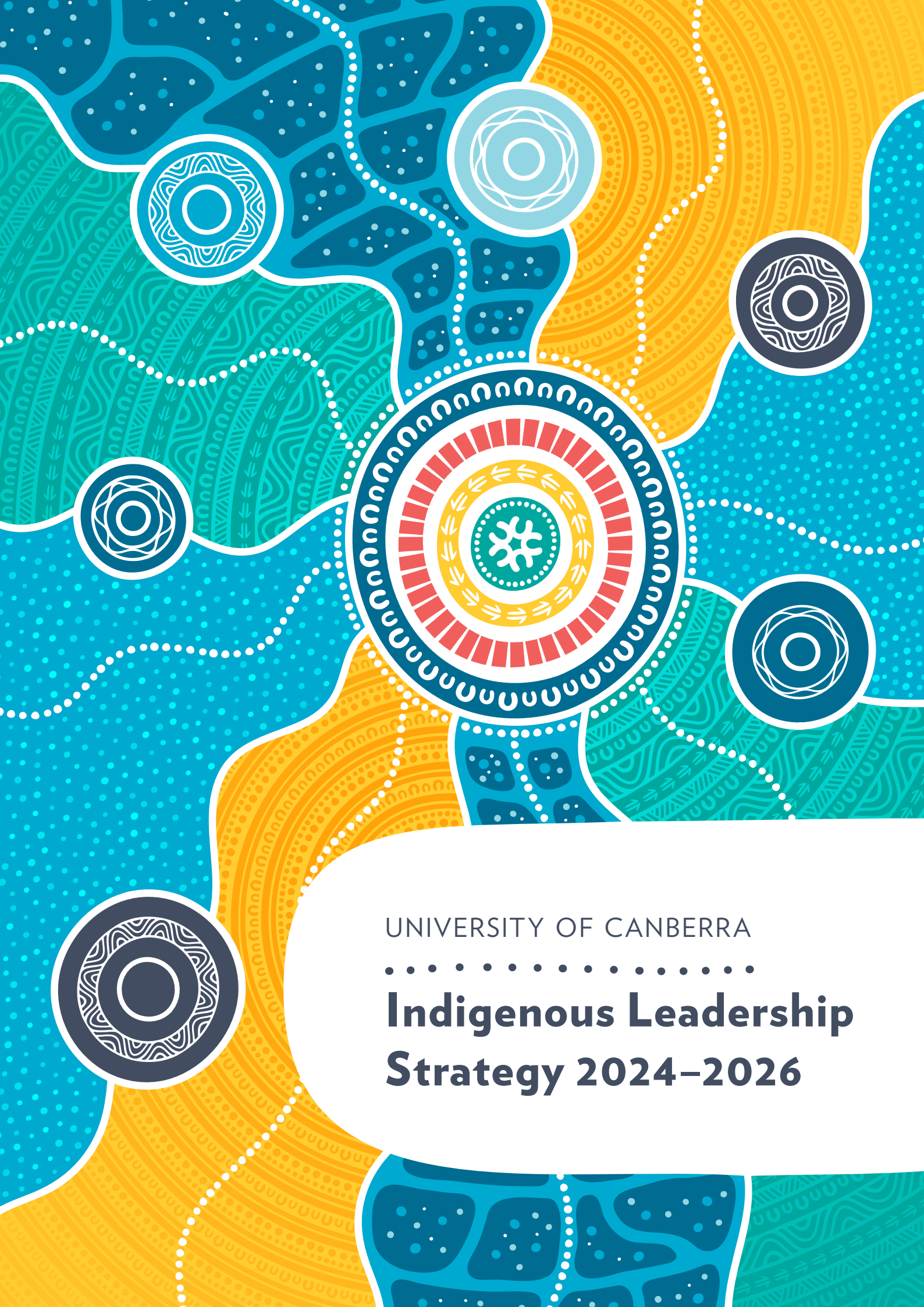
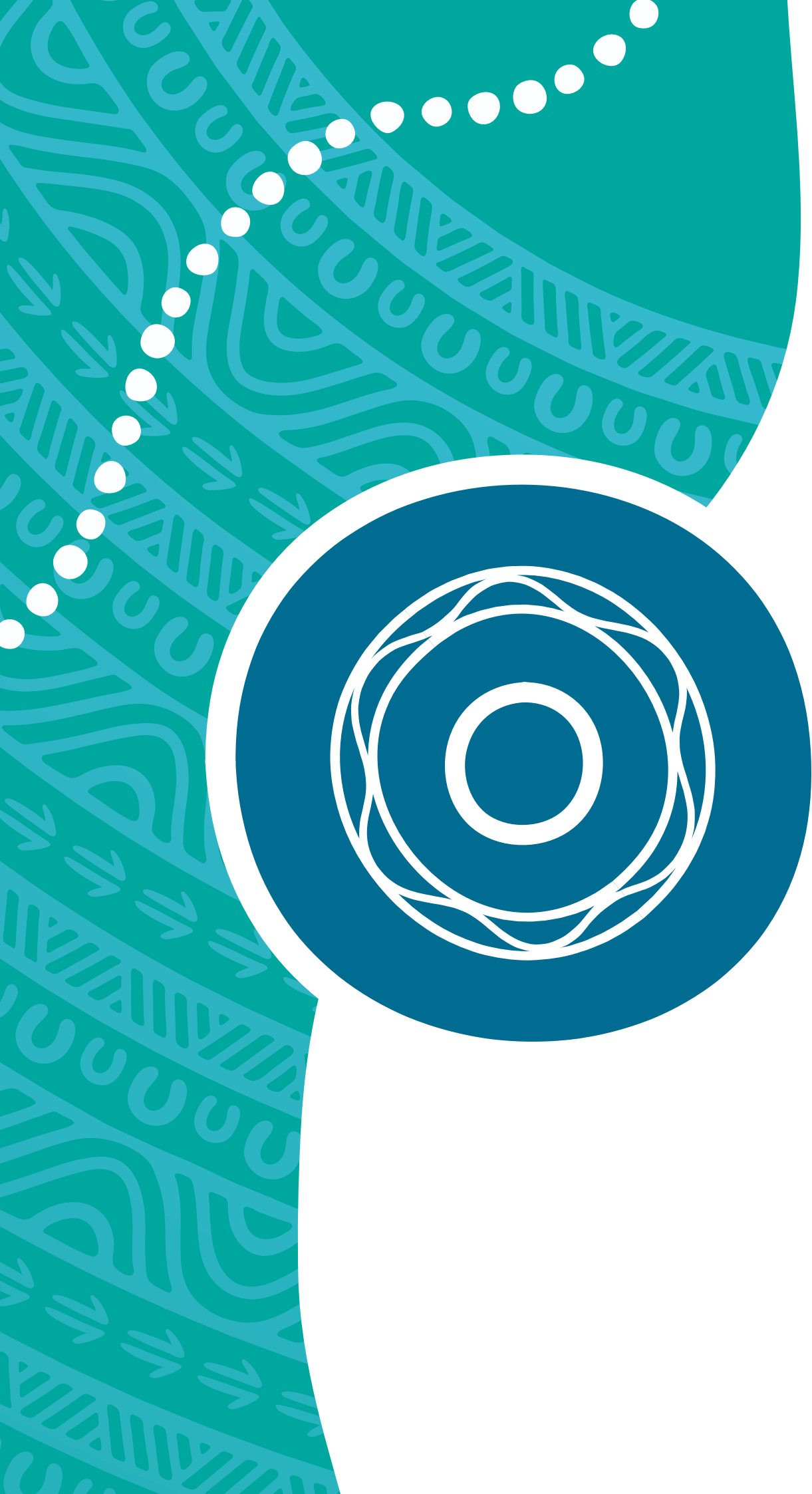




UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

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Indigenous Leadership Strategy 2024–2026



