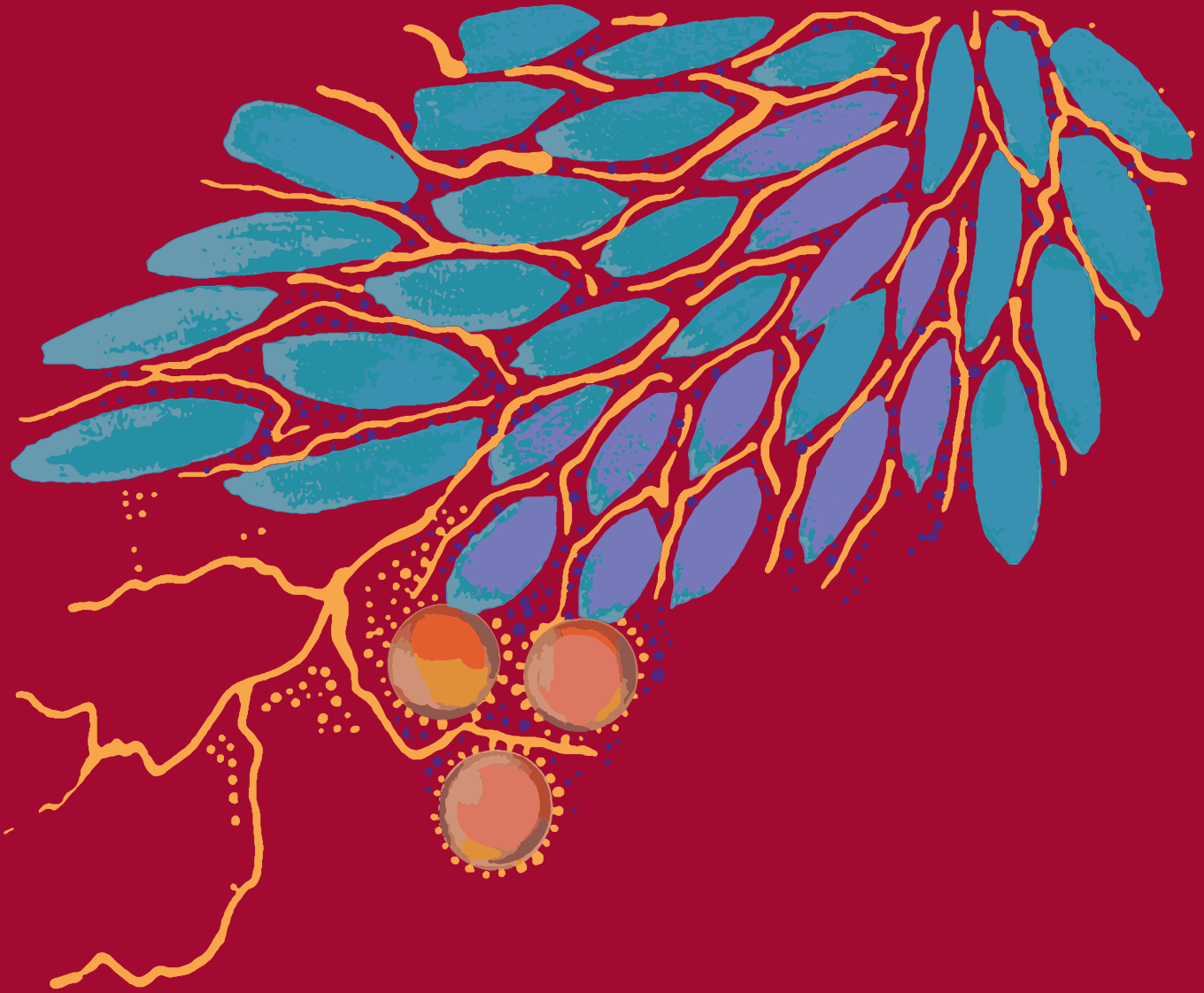


WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture
and Society



Indigenous Strategy 2024-2027



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Institute for Culture and Society is located in Parramatta, “the place where the eel sets down” in Dharug language, along the north bank of the Parramatta River. It sits on the traditional lands and waters of the Burrumattagal people of the Dharug Nation, who have been stewards and caretakers of these territories since time immemorial, in what today is referred to as Greater Western Sydney, one of the most diverse cultural communities in the world and home to the largest number of Indigenous Australians in the country. The Institute for Culture and Society acknowledges the Dharug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples as traditional custodians and Indigenous knowledge-holders, whose storytelling serve as historical record, a form of teaching and learning, a way to care for Country, and an expression of Indigenous culture and identity.

