

# INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2021– DECEMBER 2022



Australian  
National  
University



# Our vision for reconciliation

The University's vision is to be a place that facilitates learning that respects and values diversity: a place where all Australians come together to engage with their chosen disciplines in culturally rich learning and research environments. We seek to embed reconciliation into our core business practices and decision making at all levels.

ANU is a place where First Nations peoples and cultures are respected, celebrated and reflected in our research and education. We are dedicated to advancing reconciliation by further promoting greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories; increasing participation in higher education; and fostering partnerships in Indigenous education, research, wellbeing, advancement and development. As the national university, ANU provides an environment for debating the big issues to advance the status, recognition and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For tens of thousands of years, hundreds of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived in Australia. These Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia have developed complex societies with many languages, cultural practices and religious and spiritual traditions, which continue to be passed down from generation to generation. The arrival of Europeans in Australia led to two centuries of conflict and violence. Through deliberate government policy, First Nations peoples were isolated and marginalised within their own Country, resulting in significant economic and social disadvantage. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are still fighting to maintain the languages and cultures which sustain First Australians' way of life and have shown incredible strength and resilience in the face of disadvantage and discrimination.

Institutions like ANU benefit enormously from the opportunity to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. The past two centuries of dispossession and systemic racism have profoundly impacted all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life, including access to institutions like ANU. This is the legacy that ANU recognises, acknowledges and seeks to redress. This Plan is testament to the University's conviction that it has an important role to play in righting these wrongs. It recognises that meaningful relationships must be founded on mutual respect and meaningful partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

As the national university, we have a responsibility to ensure our student and staff cohorts represent the diversity of our nation. With this in mind, we strive to build a strong cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students. Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students feel welcome and are supported within a community on our campus are our top priorities. There are five core themes which this plan focuses upon:

**Students:** We will provide the best educational and campus experiences so that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may successfully complete their degrees and fulfil their aspirations. Our students are the future leaders of our nation.

**Staff:** We will develop appropriate recruitment mechanisms and pathways for career progression and professional development to support the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to succeed in their chosen field by providing a stimulating, supportive, enriching environment and community of support at ANU.

**Research & Policy Development:** We seek to transform Australian society with impactful, collaborative, Indigenous-led research and policy development.

**Education:** We have so much to learn from the cultures, histories and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are committed to ensuring that an education at ANU celebrates and embeds First Nations knowledge, principles, and ways of learning.

**Community Engagement:** Our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will provide the University with the opportunity to listen and learn about the historical and modern circumstances for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and provide space for articulating a vision for the future.

# Our business

ANU is Australia's national university and a strategic endowment for our nation. It was established by an Act of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1946 to support the development of national unity and identity, to improve Australia's understanding of itself and the region, and to contribute to economic development and social cohesion.

Since its establishment, ANU has built an international reputation for excellence in research and education and advancing knowledge through original inquiry and intellectual discourse. ANU undertakes research of the highest quality in fields of particular importance to the nation. The University is a leader in quality teaching and learning, and our profile of graduate destinations demonstrates that ANU prepares students well for workforce participation and for being valuable contributors locally, nationally and globally. With the multidisciplinary capacity created by the Colleges, ANU advances knowledge through community engagement by enhancing understanding of Australia – its economy, society, culture and environment – and its position in the region and the world. As the Commonwealth's university in the nation's capital, ANU plays a leading role in the public policy community by exploring the important problems and issues that confront the nation, the region and the world, working to provide solutions through evidence-based policy analysis and informing the public through leading open discussion of those issues. We are a university that brings together students and scholars from across the country, the region, the world, and from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

The University is located in central Canberra, with small facilities elsewhere in the ACT, New South Wales and the Northern Territory and with regional offices in China, Singapore and the USA. In 2020, the University employed approximately 5200 staff of which 115 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. A commitment by ANU to achieve the vision and targets set out in this RAP will enhance the quality, diversity and experience of the University's staff and student bodies. Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives across all areas will help ensure that courses are more responsive to international, national, community and professional expectations.