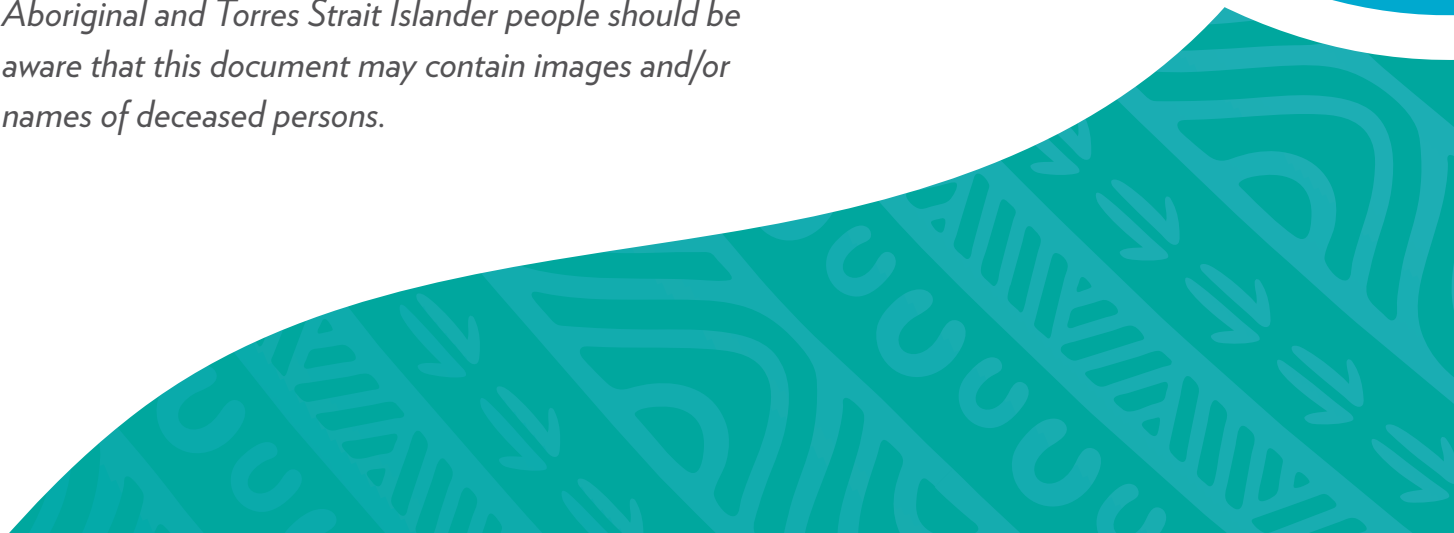
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The University of Canberra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the various lands, waterways and skies where we work, learn and live – the Ngunnawal peoples (Bruce campus), the Darug peoples (Sydney Hills campus) and the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples (Mt Gravatt and Southbank campuses).

We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that study and work with us, and thank them for sharing their cultures, knowledges and contributions to our work. We pay respects to our Elders and thank them for their continuing care for Country. We also say thank you to our Indigenous leaders and ancestors who have been instrumental in paving the way and opening doors that were once closed.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images and/or names of deceased persons.



About the Artwork and Artist

Artwork description: The artwork by Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove shows the University of Canberra's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that champions Indigenous Leadership. At its core, the piece symbolises the University's commitment to integrate Indigenous knowledges and values into its education and research.

The central meeting place, representing the University, serves as a symbolic space where individuals from all over Australia converge. Connected by pathways, smaller meeting places represent the University's geographical footprint, showing the diversity of countries that their students and staff come from.

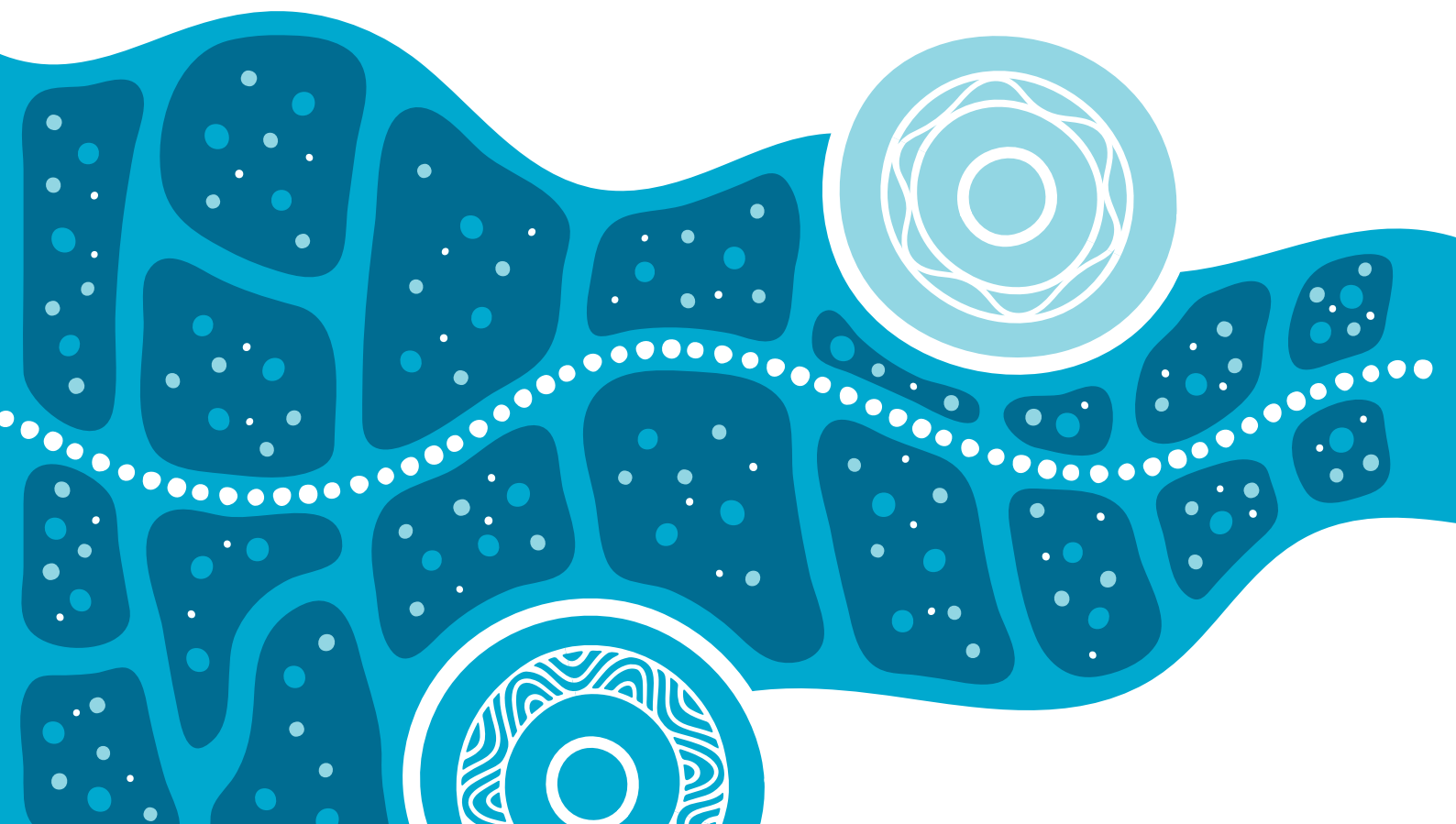
The varied patterns represent different Indigenous cultures and the 'Outside-In' approach that will shape employment, education, and research pathways. The intertwined pathways symbolize Indigenous leadership and allyship, working in harmony to empower communities and ensure the respect and recognition of Indigenous voices.

Artist: Aboriginal artist, graphic designer and Ngarrindjeri man, Jordan Lovegrove's connection to both South Australia's city and country is pivotal to his creative method and how he represents his art.

