

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Country is the land, water, sky and all the living things that occupy those spaces. It also refers to the spiritual connections that exist between all of those things.

For us, Country is our mother. We are Country. It is inseparable from our spirit and the spirit of our ancestors.

We acknowledge Country to pay respect - to the wisdom of our Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our students and staff live, have come from and are educated on.

The University of Newcastle has a presence on the lands of the Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, and Eora Nations.



Artwork: Indigenous Education Strategy (2020)

Artist: Jasmine Craciun (Bachelor of Visual Communication 2018)

Alumna Jasmine Miikika Craciun is a proud Barkindji, Malyangapa designer and artist with a passion for telling the stories of, and communicating to, diverse groups of people.

Artwork story: The symbol for people can be seen gathered within the growing vines. The brightly coloured people represent the older Aboriginal students at the University expanding their knowledge in their current fields while the smaller people symbols next to them are the new students just beginning their journey but with the older students as exciting role models. The leaves/vines represent the growing of cultural knowledge breaking through barriers (the black and white lines) to better educate our local community. The colours within the black and white lines represent the success of the growing vines - it reflects a change in education, where Indigenous people, knowledge and culture is recognised and valued. The connected circles between the two vines represent the growing of Aboriginal-led research - connecting students across fields and educating our community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION, INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

“We are immensely proud of our track record in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Our Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020-2025 clearly spells out our focus on Indigenous higher education, innovation and engagement. In 2025 we will be able to look back and applaud the success that our efforts, brought together in this Framework, have had in making our University more culturally capable, growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff population and leading reconciliation not just at the University, but across our regions.”



Professor Alex Zelinsky AO
Vice-Chancellor and President

“What do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek from higher education and research? Fundamentally what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek is to partner with the university so that Indigenous students, indeed all students, have access to education and research to inform a life lived in safety and with dignity. Furthermore, higher education should be structured so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can maintain their cultural identity by embracing, through language and knowledge systems, the teachings embedded in country; to heed the lessons derived from timeless song-lines, oral traditions and cultures.”



Professor Uncle Bob Morgan
Chair Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research (BATSIER)

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge needs to be an aspect of every teaching and learning opportunity offered by the University of Newcastle. Every graduate should feel that they are equipped with a cultural tool useful for their interaction with all future professions.”



Aunty Laurel Williams
Chair Nguraki Consultative Committee

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research is core business of the University. The responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research is shared by the Wollotuka Institute and the whole University - by each of us.”



Associate Professor Kathleen Butler
Head of the Wollotuka Institute

“This Framework brings together the ambitious plans from across the University to improve the life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, students and staff. Cultural knowledge and understanding is at the centre of this Framework. It guides every initiative. Our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is essential to ensuring that we are Indigenous-led. We have drawn inspiration from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in creating this Framework for action for the coming years.”



Nathan Towney
Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership



INTRODUCTION

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge and experiences are fundamental to Australia’s social, economic and cultural wellbeing”
 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

This Framework is interconnected with a number of strategies and plans across the University, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the Higher Education sector, and the broader community. This Framework does not delve into the detail of each - but rather points to the relevant strategy, plan and contact point to connect and collaborate with. The relevant strategies and action plans are:

- Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025
- Cultural Capability Framework 2020-2025
- Indigenous Research Strategy
- Purai Global Indigenous History Centre Strategic Plan
- The University of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan
- The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan
- The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research are a whole of university commitment - it is everyone’s responsibility. It is how all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can learn, research and apply Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

This Framework will see the University, our communities and our region work together to achieve excellence.

OUR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER-LED PARTNERSHIPS

The University of Newcastle has two major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led partnership structures. The Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research (BATSIER) and the Nguraki Consultative Committee.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership provided by both BATSIER and Nguraki are critical to our success.



BOARD OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (BATSIER)

BATSIER’s role is to advise the Vice-Chancellor on all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters across the University to ensure that the University meets the needs of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It acts as the primary source for consultation on all matters involving strategic planning, funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, education, research, operations and international engagement at the University. BATSIER is comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from our communities, staff and student populations.