COVER IMAGE:
Those who came before us.

Background

Early in 2020, two discrete one-day cultural exchange workshops for staff were hosted by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation. As part of these workshops, it was agreed that all participants would be invited to contribute to the creation of a piece of original artwork, to enhance their understanding of Country and culture. This activity was co-facilitated by artist Allan McKenzie, a Wiradjuri-Gamilaroi man from Griffith NSW.

Early in 2021, after the COVID-19 hiatus, Allan returned to Western to oversee the completion of the artwork. Importantly, the final stage of the creation of this artwork was to invite all Indigenous students and staff to visit the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education at Parramatta South Campus so that they could also contribute.

Well over 120 staff and students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, contributed to the painting of this piece of art. It is owned by none, yet owned by all, and is a great example of reconciliation in practice.

To read more about how this piece and the new WSU Indigenous branding came about, please see [Western's artwork is an example of reconciliation in practice | Western Sydney University](#)

PURPOSE AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

As a leading research institute that champions collaborative engaged research in the humanities and social sciences with a focus on studying transformations in culture and society, the ICS aims to play a pre-eminent role within local, national, and global Indigenous research networks. We acknowledge a commitment to nurturing participation in Indigenous-led and community-driven research and fostering partnerships that support Indigenous self-determination. We undertake and welcome partnerships with Indigenous scholars working across diverse disciplinary bases.

The ICS Indigenous Strategy 2024–2027 (the Strategy) is aligned to several important existing strategies and statements. Article 14 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) affirms Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural practices of teaching and learning. Our Strategy endorses the vision outlined in the *Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2022–2025* and supports the obligations and principles outlined: to increase student success and educational experience, staff recruitment and leadership, foster Indigenous advancement, tackle racism, develop safe spaces, and welcome Indigenous knowledges and value systems.

The Strategy also aligns with the commitments expressed in Western Sydney University's *Sustainability and Resilience 2030 Decadal Strategy*, to embrace Indigenous Knowledges for pathways to sustainability and Caring for Country, and the specific objectives of Western Sydney University's *Indigenous Strategy 2020–2025* with impact across HDR student experience and scholarship; employment and career development; research and engagement; and leadership, cultural viability, and knowledge. In support of the WSU Reconciliation Statement, the ICS Strategy acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the original inhabitants of this continent, and as a necessary step toward truth and reconciliation, recognises their loss of land, children, languages, health, and kin. In support of the WSU Student Engagement Statement, the ICS Strategy recognises the need to create opportunities to strengthen our commitment to acknowledging Indigenous Peoples' heritage, rights, Elders, and sacred places.

STRATEGIC VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision underpinning the Strategy is grounded on four aspirations. The ICS will:

- 01** Foster a vibrant Indigenous-informed and engaged research environment, through national and international interdisciplinary engaged research, and reciprocal research partnerships that empower Indigenous communities and nations and provide tangible outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.
- 02** Develop a prominent local, national, and international Indigenous-informed and engaged Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program.

- 03** Create teaching opportunities for Indigenous academics and practitioners in line with Western's Graduate Attributes guidelines: <https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00158>.

- 04** Play a more salient role in local, national, and international public debates and dialogue through a series of academic, practitioner, and community events, including WSU's new Indigenous Centre of Excellence (expected completion is 2026).

These key aspirations translate into four aligned Objectives, each with their own indicators of success.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

A VIBRANT INDIGENOUS-INFORMED AND ENGAGED RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

01 Build ongoing research relationships leveraging the ICS's substantial internationalisation agenda, with a focus on international engagement with Indigenous scholars, practitioners, and international Indigenous organisations.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2024-2027)

Deepen ongoing and new research collaborations and partnerships with Indigenous academics and organisations, leading to publications, research artefacts, and research grants.

Develop new collaborations with Indigenous scholars, and across research with communities, nations and other relevant stakeholders, including across HASS-STEM.

Establish pathways for Indigenous community and nation research partners to undertake appropriate research collaborations and consultancies.

Establish a funded visiting scholars' program for Indigenous scholars working in Western Sydney, in Australia, or internationally.