He utilises key themes throughout this work: connections to place, ancestry and its extension into millennia. Jordan understands that when Aboriginal culture and history is embodied in art, it has the power to build resilience, change lives and strengthen our communities.

With Ngarrindjeri heritage from South Australia's Riverland Area near the Coorong, Jordan grew up in Adelaide and as a student at Charles Campbell Secondary School he discovered his passion for creative arts. He was able to turn that passion into a traineeship with Dreamtime Creative where he developed as an artist and was further employed for a total of 10 years. Jordan is now Senior Graphic Designer at Ochre Dawn Creative Industries and also runs his own business Karko Creations.

With his rich Aboriginal background and a unique way of interpreting his cultural heritage, Jordan says that getting the art right for clients takes respectful consultation processes and a desire to help the client bring their story to life through his artwork.



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Preamble

Indigenous Australians have sustained their cultural traditions to care for Country and community for over 65,000 years. Culture is central to our ways of knowing, being and doing, and the Indigenous holistic view of health and wellbeing, which has been passed down through kinship systems, systems of lore, ceremony, and song for generations. This holistic view encompasses the social, cultural, and emotional wellbeing of the entire community, within which each individual community member is able to reach their full potential.

Colonisation has disrupted our ways of knowing, being and doing. We must recognise the many issues that Indigenous people have experienced and continue to experience - from forced dispossession of lands to removal of children, racism, assimilation, marginalisation from communities, education, employment and so much more. Recognition of these impacts of colonisation is critical to enable healing, justice, and truth-telling to occur.

At the same time, the creeping recognition of colonisation and the recent efforts to build a case for change have intensified a perception of entrenched Indigenous disadvantage. This has all but obscured the myriad strengths of Indigenous people, knowledge and culture. The focus on disadvantage has also been a barrier to acceptance of the value and power of Indigenous knowledge and capacity.

This strategy comes at a time when Indigenous issues, and the importance of Indigenous representation and voice, are recognised as more important than ever. It also recognises that empowerment of Indigenous people and voices within and nurtured by the University, is critical.

The University of Canberra recognises this context, and that all staff and students have a part to play in addressing it. Through Indigenous leadership, we will seek to claim and build a new narrative that recognises colonial impacts while also building visibility of a strengths-based future. Understanding historical context and employing strengths-based approaches will empower Indigenous people to regain control over their lives and assist to build trust in our institutions.

This approach is underpinned by our commitment to holistic solutions – creating environments and contexts that safeguard the rights of people to self-determination and enable people to thrive. Understanding and responding to the social and cultural determinants of health is critical to achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous people. A third of the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can be linked to the social determinants of health. This is where our University comes in. Education is a critical social determinant that can change the trajectory of an individual, a family, and a community.

The University of Canberra is committed to working to support self-determination through education and capacity-building opportunities with our communities. All staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have a role and a responsibility to help the University connect, engage, and seek to meet the needs of Indigenous communities across the nation.



“We can’t change our past, but we can work to change our future - together”



Foreword

An Australian university is impoverished unless it recognises the riches of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and capability on its doorstep.

At the University of Canberra, we are committed to charting a new path towards understanding, holding and sharing Indigenous knowledges, and connecting external and internal communities to improve the graduate experience, discover new horizons and collaboratively achieve a valued impact.

We are distinguished by the contribution and participation of Indigenous staff and students from across the country, drawn to learning, teaching and/or research at UC. Our capital city location, linkages to national institutions and commitment to accessibility have made our University a magnet for Indigenous people from many parts of Australia, enriching the culture and knowledge of our University community.

This Strategy sets a course for the University to strengthen its support for Indigenous students, staff and alumni and their families. We will do that by partnering with community, listening to community priorities, and aligning our efforts to deliver outcomes that matter to them.

We call this the Outside-In approach – listening to the voices of Indigenous people and grasping the opportunity to walk and work beside them with two hands.

We will find new ways to hold, nurture and share Indigenous knowledge alongside knowledge from other sources in Australia and around the world.

Critically, this Strategy is for all in our community – all staff, all students, all alumni, all partners. We cannot achieve transformative change – and we cannot expect to unlock the riches of Indigenous cultures and knowledges for the benefit of all – if we do not recognise and enlist both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to achieve its goals. We all bear responsibility to contribute to change – and we all stand to benefit from the outcomes.

We also recognise the need to help drive a new narrative in relation to Indigenous people and national identity, empowering positive perspectives about the capacity and contribution of Indigenous people and the critical place of Indigenous knowledges and cultures alongside other knowledge and cultures in our institution.

Every university in Australia aspires to do more – and do better – when it comes to serving Indigenous people. By listening and responding, we aspire to be ranked among those universities that are delivering changes that prompt excitement around the dinner tables, campfires, and boardrooms of Indigenous people.



Professor Maree Meredith



Professor Lucy Johnston

Below (left to right): Interim Vice-Chancellor Professor Lucy Johnston, Chancellor Lisa Paul AO PSM, former Chancellor Professor Tom Calma AO and Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Maree Meredith





Introduction

The Indigenous Leadership Strategy 2024-2026 is the University of Canberra's key strategic document to drive the University's commitment to improving outcomes for Indigenous students, staff, partners, and communities through its operations and impact. The Strategy will engage all of the university community in sharing and celebrating Indigenous knowledges and cultures to meet these goals.

It is critical that our new three-year Strategy focuses on getting fundamentals right. The strategy has been designed to establish a clear platform for Indigenous leadership across UC, making progress over an initial three-year window, before building a more ambitious approach guided by evidence gathered during this first strategic phase.

We need to develop, pilot, and refine strategies to improve outcomes across our key focus areas where, in alignment with the *Connected* strategy, we must seek to achieve clear, measurable improvements in the following outcomes:

- Indigenous student success
- Indigenous staff success
- Indigenous research
- Indigenous community engagement and impact
- Recognition and accountability
- Indigenous leadership

The Strategy provides a strategic framework for our whole-of-university approach to recognise, respect, and include Indigenous people, their knowledges, and cultures at the heart of the University and its education and research. It will drive, enable, and inspire change through genuine engagement, co-design, reciprocity and respectful partnerships, which prioritise the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

Strategy for all

One of the most important parts of this Strategy is that it is developed for – and owned by – the entire University of Canberra community – including all staff, working in collaboration with students, alumni and partners. The Strategy is a whole-of-university commitment, recognising the value and the imperative for every single area across the University to contribute to achieving its goals.

The Strategy was developed in an Indigenous-led process that sought to involve all. This is a critical point, because while Indigenous people are the First Australians, we make up just three per cent of the Australian population, and a smaller percentage of the higher education sector.

Co-investment

Substantial, powerful, transformative change is only possible if non-Indigenous allies work in concert with Indigenous staff and students to resource, enable and create that change.

To achieve the goals outlined in this Strategy, as well as specific Indigenous-related objectives in the *Connected* strategy, the University must actively alter its investment to enable change. Initiatives highlighted in this Strategy will need to be funded annually, and it will be up to senior staff across the University to ensure their teams proactively include support for these initiatives in their work plans. Additionally, it is critical for this Strategy to be considered at our highest level, for our Council to advocate for the Strategy and hold the University accountable for its success.

It is important to note that this co-investment is not just financial – although additional financial commitments will be crucial to enable many initiatives to proceed. This Strategy seeks a commitment that extends to a proactive culture of active inclusion – involving all staff across the University seeking opportunities throughout the year to find new ways to work with Indigenous communities, in order to support and enable change.

An enhanced focus on building the cultural capabilities and competence of all staff will be required to support this approach. Our business is your business!

Galambany

Together we work to empower, connect, and share knowledge with our people, cultures, and places.

Our UC Values



Narragunnawali is a Ngunnawal word meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together, and peace.

At UC, we embrace Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in our work and our culture. We get amongst the conversation and listen authentically. We strive to be a driver of meaningful reconciliation.



