of insight, not something to ignore. Speaking up when the pace isn't sustainable.
Cultures and language that acknowledges and holds uncertainty. Safety to express vulnerability. Shared language for talking about fear and doubt.	**Navigating uncertainty** *Noticing excitement, fear, grief or doubt without letting them unconsciously drive your actions.*	Naming what you're feeling inside. Seeking support rather than performing certainty. Recognising fear, doubt or grief as valid responses, without letting them drive reactive action or withdrawal.
Structures that share responsibility around recognition for collaboration, not just individual effort. Clear role boundaries. Cultures that don't reward overworking.	**Letting go of control and heroism** *Being willing to release the need to fix, rescue or be the one who knows. Letting go of the need to be recognised as the sole contributor to change. Leaving ego and logo at the door.*	Creating space for others to act. Trusting the group's collective wisdom. Recognising that stepping back can be an act of care, not neglect.

Relational

Conditions and capabilities

What helps this grow	Capability	What this might look like
Ways of working that value process, with clear agreements about how people take part. Time to build trust. Cultures that value listening and dialogue over asserting.	**Relational awareness** *Sensitivity to trust, power and safety within groups — and to our connection with Country, community and future generations.*	Noticing who is included and who isn't. Adjusting how you work to include quieter voices. Including young people and Elders. Responding to conflict instead of avoiding it. Considering the effects of decisions across generations, community and Country.
Time and funding to notice existing strengths, not just gaps. Real space for different or conflicting views. Time to reflect on how the collaboration itself is going.	**Collaboration** *Valuing and aligning people and systems towards a shared purpose and dialogue. Creating and holding space that creates permission and enables agency to act.*	Building flexible ways of working together across ages and roles. Noticing existing strengths and building on them. Slowing down to explore different needs and values rather than rushing to agreement. Acknowledging that collaboration involves loss, and making time to work through that.
A visible commitment to psychological safety. Clear boundaries. Cultures and processes in place to acknowledge and explore tension with curiosity rather than blame.	**Holding difference and tension** *Staying in relationship across disagreement and uneven power, without forcing consensus.*	Letting more than one truth exist at once. Naming tension as useful information, not a problem. Holding disagreement with care, without needing quick consensus.
Dedicated time for reflection. Facilitation that centres genuine inquiry. Less pressure for fast decisions.	**Collective sensemaking** *Groups noticing patterns and dynamics together, rather than relying on individual analysis.*	Slowing down to make sense of things together. Testing more than one interpretation before deciding. Valuing shared understanding as a real outcome, not a delay.
Ways to mark change, progress, loss and grief. Cultures and language to notice and hold resistance, with reflective spaces to explore with curiosity, rather than shutting resistance down.	**Working with resistance as opportunity** *Recognising resistance as a natural, valuable part of change — and engaging with it with curiosity, not avoidance.*	Noticing when reactions shift, and slowing down. Asking permission to explore what's underneath resistance. Recognising moments of relief or resolution, and learning from them.
Clear expectations that still allow flexibility. Repair practices. Cultures and language to provide and discuss feedback are supported. Conversations about accountability and taking responsibility are encouraged.	**Accountability in relationship** *Understanding accountability as something held with others, not imposed on them.*	Making commitments, roles and limits clear and visible. Taking responsibility when harm occurs, without blame or defensiveness. Awareness that First Nations communities aren't carrying the weight of fixing harms they didn't cause. Judging success by trust and relationships, not just results.
Cultures and processes to learn about and reflect on power are integrated. Safe spaces are created for open conversations about power imbalances and enablers.	**Power awareness** *Seeing power as a relational, shifting force to be stewarded — not a fixed resource to hold onto.*	Recognising power as something that shifts depending on relationships and roles. Exploring range of ways power is being used and felt. Taking responsibility for using power in ways that serve children, not control.