Establish a funded artist-in-residence program for Indigenous creative researchers and artists working in Western Sydney, in Australia, or internationally.

Embed the Indigenous visiting fellow program within ICS Research programs and the ICS seminar series. Indigenous Visiting Fellows will be welcome to participate in or present their work across ICS seminar series, Research Program events, HDR Key Thinker series, and/or other symposia and masterclasses, as desired or appropriate.

Increase the number of publications and research outputs by and with Indigenous authors in relevant journals, books and practice-based work.

Invite and facilitate partners to author bi-lingual articles in Indigenous and other languages via the ICS journal Issues.

Via the visiting scholars' program, develop shared interests, deep collaborations and funding applications that will lead to the:

- Recruitment of one or more Indigenous Research Fellows via Cat 1/2/3/4 funding.
- Recruitment of an Indigenous scholar to the Professoriate (Level D/E).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

A VIBRANT INDIGENOUS-INFORMED AND ENGAGED RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2024-2027)
<p>02 Encourage Indigenous research methods and practices for research undertaken with, or by Indigenous scholars, communities, nations, and partners.</p>	<p>Increased number of Indigenous research collaborators to lead research activities, publication authorship, and presentations.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity by relevant ICS non-Indigenous staff to work collaboratively with Indigenous researchers, Indigenous communities, and nations.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity to grow the number of Category 2-4 Indigenous research grants.</p> <p>Impact and Engagement reports of completed research projects and collaborations to demonstrate evidence of tangible benefits to Indigenous partners.</p> <p>Establishment of a research advisory group that provides advice and/or support to non-Indigenous researchers working on or proposing projects with Indigenous partners.</p> <p>Adoption of best practice protocols for the protection of Indigenous communities' and nations' intellectual property.</p>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

INDIGENOUS-INFORMED HDR PROGRAM

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2024–2027)
01 Indigenise the ICS HDR Curriculum.	<p>Co-develop with Indigenous scholars and practitioners new HDR training materials that foreground Indigenous scholarship and methodologies. These activities include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work of national and international Indigenous scholars is included in the ICS Key Thinkers series and HDR research methodology and seminar series.• Indigenous scholarship is front and centre in HDR reading lists. ICS courses/lectures contain material addressing Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and practices, where appropriate.• Convene an Indigenous Research Summer School in Indigenous research methodologies, employing Indigenous academics and Visiting Indigenous Scholars as appropriate.
02 Build the Indigenous HDR student cohort and develop strategies to ensure their success.	<p>Achieve parity (3%) in enrolment.</p> <p>Marketing strategy implemented to develop interest from high-performing Indigenous MRes students, Honours students and project research assistants.</p>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2024–2027)
<p>01 Attract and recruit Indigenous staff across academic, research, professional, and /or senior management positions.</p>	<p>Increased number of Indigenous staff in the ICS.</p> <p>Ongoing involvement in Western’s Ignite traineeship program tri-annually, subject to funding allocations from Western.</p>
<p>02 Develop an affirmative action employment approach to promote the recruitment, retention, and career development of Indigenous staff, including enhanced employment pathways for existing Indigenous employees.</p>	<p>Increased number of Indigenous research assistants employed and a revised procurement policy to contract Indigenous organisations, where appropriate.</p> <p>Training new Indigenous academics through mentoring programs and pathways programs.</p> <p>Support and engage with the Indigenous Centre of Excellence at Western.</p> <p>Improved post-doctoral transitions for Indigenous graduates.</p>
<p>03 Support Indigenous leaders and professionals from community, nations, government, and industry to take up academic positions and/or PhD studies.</p>	
<p>04 Support Indigenous HDR students to transition into post-doctoral positions.</p>	

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

CULTURAL VIABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2024–2027)
01 Ensure Acknowledgement of Country is performed at the start of each formal meeting and gathering within the ICS.	Acknowledgement of Country (or when appropriate, Welcome to Country) performed at the beginning of formal meetings, gatherings, and teaching sessions.
02 Develop a page within the ICS website foregrounding Indigenous staff, students, visitors, research, and events.	Establishment of a dedicated web page on Indigenous research showcasing ICS and School-based members’ and partners’ work.
03 Centre Indigenous culture and knowledge in ICS work.	Include a copy of the ICS and WSU Indigenous Strategy in the academic work plan for the ICS. Report against the strategy in annual performance review over next three years. Portfolio leads to report against the strategy in ICS Executive Meetings.

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