Walk together is about us connecting and collaborating with our community—both near and far. We embody the spirit of Canberra as a meeting place of ideas and creativity. We show our community what we have to offer.



Everyone's invited means we celebrate differences and embrace similarities. We value the unique contributions of our colleagues, staff, and collaborators. We actively promote accessibility and equity for all.



Dare to be curious means that we find purpose in learning. We step out of our comfort zone. We are brave and stir curiosity. We share ideas and discoveries that shape our future.



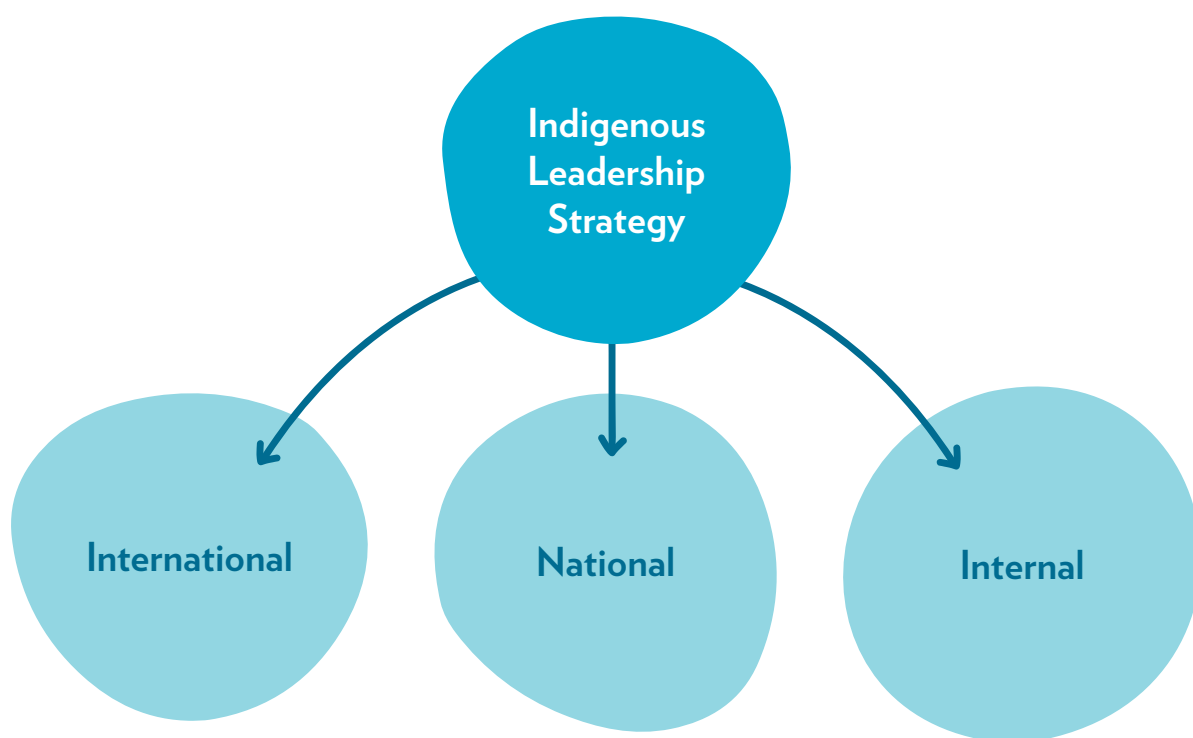
Change the world is about not being afraid to have an impact. We do things differently. We inspire each other to be innovative.

Strategic Alignment

The Indigenous Leadership Strategy 2024-2026 has been designed to align with Connected – A Decadal Strategy 2023-2032 and to link the University's work and objectives to the goals and needs of community. The Outside-In approach facilitates this – enabling community to partner in building stronger outcomes in collaboration with UC.

The strategy will be underpinned by the same purpose and values of the University (see left)

The Strategy is also interconnected with other strategies and plans across the University, and it is informed by national and international strategies and frameworks from the Higher Education Sector and Indigenous policy. This Strategy consolidates commitments under the University's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as well as a range of other strategies and commitments. The RAP aligns with this Strategy but has a focus on Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, prioritising relationships, respect, and opportunities to facilitate Reconciliation. It also involves separate reporting.



- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

- Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy
- Australian Universities Accord
- Innovative Research Universities Strategy
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap

- Connected Strategy and Connected Operating Model
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Campus Master Plan
- Student Success Framework
- Sport Strategy
- Research Plan
- Digital Master Plan
- Civic Engagement Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy

Figure 1: Strategic Alignment

Methodology

The Indigenous Leadership Strategy has been developed after extensive consultation both within and outside the University. In recognition of the importance of UC connecting with community and creating a process to be informed and led by community, the Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy undertook our Outside-In approach to develop our strategy.

All faculties, business units, executive staff, students and various internal networks and groups participated in internal consultations. External consultations were held with local and regional community members, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, national peak bodies, and Indigenous professionals. The consultations built our evidence base in addition to feedback via our public survey, internal discussion paper, questionnaires, and internal focus groups.

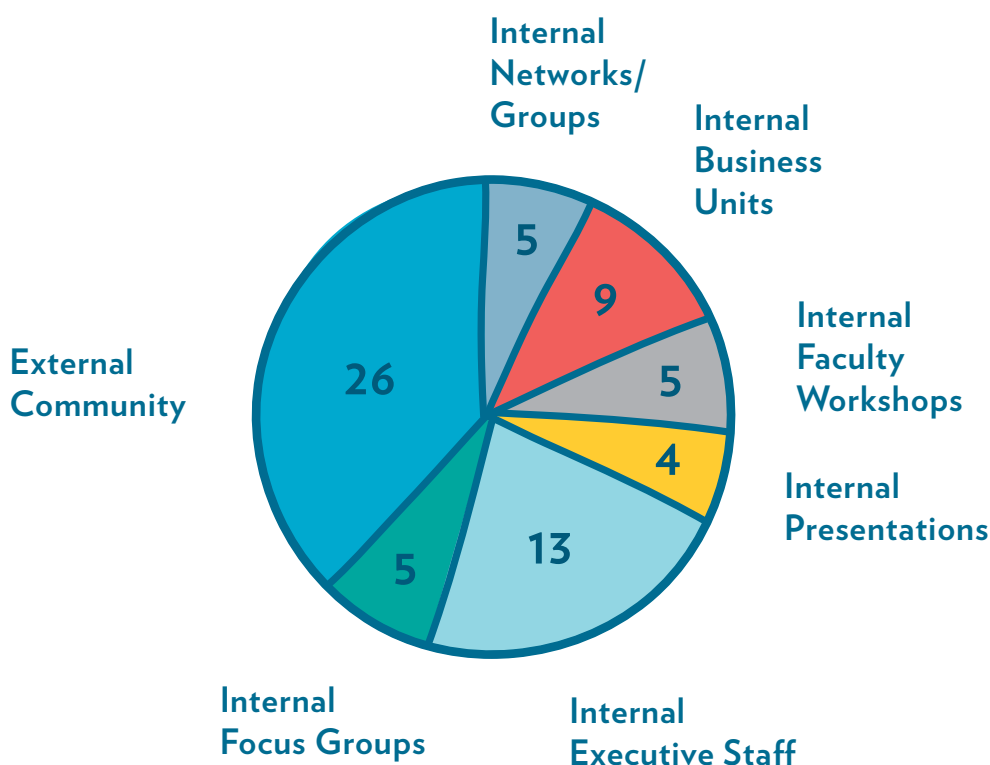


Figure 2: Consultations for Indigenous Leadership Strategy

Building on a long-term commitment

The University of Canberra has long held a strong commitment to supporting Indigenous students, in particular through the Ngunnawal Centre, which has operated on our Bruce campus for 30 years.