ANU is fully committed to the values of academic inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge, integrity in all its activities, collegiality in its relationships, diversity in its staff and students and engagement with its communities and the nation. ANU is uniquely placed to contribute both to the national reconciliation agenda and to supporting the aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The University has a long-standing commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultures, and has already taken a number of significant steps towards reconciliation.

The University has a number of organisational units with a singular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus. The Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre provides a meeting place and support base for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at ANU. Tjabal staff and students are strongly committed to improving education outcomes and achieving study and career goals that positively impact communities.

Other areas of the University that have a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus include:

- The National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS) which promotes and initiates cross-disciplinary research in a wide range of areas of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through this research NCIS aims to deepen Australia's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and ensure these knowledges, perspectives and experiences are respected, valued, accessed and incorporated into all learning environments and beyond.
- The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) is Australia's foremost social science research body focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic and social policy from a national perspective. CAEPR aims to undertake social science research that informs intellectual understanding, public debate, policy formation and community action.

- The Australian Centre for Indigenous History conducts collaborative and individual research projects on Australian, comparative and trans-national Indigenous histories. The Centre hosts the journal, *Aboriginal History*, which is co-edited by two staff members, and offers an undergraduate course on Indigenous histories.
- The National Centre for Indigenous Genomics aims to create a repository of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bio specimens, genomic data and documents for research and other uses that benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander donors, their communities and descendants, and the general Australian community.
- The 2019 ANU Grand Challenge scheme funds interdisciplinary research aimed to improve the health and wellbeing for First Nations peoples across Australia. The research priorities were generated collaboratively by community stakeholders and researchers in 2017 at ANU.
- The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language has a major focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, supported by a Chair of Indigenous Linguistics. ANU students have the opportunity to learn an Aboriginal language.
- The School of Music's Indigenous composer initiative, in partnership with other arts organisations, provides mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander composers.
- The Sir Roland Wilson Foundation offers the Pat Turner Scholarship to high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public servants to undertake a 1-3 year postgraduate qualification in topics of national significance and strategic importance to the Australian Public Service building connections between the APS and academia.
- The University has close relationships with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the National Museum of Australia, both located adjacent to the University.

# Our RAP

The RAP signals an ambitious systemic shift in the University's culture and its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The University recognises the importance of reconciliation for all members of our University and that initiatives to promote reconciliation must be framed within a respectful environment for all.

The organisation of the University resembles a federalist structure which is used as a framework for the implementation of this document. The RAP is intended to set a benchmark for initiatives that are to be implemented at a University-wide level and to create a holistic approach to advancing reconciliation. It informs all plans that follow it at College and Division levels while permitting them the flexibility to be creative in actions that are especially adapted to those units.

The University's first RAP was launched in 2009 but by 2012, the central RAP Committee had ceased to function due to lack of central support and coordination. The RAP Committees of some Colleges and administrative units continued to implement actions and made some very significant advances, particularly in trying new models for recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional staff. In 2017, under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Schmidt and with the launch of our new strategic plan, ANU renewed its commitment to reconciliation through the development of an Innovate RAP. There have been many achievements in implementing our 2018-19 RAP, in particular a reinvigorated RAP Working Group which has driven action across all levels at ANU.



The Working Group membership is:

- ex officio, Vice-Chancellor, as Chair
- ex officio, a College Dean, as Deputy Chair
- ex officio, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student & University Experience), as Co-Chair
- ex officio, Vice-President First Nations, or nominee
- ex officio, Chief Operating Officer, or nominee
- ex officio, the General Manager of each College (7) or College Executive nominee
- ex officio, the Chairs of College RAP or IDEA committees (7) or nominees
- ex officio, representative from Human Resources
- ex officio, representative from Strategic Communication & Public Affairs
- one nominee of PARSA (ex officio)
- one nominee of ANUSA (ex officio)
- one nominee from the Residential Colleges
- one representative from ANU's Indigenous alumni community
- at least one Indigenous academic staff member, if not included in the above roles
- at least one Indigenous professional staff member, if not included in the above roles

Other achievements include beginning all major ANU public events with a Welcome to Country; the inclusion of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person on high level decision-making bodies of the University including ANU Council; an enhanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence at graduation ceremonies, including flags and stoles for graduates; the ANU Indigenous Heritage Trail; the establishment of staff Reconciliation awards; implementation of the Core cultural learning program for staff and students; and an increase in the number of artworks and symbols displayed across the University. A number of these actions have helped to establish a sense of place and belonging across our campus. We still have a long way to go to reach our goals of parity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and student numbers however there is enormous goodwill across our community to continue our work towards reconciliation.