Ecosystem

Conditions and capabilities

What helps this grow	Capability	What this might look like
Long-term thinking and investment acknowledges changes, forces and learning. Time to reflect on what's been learned. Valuing insight and story alongside data.	**Seeing systems as living ecologies** *Understanding systems as dynamic and shaped by history, culture, power and ecology — not just structures or processes.*	Noticing patterns over time and how actions ripple beyond what was intended. Asking what "thriving" really means across generations. Building a shared, hopeful and realistic vision for the future.
The context is always considered and explored in dialogue to surface perspectives on alignment and what's non-negotiable. Trust-based ways of governing. Leaders who support good judgement in service of children.	**Working with context, opportunity and constraint** *Acting in relationship with the forces and limits around you, without defaulting to compliance or rebellion.*	Choosing carefully when to work within existing structures and when to challenge them. Being honest about trade-offs. Finding pockets of energy and readiness elsewhere when things feel stuck.
Cultures and language to reflect on and explore resistance. An understanding that loss is part of how systems change.	**Seeing ecosystem elasticity and resistance as natural** *Understanding that resistance, inertia and snapback to old patterns are inevitable across systems.*	Starting with people who have the most energy and readiness. Exploring resistance with curiosity rather than pushing past it. Listening to those most affected to understand what's at stake for them.
Leaders who provide enough steadiness and structure for people to move through disruption without becoming overwhelmed.	**Working with disruption** *Bringing enough order and support that disruption can be navigated, not just survived.*	Working across organisations and sectors to test what's actually needed. Sharing responsibility to hold steady together. Using urgency to spark innovation, while still learning as you go.
Permission to experiment, with room for things not to work the first time. Flexible funding and time frames that allow ideas to be tried, adapted or let go. Leaders who protect space for new approaches while they are still fragile. Ways of capturing and sharing what is being learned.	**Opening windows for adaptation and innovation** *Noticing and creating moments when change becomes possible, and holding them open long enough for new ways of working to take root.*	Recognising when a shift in policy, leadership, funding or community energy creates an opening, and acting on it. Starting small, with trials that children, families and communities help shape. Sharing early learning openly so others can build on it. Helping promising practices move from the edges into the way things are usually done.
Work is grounded in place, with time frames that reflect the work. Tangible responsibility is taken for future impact. Cultural practices that honour land and lineage.	**Attending to connections** *Awareness that this work is embedded in place, history and responsibility to those not yet here.*	Considering impact on future generations and the land, not just short-term results. Grounding decisions in place and season. Noticing where relationships need repair or renewed care.
Cultures and ways of working which explore and discover what roles can support purpose. Regular reflection to allow room to adapt.	**Fluidity in roles and actions** *Taking up roles in ways that respond to context, rather than staying fixed and linear.*	Noticing when a role isn't serving children's thriving anymore. Taking up whatever role is genuinely needed, rather than sticking to a fixed job description.

What we hold together for children and young people

Systems Weavers hold a number of things that are true at the same time — including the pace of change itself. Children's needs can be urgent, and real, trusted change often takes longer than that urgency demands. Holding these tensions honestly is part of what it means to be a Systems Weaver. Some are outlined here. You may find others.

Generalised and tailored

A shared guide gives everyone a common language and a sense of coherence across Queensland. At the same time, every community, culture and context is different.

This Guide with condition-building for capabilities is a starting point that Systems Weavers can interpret, adapt and make meaningful in their own context. When something doesn't quite fit, that's not a problem to fix. It's information we can pay attention to.

Emergence and structure

These conditions and capabilities are designed to evolve through use, staying open to what emerges in practice. At the same time, this Guide provides the scaffolding to support shared understanding, accountability and practical application.

The guide is not a fixed document. It is a reference to be held and adapted over time, rather than a static blueprint to be implemented exactly as written.



Ultimate vision and next step

The conditions and capabilities hold an aspirational vision for what Systems Weaving can look like. This can mean disrupting inherited patterns and inviting deeper transformation. At the same time, change has to stay grounded in what's viable and supportive right now, in this system, at this moment.

The vision keeps the work pointed in a direction that enables change. The next viable step is what actually creates the shifts that need to happen.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of working

First Nations knowledge and ways of knowing, being and doing offer important perspectives for this work, particularly around relationality, stewardship and intergenerational responsibility. At the same time, this guide has been developed primarily within non-Indigenous institutional contexts and has not been shaped from within First Nations knowledge systems.

This creates an ongoing responsibility to learn from First Nations people and knowledge, while recognising what the guide does not yet hold. Systems Weavers are encouraged to integrate First Nations leadership, perspectives and knowledge in practice, including where these may challenge or deepen the way the work is understood.

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Queensland Kids Partnership
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