In 2023, UC is proud to count more than 300 Indigenous students, 51 Indigenous staff and well over 600 Indigenous alumni as part of our community. The entire University is keen to welcome greater numbers into our community in the future, while also forging more and deeper relationships with Indigenous communities through our education, research, and impact.

We also recognise that most of our Indigenous staff and students are not local, they are off Country and while they share many similarities, we celebrate the many different cultures and knowledges that we each bring. Additionally, as the physical locations of the University expand and as we work with our regional community hubs, we recognise that all Indigenous nations and cultures must be supported and respected.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff have made some valuable advances in supporting growth in Indigenous student and staff numbers, and establishing an environment that seeks to welcome Indigenous people.

This Strategy recognises the work of many staff to establish the University of Canberra as a welcoming place that supports Indigenous students and seeks to build on that foundation.

Our Future



Vision

Indigenous people and communities will recognise and value positive change that is supported, facilitated and/or driven by the University through our Outside-In approach to listening, learning, and acting.

People across Australia and around the world will also have the opportunity to benefit from Indigenous knowledge, culture and capabilities through the leadership of the University's Indigenous staff, students, alumni and partners.

As a result, the University of Canberra will be a preferred employer, educator, and partner for Indigenous people.

A new narrative

The University will actively pursue a new narrative, embodying our vision for self-determination and Indigenous leadership. We will continue to recognise and identify obstacles and restrictions that arise from the ongoing legacy of colonisation while simultaneously rejecting the deficit narrative that identifies and limits Indigenous Australians as problems needing to be solved. Instead, we aim to draw focus to a positive narrative that builds awareness and understanding of Indigenous strengths.

In doing so, we will elevate the profile of current and emerging Indigenous leaders in our community and encourage others to follow in their stead. We will also demonstrate how Indigenous knowledges and cultures form a fundamental element of Australian identity and Australian university life and are essential to shaping professions into the future.

This new strengths-based narrative is a fundamental component of our Indigenous leadership – recognising that Indigenous knowledges, cultures and strengths can benefit all.

Indigenous leadership

Indigenous leadership seeks to benefit all stakeholders – growing opportunities for the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous people at the University and its education and research, while also sharing Indigenous knowledge and culture with all.

Participation in decision-making, partnerships and leadership improve confidence and capacity while facilitating meaningful relationships and development opportunities. When Indigenous communities are included in co-design and governance processes, better outcomes can be expected. This is not only because tailored programs have greater impact, but it allows other, underlying structural issues to be addressed.

Indigenous leadership introduces different ways of working, decision-making and perspectives that promotes diversity and inclusion – and ultimately – better outcomes for all.

The Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy seeks to guide the development and rollout of this Strategy but ultimately, its success depends on commitment and action from leaders and people across our community, united in our constructive vision for change.

This distinguishes the Indigenous Leadership Strategy from an Indigenous strategy – it recognises the contribution and the benefit that all in our community can unlock. Moreover, it recognises that we cannot unlock substantial constructive change for Indigenous people without the collaboration and contribution of non-Indigenous allies.

Self-determination

Self-determination enables Indigenous people to exercise their human rights to have choices about their development pathways, to participate in decision-making and to take control of their education, health, economic development, cultural practices, and protection.

Universities play a critical role in supporting communities through education, research, community and civic engagement, economic opportunities and much more. The University of Canberra is well-positioned to improve outcomes for Indigenous peoples by supporting self-determination, building capacity and the next generation of Indigenous leaders.

It is critical to note that self-determination does not lead to exclusion or segregation of Indigenous people and knowledge. Self-determination enables Indigenous people to feel safe and empowers them to participate in decision-making and make informed choices about their lives.



Outside-In strategy

Indigenous community priorities and needs will shape our education, research, and outreach priorities – implementing what we call the ‘Outside-In’ approach to our work. By listening to and understanding the needs and priorities of communities, we can then ensure that our capacities in education, research and outreach are effectively shaped and deployed to meet those needs.

Indigenous students, staff, alumni, prospective students, partners, and prospective partners have indicated that this approach is an important step forward in delivering outcomes that are relevant and significant to Indigenous people.

This community-led strategy does not mean that community will dictate the University’s operational plan – but rather that we will listen and talk to community, identifying areas of alignment where we can add value, and adapt our approach to enable better outcomes. We will also measure outcomes that matter to community and report back to them on our progress.

Recognising and encouraging the leadership of Indigenous people will help demonstrate the University’s commitment to Indigenous people, opening the door to increasing Indigenous student enrolment and student success as well as increasing opportunities for research collaboration.

Our Outside-In approach is about working collaboratively and in equal partnership with Indigenous communities to ensure we are creating better outcomes based on community priorities.

Additionally, it is critical that we are accountable to our communities, therefore our success and impact should be measured from a community perspective if we want to create genuine change.

We must leverage the opportunity that our institution plays in creating better outcomes for Indigenous communities. We can do this through improving our community connections and engagement and having greater impact by working with local and regional communities; bringing together community leaders, local business, services, and governments to work collaboratively; fostering knowledge sharing; and developing place-based strategies.