In developing this current plan, we explored the challenges of the previous plan, including committing to too many individual actions and deliverables without the required support, communication and resources, and have thus refocused on five key priorities, while maintaining a list of our ongoing commitments. To further address this going forward, ANU is adopting a new monitoring and reporting system to better track progress against our commitments. The plan has been developed by our RAP Working Group, led by the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students and academic and administrative units of the University. The RAP Working Group is comprised of professional and academic staff representing all seven Colleges, representatives of key service divisions, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student representatives. A draft version was also sent to all ANU staff and students for comment. The final plan was endorsed by ANU Council on 11 February 2021 and submitted to Reconciliation Australia for final endorsement.

# Relationships

As the national university, one of our defining roles is to contribute to the advancement of First Nations peoples. Building broader and deeper relationships and collaborations with First Nations peoples will enable the University to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments and graduates; undertake more effective teaching, learning and services; undertake research in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; provide an environment for discussion and action regarding issues which advance the status, recognition and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and give back to the communities that we engage with.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1</b> Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Create a First Nations Portfolio to provide leadership and advice to staff across ANU regarding the University's engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	January 2021	Vice-President (First Nations)
	Create a new group to advise the University's Ethics body on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.	December 2021	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) / Vice-President (First Nations)
	Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to inform and develop an engagement plan to guide our work with these stakeholders which will inform our research agenda, education content and practices.	December 2021	Vice-President (First Nations)
	Develop and strengthen the University's Indigenous Alumni Network to share their experience, expertise and contributions, and to enhance Indigenous education and research and in support of the RAP.	December 2021	Vice-President (Advancement)

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Build relationships and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by engaging and promoting National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</p>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to staff	May 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Register our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Encourage the RAP Working Group members and all staff to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. When external invitations are extended to senior members of the working group, they or their representatives will be available	May 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Organise at least one NRW event each year	May 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</p>	Continue to monitor HR policies and procedures to identify any new anti-discrimination provisions, future needs in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and in line with regular Enterprise Agreement and relevant policy review cycles.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer
	Continue to monitor and communicate ANU's Procedure for the prevention of discrimination, harassment and bullying.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism and how they can influence positive relationships across and beyond the ANU community.	July 2021	Chief Operating Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Promote reconciliation as part of the University's core business through building a culture among staff and students whereby everyone has a role to play in reconciliation.</p>	Implement strategies to engage our staff and external stakeholders in reconciliation to further drive reconciliation outcomes	December 2021	Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Embed recognition and reconciliation across annual alumni events (e.g. Alumni Awards; Alumni Weekend)	December 2021	Vice-President (Advancement)
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly	May 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Collaborate with Reconciliation Australia and build robust and collaborative partnerships with other universities to collectively advance reconciliation.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
	Develop an annual a calendar of events to plan lectures, forums and workshops and other important events nationally that actively promote reconciliation internally and externally.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations) / Deans

# Respect

The knowledge, cultural expression and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians should be acknowledged and celebrated by all in our community. The perspectives which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring to intellectual inquiry make valuable and unique contributions to the University's research and educational programs and the generation of new knowledge. Respecting and valuing these knowledges, cultures and experiences is therefore fundamental to the business of the University and its goals in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, research and employment.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Increase staff and student understanding, valuing and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning in our education and research programmes.</p>	<p>Develop and implement, with appropriate training, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education strategy that includes identifying opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, principles and other content into undergraduate and graduate coursework in every College where applicable.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) / Vice-President (First Nations) / Deans</p>
	<p>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research strategy to ensure research and public policy development at ANU aligns with national and community priorities to make a significant impact.</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) / Vice-President (First Nations) / Deans</p>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</p>	<p>Continue to make available an online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course for all staff and students, and utilise incentives to increase uptake.</p>	<p>December 2021, 2022</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer / Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) / Deans</p>
	<p>Consult local Traditional Owners on the development of a cultural learning strategy.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations)</p>