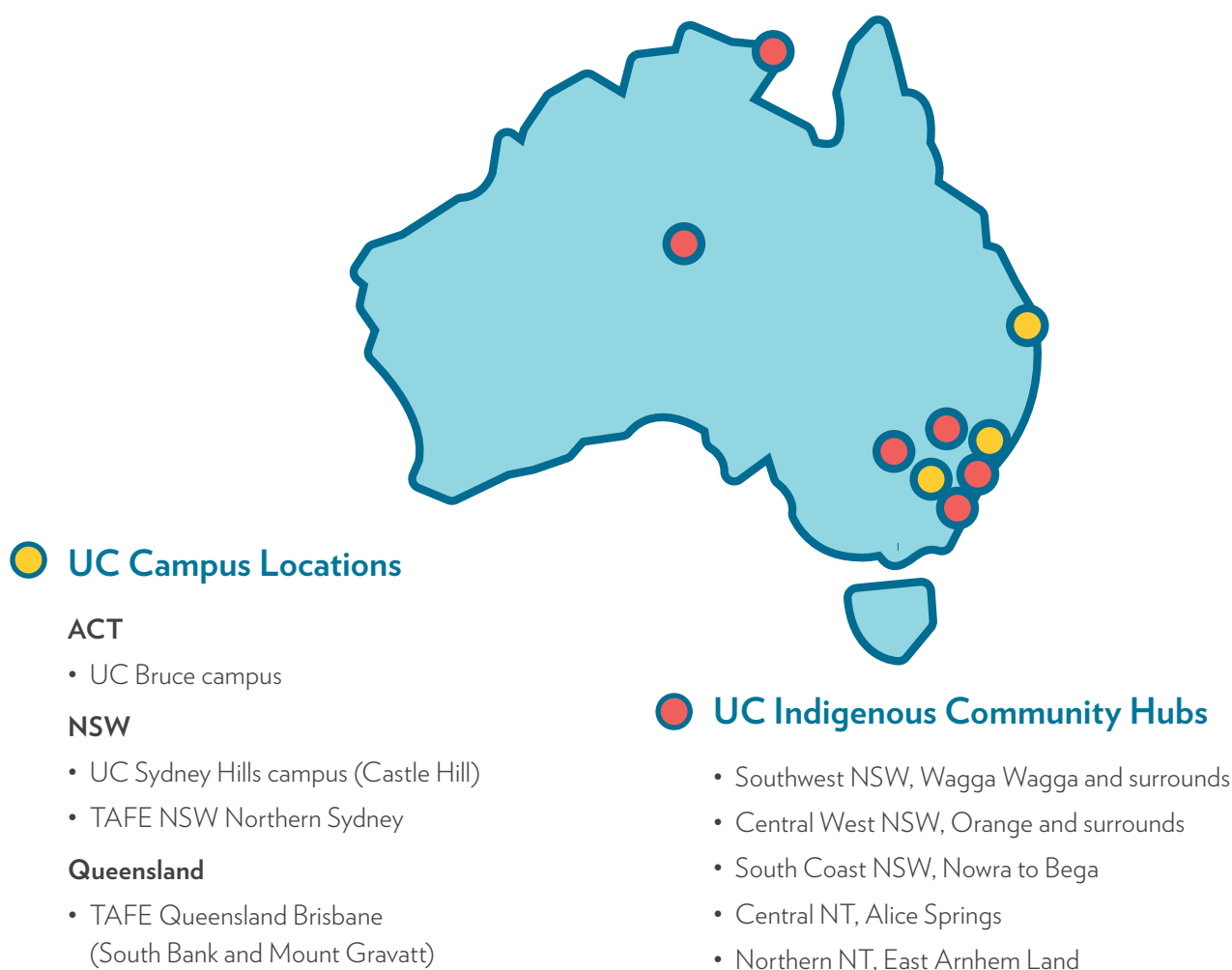


Figure 3: UC Campus Locations and Indigenous Community Hubs



Governance

The Indigenous Leadership Strategy upholds that Indigenous success is a whole-of-university responsibility. Collaboration is needed from all faculties and business units across the University; this will be coordinated by the Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy. The Outside-In approach is critical to developing and implementing the Strategy, and also measuring and evaluating its success. This will be facilitated through a new approach to governance.

Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy

The Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy (OILS) has developed the Strategy and will bear responsibility for coordinating and overseeing implementation, measurement, and evaluation of the Strategy, with the guidance of Indigenous community members, internally and externally.

The Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy will report on progress to the University Executive Group and the University Council through the Vice-Chancellor, at least twice per year.

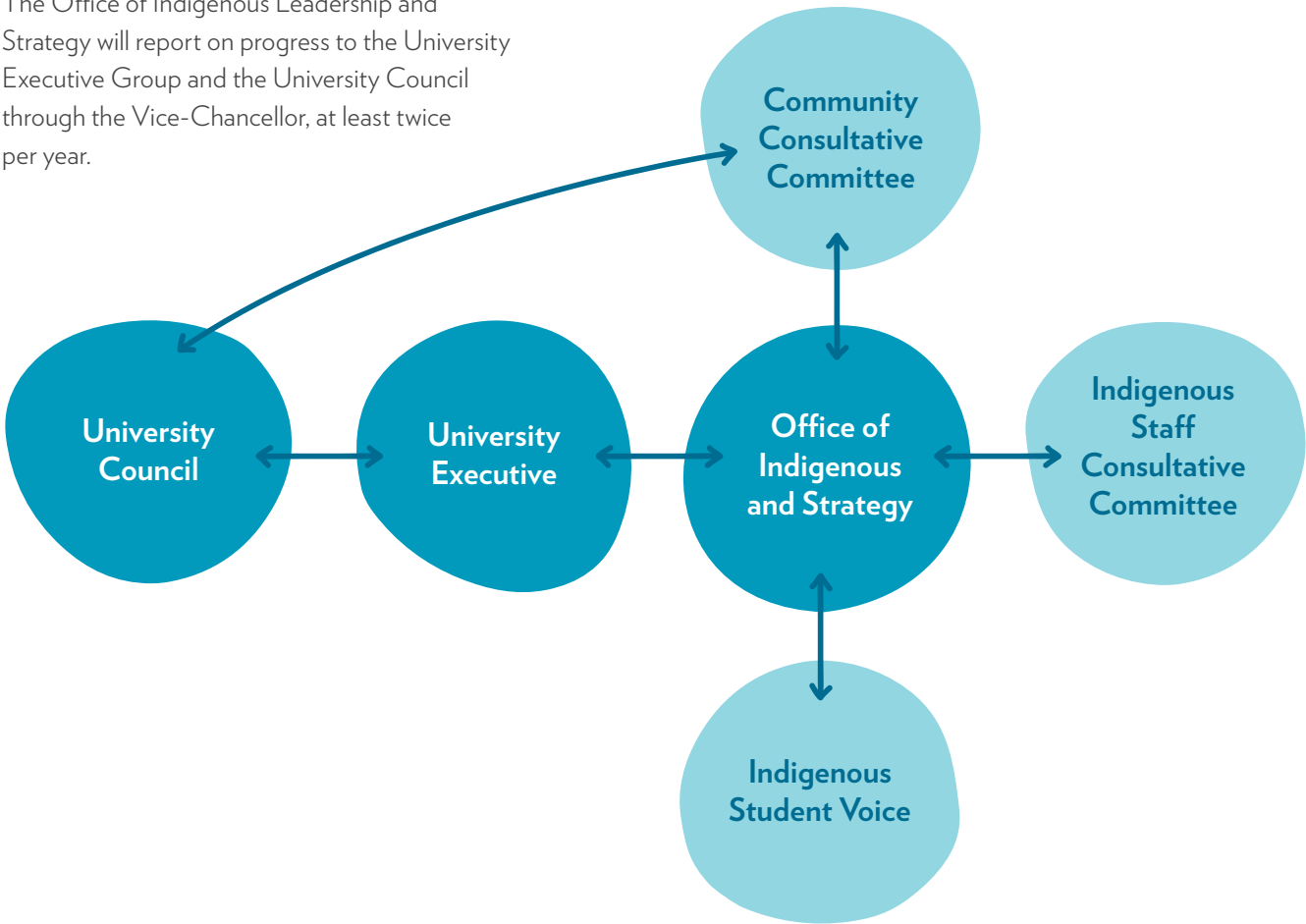


Figure 4: UC Indigenous Leadership Strategy Governance

University Executive and Council

Within the Strategy Action Plan (page 20), various executive positions have been identified as responsible leads for strategic priorities - however all University Executive will be responsible for supporting and implementing the Strategy in partnership with OILS. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be factored into institutional KPI's and performance plans for all members of the University Executive.

The University Council will provide oversight and monitor performance against milestones and KPIs, while advocating and ensuring the Strategy is adequately resourced. The Council will have the opportunity to engage with the Community Consultative Committee regularly to seek advice and hear their perspectives directly.

Community Consultative Committee

An Indigenous Community Consultative Committee will be established and formalised with representation from local, regional, and national community members, alumni, business professionals and partners. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a formal opportunity to listen to community perspectives and aspirations, advice, and information on the implementation, and impact of the strategy, and to feed this directly to the Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy.

The Committee will hold regular meetings to share cultural expertise and advice to help guide our approaches to support Indigenous student and staff success, provide strategic advice and input on community priorities that will inform opportunities for education, research, and community engagements. The Committee will also provide advice to the University Executive and Council.

Indigenous Staff Consultative Committee

An Indigenous Staff Consultative Committee will be established and formalised to provide feedback and advice on implementation of the Strategy, with a focus on improving outcomes from operational initiatives within the University.

An Indigenous Student Voice will be established, with all current Indigenous students invited to attend and participate



Additionally, the Committee will work with the Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy and the Ngunnawal Centre to provide collective feedback and advice to the wider University on other strategies, plans, policies or matters that affect Indigenous peoples, as required.

Indigenous Student Voice

An Indigenous Student Voice will be established, with all current Indigenous students invited to attend and participate. There will be a range of approaches for engaging with Indigenous students to encourage widespread participation and engagement, with a formal Indigenous Student Voice meeting to be held to discuss progress with this Strategy, at least annually.

Reporting Commitments

Key components of this strategy must drive positive impacts in areas of Indigenous student enrolments and success, staff success, research, reconciliation, and community engagement. These impacts must be demonstrated in outcomes relevant to the following commitments:

- National Indigenous Australians Agency – Indigenous Students Support Program (annual report)
- Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy (annual report)
- Reconciliation Australia RAP Impact Survey (annual report)
- Reconciliation Australia Barometer (bi-annual report)

Key Focus Areas



Student Success

Goal: Position UC as the preferred university for Indigenous students by improving access to opportunities and support, to study in an environment that promotes Indigenous leadership.

The Ngunnawal Centre will become part of the Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy in January 2024. This provides an opportunity to take a broader look at the provision of Indigenous student support and to reimagine the Indigenous student journey, from the engagement of prospective students, family, and community to involvement of those supports through the process of enrolment, education and graduation to alumni. This includes support for prospective students, families, and their communities prior to enrolment, so that UC can be recognised as a first choice for prospective students.

The Ngunnawal Centre will focus on student support, in collaboration with other areas across the University, while the Office will oversee services and initiatives to engage and support students and their communities through the student journey. This presents a great opportunity to work with faculties and other units of the University to deliver a coordinated, integrated experience – one that will drive improved student outcomes and enrolment growth as well as stronger links to alumni and community.

Community and external partnerships are also critical to Indigenous student success and will key to providing cultural leadership, advice, and opportunities to support Indigenous students throughout the life course of their student journey.

CASE STUDY:

UC ‘feels like home’ for Liam



Liam Searle could have studied anywhere after he completed his studies at Gungahlin College, but ultimately decided that a Bachelor of Engineering in Network and Software Engineering (Honours) degree was the right choice for him.

A proud Nukunu man, Liam grew up around the corner from the Bruce campus and paid his way through university working as a DJ and as a tutor in the Ngunnawal Centre, but he deliberately chose UC because it had the IT course he wanted to focus on, and he liked the campus.

“It gave me a feeling of home,” Liam said.

“Coming to UC I felt like I could be myself, UC is a very open and inviting space to be able to learn in to have fun, do my degree, study hard, work was all around here for me and there were lots of opportunities for support and I felt comfortable, they were the main reasons I came to UC.”

Liam was awarded the Tom Calma Medal in 2023, an award recognising an exceptional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student from the University.



**Liam
Searle**

CASE STUDY:

Runway to Pathway: Teish's journey

After growing up in a small southern NSW town, Lateisha Bright moved to Sydney as soon as she had graduated from school, and after a short stint in fashion school found some gigs as a model, walking the runway.

When her brother moved to Canberra, Teish decided to join him there in mid-2021, just at the time the University of Canberra's Ngunnawal Centre was looking for an Administrative Officer.

"I was very lucky to get this position, I have become a part of a really beautiful community. It's not just the Indigenous community here, I have made a lot of non-Indigenous friends as well," the Wiradjuri woman said.

"I have changed my mind probably once a week every week since I was about five years old thinking about what job I would do; but as I have grown and had a baby and worked in a large organisation, I have changed my focus.

"I used to want to work in fashion, but now I would love to work within an organisation like UC to improve outcomes for our mob, focusing on the younger generation.

"You can apply for study assistance, I intend on doing that next year, which helps to pay for some of your study. I can really make a contribution here.

"As an Indigenous person from a small town that's only grown up around mostly Indigenous people, you still want that connection and that sense of community, not just with Indigenous but also with non-Indigenous people, I think that's what the University of Canberra is doing really well."



Lateisha
Bright

Staff Success

Goal: Provide opportunities to increase and retain Indigenous employees in a supportive environment that promotes Indigenous leadership

Indigenous employment is a national priority and a competitive market. To become an attractive employer of choice, we must take proactive approaches to increase Indigenous representation across all areas of the University and support meaningful pathways and opportunities for development and leadership positions, including within our governance structure.

Creating a culturally safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for staff, students and partners is critical to the success of Indigenous staff and students and our engagements with community. Developing a cultural competency framework for all staff will raise awareness and understanding of Indigenous contexts, knowledges and cultures, and support non-Indigenous colleagues to build cultural proficiency to engage and work effectively with Indigenous students, staff, partners, and communities, proactively demonstrating allyship with Indigenous people.

Research

Goal: Expand Indigenous research capacity and opportunities that support Indigenous communities and promote self-determination.

The research will be defined, initiated, and supported through the University's Research Strategy. Working in collaboration with community, the University will seek to grow Indigenous research by attracting a greater number of academic staff and HDR students to build the University's research capacity and capability.

UC will create opportunities to support Indigenous-led research, and research that strengthens Indigenous community priorities, developing expertise in the use of Indigenous research methods and respect for Indigenous data sovereignty. Through our Outside-In approach and partnerships with Indigenous organisations, researchers, and communities, we will ensure that research is shared through knowledge translation activities and supports Indigenous self-determination.

CASE STUDY:

Stirling: running hard through life



It's 9.45 and Stirling Sharpe has already notched up a training run, completed the school drop off, and busted through a congested inbox before he sits down to chat.

An Awabakal man, who lectures in Sports Management at UC, Stirling is agonisingly close to finishing his PhD, fitting in the final writing and polishing stages around a myriad of roles both at work and in the community.

"My leadership experience on my CV is pretty vast compared to many other level B staff. I have had the chance to lead University-wide committees and jump onto research grants that I wouldn't have been invited onto if I wasn't Indigenous," Stirling says.

"Last night I was working until 1.30 in the morning. It's just what I have to do at the moment, because I want to set myself up early, doing a whole range of things that are outside my job description, building up my networks and experience.

"I am an ambitious person, if I can get out and improve the world I will go out and do it."

**Stirling
Sharpe**



CASE STUDY:

Community drives passion to teach

Art consumed Eli Archer. She loved photography, design, creation. Until she discovered teaching. The passion for art never left – it just took a back seat to the buzz of triggering an epiphany of understanding in young people.

After completing a Bachelor of Graphic Design at UC, Eli forged a career in graphic design before maternity and the persistent call of culture inspired her to change direction - completing a Graduate Diploma in Education at ACU so she could become a teacher.

“I had always wanted to teach. I really wanted to be able to support First Nations students achieve their own aspirations. Now that I am a teacher, it’s really inspiring to see more Indigenous students make great progress in their studies and bring their voices into the classroom,” the Palawa woman says.



Eli
Archer

Community and impact

Goal: Situate UC as an institution that works with and for Indigenous peoples, and promotes Indigenous advancement.

We will embed the Outside-In approach across our University and establish the committees and groups necessary to ensure sound governance and Indigenous leadership. We will also coordinate and facilitate opportunities for engagements and collaboration across all business units and faculties.

The Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy will lead co-design of implementation plans with communities and elevate community aspirations through the Community Consultative Committee. Measures for impact will be explored and developed with guidance from governance groups. Relevant policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Recognition and accountability

Goal: Create a culturally safe and inclusive university where Indigenous peoples, knowledges and cultures are respected and valued and embedded across our workplace culture, education and research.

The University will recognise Indigenous knowledges, cultures and peoples and explore ways to best incorporate these into all operations, the student experience, and graduate outcomes. Staff and students will have increased access to cultural immersion, and build their understanding of Indigenous cultures, as part of an approach to develop culturally safe and inclusive environments for work and study.

Indigenous staff will lead work examining the best ways to incorporate Indigenous learning, knowledges and teaching into the curriculum, and this approach will be incorporated into the Indigenous Education Policy once it is formalised.

The experience of staff, students and visitors to our campuses will be transformed to include a stronger connection to Indigenous knowledge, communities, and culture. Recognising Indigenous culture as part of our presence, with a holistic rejuvenation of our representation and identity through our campus environments, buildings, marketing, and communications.

Communications will be vital to engage, inform and guide staff, students and communities that we partner with. The Office will lead the development and implementation of an integrated communications strategy to support the rollout of the Indigenous Leadership Strategy.

Responsibility for proactively engaging with communities and achieving change through this Strategy is held – and embraced – by all members of the University Executive.

CASE STUDY:

Flexibility key for hero Selina



Ask Selina Walker what her job is and the first one she will tell you about is the most important – being a Kinship Carer for three godsons.