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7 Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Implement a cultural learning strategy which is communicated to all staff.	December 2022	Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations)
	Monitor cultural learning needs across ANU to design and then provide opportunities for formal and structured cultural learning for key leadership staff, HR managers and RAP Working Group members.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations)
	Invite a Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events each year including graduations, State of the University and Commencement.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Provide a cultural protocol document and support and training to enhance the entire University community's cultural competency and understanding to ensure delivery of an appropriate Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important meetings.	December 2021	Vice-President (First Nations) / Chief Operating Officer
8 Build relationships and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by engaging and promoting NAIDOC Week.	Display Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags at significant events and on University grounds.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)
	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	May 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	Encourage RAP Working Group members and all staff to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NAIDOC Week. When external invitations are extended to senior members of the working group, they or their representatives will be available	July 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Engagement & Global Relations)

# Opportunities

The University aspires to enrol Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in proportion to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the overall population. To do so, we will focus on providing a culturally appropriate, stimulating, enriching and supportive environment to study and work.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Establish ANU as a preferred university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.</p>	<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments by 10% annually, at least up to parity; and focus on maintaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completion, retention and satisfaction rates at, or above, the rates for non-Indigenous students through development, implementation and promotion of a recruitment and support strategy.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) / Vice-President (First Nations) / Deputy Vice-Chancellor (University Experience) / Deans</p>
<p><b>10</b></p> <p>Establish ANU as a preferred university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic and professional staff.</p>	<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment by 10% annually, at least up to parity through development and implementation of a specific recruitment, retention and professional development strategy for both academic and professional staff.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations) / Deans</p>
	<p>Advertise all professional staff vacancies, and appropriate academic vacancies, in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>
	<p>Monitor HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.</p>	<p>December 2021, 2022</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>
	<p>Monitor and maintain understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</p>	<p>December 2021, 2022</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Increase opportunities to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to support improved economic and social outcomes.</p>	Continue to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, consulting on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations)
	Maintain and support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network for academic and professional staff.	December 2021, 2022	Chief Operating Officer / Vice-President (First Nations)
	Review and monitor procurement practices to ensure there are no barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy as part of the wider University procurement strategy, to include scoping of potential vendor opportunities.	December 2021	Chief Operating Officer
	Target a 50% increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vendors that ANU contracts with across the 3 year period to enable a greater number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vendors exposure to ANU with the intent of identifying scalable vendors to build longer term engagements.	December 2022	Chief Operating Officer
	Develop a relationship with at least 1 preferred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business supplier	December 2022	Chief Operating Officer
	Communicate to staff avenues to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	July 2021	Chief Operating Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Provide appropriate governance and support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</p>	Maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of the RAP, chaired by the University's RAP Champion, the Vice-Chancellor, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation. The RAP Working Group will be run in accordance with its Terms of Reference.	March, June, September, December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
	Utilise Strategy Dot Zero system to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
	Define resource needs for RAP implementation at Central and College levels, including the residential experience.	March 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor / Chief Operating Officer / Deans
	Incorporate RAP deliverables into College/Division business plans to outline specific actions at the local levels to implement the RAP and to improve coordination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives between Schools, Colleges and the centre.	December 2021	Vice-Chancellor / Chief Operating Officer / Deans
	Establish accountability mechanisms to empower and hold accountable through the Vice-Chancellor (the senior RAP Champion), and the senior management team, in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<h1>13</h1> <p>Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</p>	Report RAP progress to senior leaders quarterly.	March, June, September, December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
	Publicly report, and share with all staff, our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	December 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2021, 2022	Vice-Chancellor
<h1>14</h1> <p>Review, refresh and update our RAP as part of our reconciliation journey.</p>	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements from this RAP	January 2022	Vice-Chancellor



Australian  
National  
University

## Contact us

**First Nations Portfolio**

Margaret Murphy

Chief Operating Officer

T 02 6125 8416

E [margaret.murphy@anu.edu.au](mailto:margaret.murphy@anu.edu.au)