A Ngunnawal woman born and raised in Canberra, the ACT Local Hero of the Year for 2024 is modest about her achievements, serving in a huge range of roles, most of which revolve around her passion for giving young Ngunnawal people more opportunities to thrive.

She wanted to study Psychology for 11 years before life and circumstances conspired to give her both the motivation and the time to start, in 2023.

As the Founder of an agency caring for Indigenous kids, co-Chair of the ACT Reconciliation Council, advocate and Elder, Selina didn't have time for a rigid new schedule of classes, but fits her study in around her life.

"When I am waiting for a meeting, or doing a welcome, I set down and watch a lecture or do a tutorial online – I love the flexibility," Selina said.

"My car has always been my office and the biggest issues for me was trying to get to classes, so I love the online stuff."



Selina
Walker

CASE STUDY:

UC skills remain useful to CEO

“I am glad that I chose UC because I had a really good experience,” Healing Foundation CEO Shannan Dodson said.

A Yawuru woman, born and raised in the NT, Shannan has worked in a range of leading roles in Indigenous Affairs before returning to lead the Healing Foundation, supporting and also building up recognition of Stolen Generation survivors. She chose UC so she could study a double degree, building skills in communication.

“I really enjoyed the degree; I learned a lot - especially some practical skills that I still use - and I made some of my best friends at UC, that I still talk to today,” Shannan said.

“UC is a good uni that would suit lots of Aboriginal students. It isn't a big city uni that is huge and daunting; it has a community feel, not totally out of your comfort zone.”

Shannan
Dodson



Indigenous leadership

Goal: Provide leadership opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and community to share Indigenous knowledges and support Indigenous advancement.

To support the advancement and self-determination of Indigenous people and build cultural capability and capacity of non-Indigenous people, it is important to create opportunities that provide insights on Indigenous cultures, knowledges and Indigenous contexts to the broader community.

The Office of Indigenous Leadership and Strategy will facilitate regular opportunities to showcase Indigenous leadership, expertise and strength-based narratives. We will do this through different events such as public lectures, networking opportunities and communication materials. This approach will increase the visibility of Indigenous leadership and also of UC and our commitment to Indigenous leadership.

The Office will support policies and approaches to build capacity and opportunity for Indigenous staff, developing a pipeline of Indigenous leaders valued and embedded across the University.

The Office will also expand this approach to include an international knowledge network with First Peoples in other nations, offering opportunities to grow engagement and for knowledge exchange. We will also explore opportunities to establish new programs and/or expand existing programs to meet the needs of Indigenous students and communities.

Action Plan



Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priorities	Success Measures	Responsibility	Alignment
Student Success	1. Develop an Indigenous Student Success Strategy that supports: • Community-led approaches, alternative pathways, and reimagined education offerings to increase student enrolments in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. • Improved access, quality of education offerings and holistic support and pathways, from enrolments through to completions and careers • University-wide approach to support and celebrate Indigenous student success 2. Develop an Indigenous alumni engagement plan that supports mentoring opportunities, transition to work and return to study at UC. 3. Create a safe and inclusive environment that supports and benefits all students, from school leavers to mature age students.	• 5% annual increase in Indigenous enrolments • Annual increase in Indigenous completion rates • Increase in access and usage of student supports • Active Indigenous alumni network • Sharing student success stories	DVC (A) and PVC (IL)	Connected / RAP / Student Success Framework / ISSP / Sports Strategy



Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priorities	Success Measures	Responsibility	Alignment
Staff Success	1. Develop an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy that supports: • Growth of Indigenous employment opportunities • Promotion of pathways and professional development opportunities for meaningful career progression • Indigenous representation at all levels across the University, including in leadership and governance positions • Growth in the proportion of Indigenous staff in ongoing roles – achieving a ratio equivalent to non-Indigenous staff. 2. Create supportive environments that foster staff satisfaction and opportunities for engagement for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. 3. Develop a cultural competency framework for the University to ensure a University-wide approach towards: • Culturally safe and inclusive environments • Cultural competency and capability of all staff to reduce cultural loads of Indigenous staff • Cultural immersion opportunities for all staff, particularly Executive staff, demonstrating allyship with Indigenous people and communities.	• Annual increase in Indigenous employment numbers and retention • Establishment of professional development supports and career progression for Indigenous employees • Cultural competency training for non-Indigenous staff across all business units, faculties and Council by 2026 • Ongoing cultural immersion and exchange activities for all staff, including Executive and Council members • Sharing staff success stories	PVC (IL) and CPO	Connected / RAP / ISSP



Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priorities	Success Measures	Responsibility	Alignment
Research	- Develop an Indigenous Research Implementation Plan to support: - Growth in Indigenous HDR students - Indigenous-led research and income - Partnerships with Indigenous organisations, researchers and communities - Knowledge translation to empower Indigenous communities - Promote cultural capability for all UC researchers and supervisors to ensure they understand ethical requirements and foster respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.	- Annual increase in Indigenous postgraduate and HDR students - Annual increase in Indigenous research income - Indigenous research partnerships and engagement activities - Non-Indigenous research staff and supervisors undertaking training on ethics and cultural competency	DVC (R&E) and PVC (IL)	Connected / RAP/ Research Plan



Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priorities	Success Measures	Responsibility	Alignment
Community and Impact	1. Embed the Outside-In approach – bringing community in as equal partners and making UC a part of community locally, regionally and nationally to create opportunities for students and staff by: • Increasing partnerships and opportunities with Indigenous businesses, organisations and communities • Aligning University priorities with Indigenous community priorities • Continuous improvement to our engagement and the way we work together • Establishing communications to share and promote opportunities for internal and external stakeholders 2. Review our internal policies, procedures and processes to ensure we are contributing to Indigenous advancement, particularly in the areas of procurement, cultural safety, student access and support, and employment. 3. Establish an Indigenous Procurement Policy to increase Indigenous procurement opportunities.	• Establishment and operationalisation of governance committees (community, staff and student) • Annual increase in formal partnerships with Indigenous organisations or partners • Annual increase in community engagement activities • Annual increase in Indigenous procurement expenditure	PVC (IL), DVC (A), CPO and COO	Connected / RAP / Sustainability Master Plan / Digital Master Plan / Connected Operating Model / Campus Masterplan / Civic Engagement Strategy



Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priorities	Success Measures	Responsibility	Alignment
Recognition and Accountability	1. Develop an Implementation Plan to operationalise the Indigenous Leadership Strategy for the University to ensure whole-of-university responsibility for supporting Indigenous advancement through our teaching, work and University culture. 2. Develop an Indigenous Education Strategy that facilitates: • Indigenous learning and teaching in the curriculum • Indigenous Graduate Attributes in all programs 3. Incorporate Indigenous cultural and social narratives throughout our campus landscapes, design and marketing.	• Mechanisms embedded for University-wide approach to implement the Strategy • All courses to embed Indigenous curriculum, pedagogies and Indigenous Graduate Attributes by end of 2026 • Increased Indigenous representation through university campus, marketing and communications	DVC (A), DVC (R&E), COO and PVC (IL)	Connected / RAP / Sustainability Master Plan / Digital Master Plan / Connected Operating Model / Campus Masterplan / ISSP
Indigenous Leadership	1. Create opportunities to bring people together to hear from Indigenous leaders and work towards building the profiles of current and emerging Indigenous Leaders. 2. Establish Indigenous knowledge exchange programs between local and international Indigenous students, researchers and communities to inform and support Indigenous Leadership. 3. Establish an Indigenous Leadership Academy that offers training courses specifically to meet the practical needs of Indigenous students and staff.	• Ongoing program of Indigenous leadership events and activities • Pilot of international knowledge exchange program • Increased Indigenous enrolment in courses and programs that meet the needs of Indigenous community	PVC (IL) and VC	Connected / RAP / Sustainability Master Plan / Research Plan / Campus Masterplan / Connected Operating Model / Digital Master Plan





SCAN

for more information



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