NGURAKI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

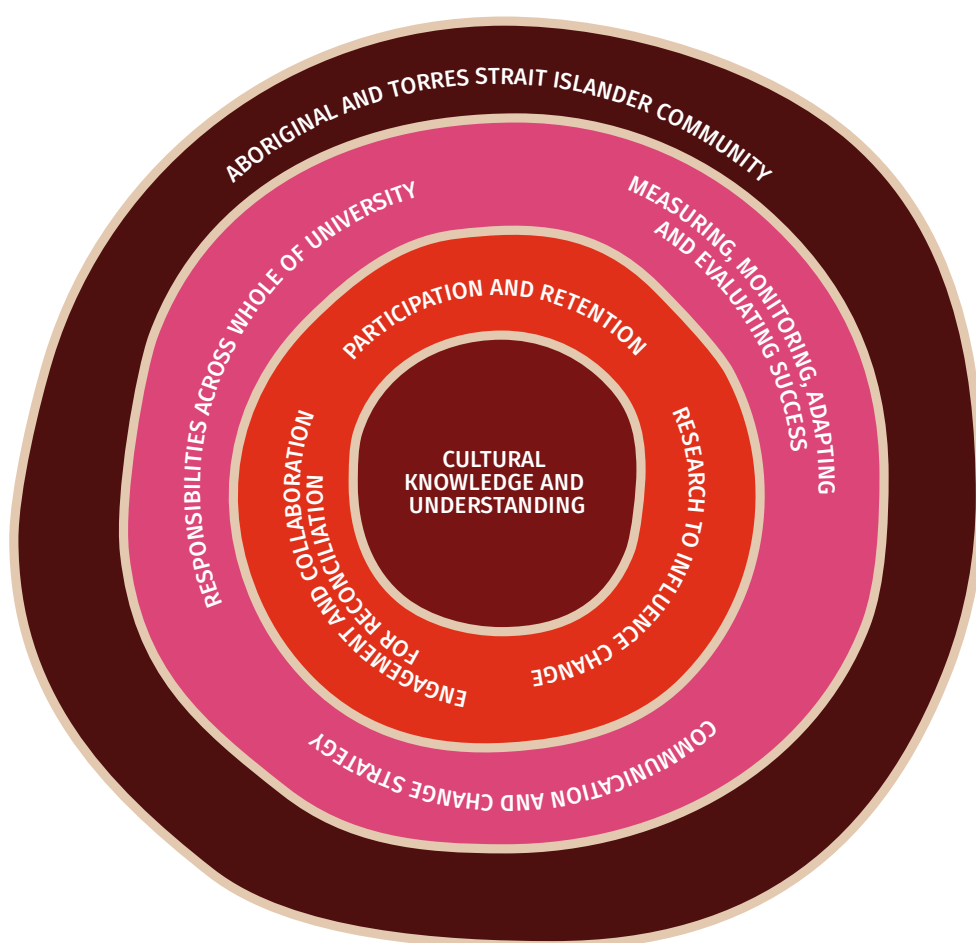
The central aim of the Nguraki Consultative Committee is to provide culturally informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community perspectives, consistent with the cultural standards, to help guide the Wollotuka Institute’s core functions including; student and staff engagement, teaching, research, community involvement and advocacy. Elected members of Nguraki also participate in BATSIER.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

VISION

The University of Newcastle will be a culturally responsive place of excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the community feel connected, and culturally safe. It will be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge is woven into each aspect of the University - our relationships with communities, students and staff, the way we teach, learn and research and how we foster reconciliation in our regions.



WHO? RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for bringing this Framework to life rests with all of us at the University regardless of our position and role. Colleges, Units, Divisions, staff, student, researchers and our external partners are all asked to contribute.

HOW? IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Integration into the core business of each College, Unit, Division, and team. The communications and change strategy, measuring, monitoring, adjusting the Framework and evaluating our success will all be led by the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership with support from the Wollotuka Institute, Thurru Indigenous Health Unit and Purai Global Indigenous History Centre.

THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE CULTURAL STANDARDS

The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards are designed to help define and guide how the University operates and the relationships with students and the Community. They provide a set of principles and standards against which the cultural integrity of our University can be monitored, reviewed and assessed. They are a part of all that we do. In each of the sections of this Framework we have connected back and referenced the Cultural Standards that are most relevant to each area of focus.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and understanding is at the heart of this Framework. It cannot be separated from our relationships and connectedness to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in our region, and the communities where our people come from.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and understanding is important to how we conduct teaching and learning, how we support students and staff, how we design and conduct research. Culture is important in how we lead reconciliation and how we collaborate with our partners to achieve reconciliation in our region and our spheres of influence. Culture is everywhere.

Our Cultural Capability Framework 2020 - 2025 establishes a roadmap for the University to become a culturally safe, responsive and capable institution. Utilising the Cultural Capability Framework is the responsibility of all staff within the University, as culturally capable individuals build a culturally responsive environment.

Importantly there is a priority focus on supporting staff to move beyond cultural awareness and along the continuum towards responsiveness. The University is committed to all students being exposed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge while studying - it will become part of the graduate attributes of our students.

“It is critical that staff are empowered, comfortable and confident in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, creating culturally safe spaces, teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content to all students and supporting all of our students towards cultural responsiveness.”

Nathan Towney, Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership

Participation in culturally significant nation-wide initiatives are important for our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our region and a way to transform the nature of our University. This is emphasised by our Reconciliation Action Plan.

WHAT OUR SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE BY 2025

- Our Cultural Capability Framework is applied across the whole of the University and there is a demonstrated shift towards creating a culturally responsive University.
- Our students will be 'life-ready' graduates grounded in an understanding of, and connection to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Staff will be proficient in teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content and creating a culturally safe space and able to support, and retain, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Our curriculum, will be responsive to, and inclusive of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories and issues.
- We will leverage opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promote Reconciliation across the University, with our community and partners.
- Research produced by the University will be culturally responsive and where possible led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Cultural Capability Framework 2020 - 2025
- The University of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan
- The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan
- Universities Australia, National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities

THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE CULTURAL STANDARDS

- Respect and Honouring
- Cultural Celebration
- Community Responsiveness
- Centred around country/place, heritage, culture and identity

PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION

“Higher education plays a critical role in improving life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities. It also has an important role to play in driving the Nation’s social and economic development”

Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 2012

The University of Newcastle has a whole-of-life approach to enhancing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education.

We understand the importance of supporting families and communities to have confidence in the University to provide a culturally safe space for their child, niece, nephew, grandson, granddaughter or cousin to learn. A University where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge is recognised, celebrated and woven into the fabric of the learning environment. The Wollotuka Institute’s community outreach program is integral to building trust, confidence and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, no matter at what stage of life, to see themselves at University. Addressing the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education must start before enrolment.

The University has a number of focused Strategies and Plans to demonstrate improvements across the whole student and staff lifecycle - increasing participation and retention in undergraduate studies, conversion to post-graduate, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and/or employment at the University and enhancing our students’ experience and achievements. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student Alumni will be connected, champion and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research at the University of Newcastle.

WHAT OUR SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE BY 2025

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

- Will be retained at the same rate or better than the broader student population.
- Will be retained at the same rate or better than the broader student population.
- Will have opportunities to be connected to culture through engagement with our local community and Indigenous communities across the globe.
- Conversion from undergraduate to postgraduate study and/or employment at the University, will be increased.
- Opportunities are increased through additional scholarship offerings.
- Outreach activities in our communities result in a demonstrated conversion to enrolments.
- Increase in academic achievement by students (evidenced by GPA and graduations) and the creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students High Achievers Network.
- Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alumni Engagement strategy to keep Alumni connected to the University.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff

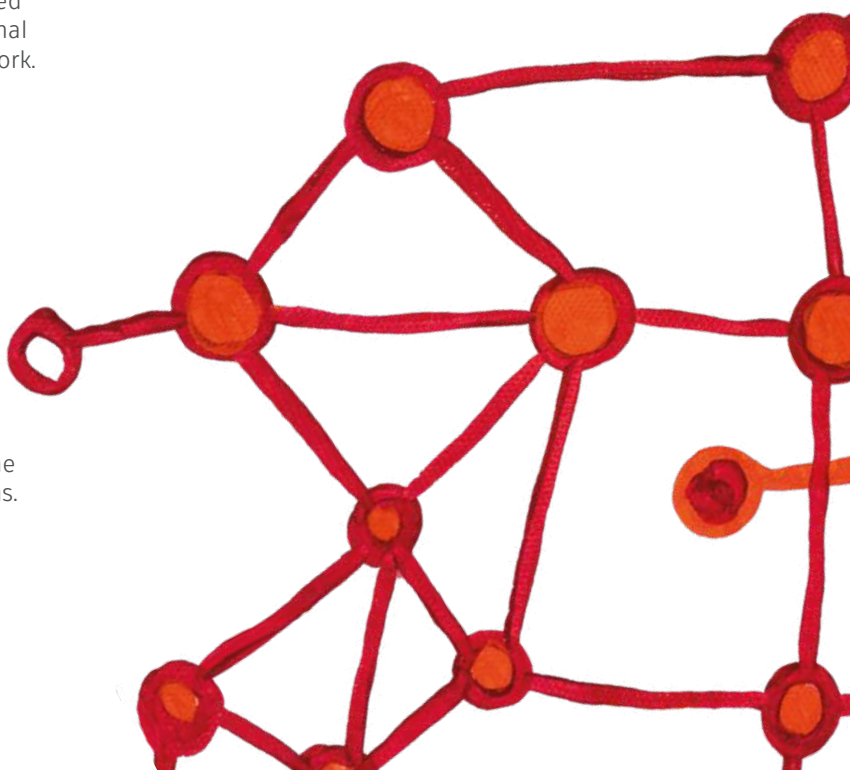
- Representation will be increased to 3.9%, consistent with the population in our region.
- Will be retained at the same rate as the broader professional and academic staff population.
- Retention of will be enhanced by:
 - The creation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee network.
 - Recognition for the additional cultural, diversity, inclusion and community work they do on behalf of the University. This work is valued in promotional decisions.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025
- The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan
- Cultural Capability Framework 2020 - 2025
- The University of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan
- Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy, 2017 - 2020

THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE CULTURAL STANDARDS

- Respect and Honouring
- Cultural Celebration
- Community Responsiveness
- Academic and Research
- Inter-Institutional Relationships



RESEARCH TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

The University of Newcastle is committed to excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research. This means producing world-leading research into issues, topics and concepts that are guided by, and responsive to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research that positively contributes to, and influences change on, the wellbeing, lives and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

Professor John Maynard

We want the University to be a resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We are committed to working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led partnership structures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, researchers, students and staff to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research agendas. Ideally this research will be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Investigators and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and peoples.

To do this successfully it is imperative that we have a strategic approach to creating the right ecosystem for research. We will increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people successfully completing higher degrees by research study so that they can move on to careers in academia and research. We will grow our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and academics.

It will focus on empowering non-Indigenous researchers, academics and staff with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge that they can embed in their research partnerships, design and methodologies.

The recognition of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) is critical. By supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the ICIP community guide, and introducing ICIP protocols at the University, relationships can be formalised. Research partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will create research methodologies and protocols that are culturally responsive and ambitious. Critically, research that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led and can influence positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2021 the University of Newcastle will finalise a new Indigenous Research Strategy to provide a roadmap of how to achieve excellence in Indigenous research that positively influences change.

WHAT IS “INDIGENOUS RESEARCH”?

"Indigenous research" is research that is:

- Led by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Investigator; and/or
- Co-led and authored by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher; and/or
- Has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or organisation as a research partner; and/or
- Led by a non-Indigenous researcher and fully or partially about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, waters, culture and people.

- We have created an Indigenous Health Research Strategy and an Indigenous Ecological Knowledge Research Cluster.
- We have enhanced Human Research Ethics Committee processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.
- We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students through the creation of the Indigenous Priority Scheme Scholarships and an active HDR network.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Indigenous Research Strategy
- Purai Global Indigenous History Centre Strategic Plan
- The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan
- The University of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan

WHAT OUR SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE BY 2025

- The University of Newcastle Indigenous Research Strategy will guide our approach to research led by and/or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research grows in:
 - the number of projects
 - the amount of funding
 - the number of research partnerships
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protections will be embedded throughout the University.
- The University will value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge by creating initiatives and approaches that explicitly value the knowledge, relationships, cultural and community work that staff and students do in addition to their usual responsibilities.

THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE CULTURAL STANDARDS

- Respect and Honouring
- Community Responsiveness
- Academic and Research
- Inter-Institutional Relationships

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our regions are home to the fastest growing population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Culture is strong and there is a thirst from non-Indigenous parts of our community to connect with, and learn from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“We are passionate about reconciliation. Our role is to advocate for, support and grow the contribution our region can make to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education and reconciliation. This includes supporting Reconciliation Action Plans of our external partners.”

Leah Armstrong, Director Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation

The University is in the position of being able to use our resources to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, and people, to thrive. We seek to leverage our core business; our innovation hubs, research excellence, professional development coursework and our procurement function, for the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and communities.

We are committed to our journey towards being a culturally responsive organisation - developing and embedding policies and protocols of how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and communities will enhance our relationships, trust and the results we can achieve together.

The Wollotuka Cultural Standards play an integral role in how we engage and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The principles of self-determination and reciprocity are paramount.

WHAT OUR SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE BY 2025

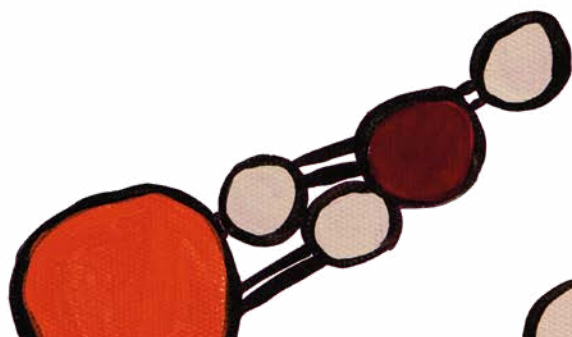
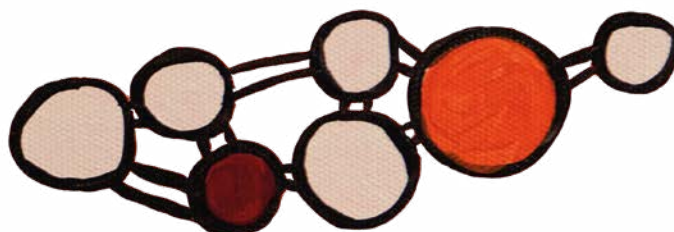
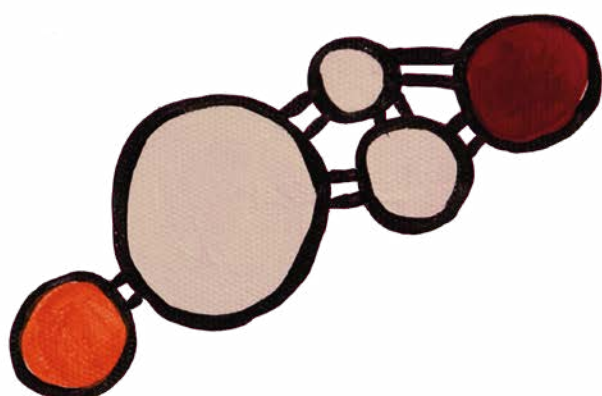
- Our contribution to reconciliation will be recognised with an Elevate RAP.
- The University will have policies and practices that embed ways of working with Indigenous peoples and communities - in particular an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Community Guide.
- We have established ourselves as a connector and hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, businesses and organisations interested in reconciliation to develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
- The University will be supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses to thrive through our procurement spend, innovation hubs and institutional resources.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- The University of Newcastle Reconciliation Action Plan
- Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025
- Cultural Capability Framework 2020 - 2025
- The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan

THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE CULTURAL STANDARDS

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MEASURING, MONITORING, ADAPTING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia have a long and complex history of being 'studied' and 'evaluated' by non-Indigenous people. At the University of Newcastle we seek to disrupt this paradigm.

Self-determination is a key principle and is emphasised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led partnership structures at the University. They will lead the measurement, monitoring and eventual evaluation of the success of this Framework. This Framework is ultimately for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - it is critical that they be the judge of its success.

Each of the priority areas within this Framework, and the corresponding strategies, plans and implementation roadmaps, have their own goals, indicators and measures to guide the University in action.

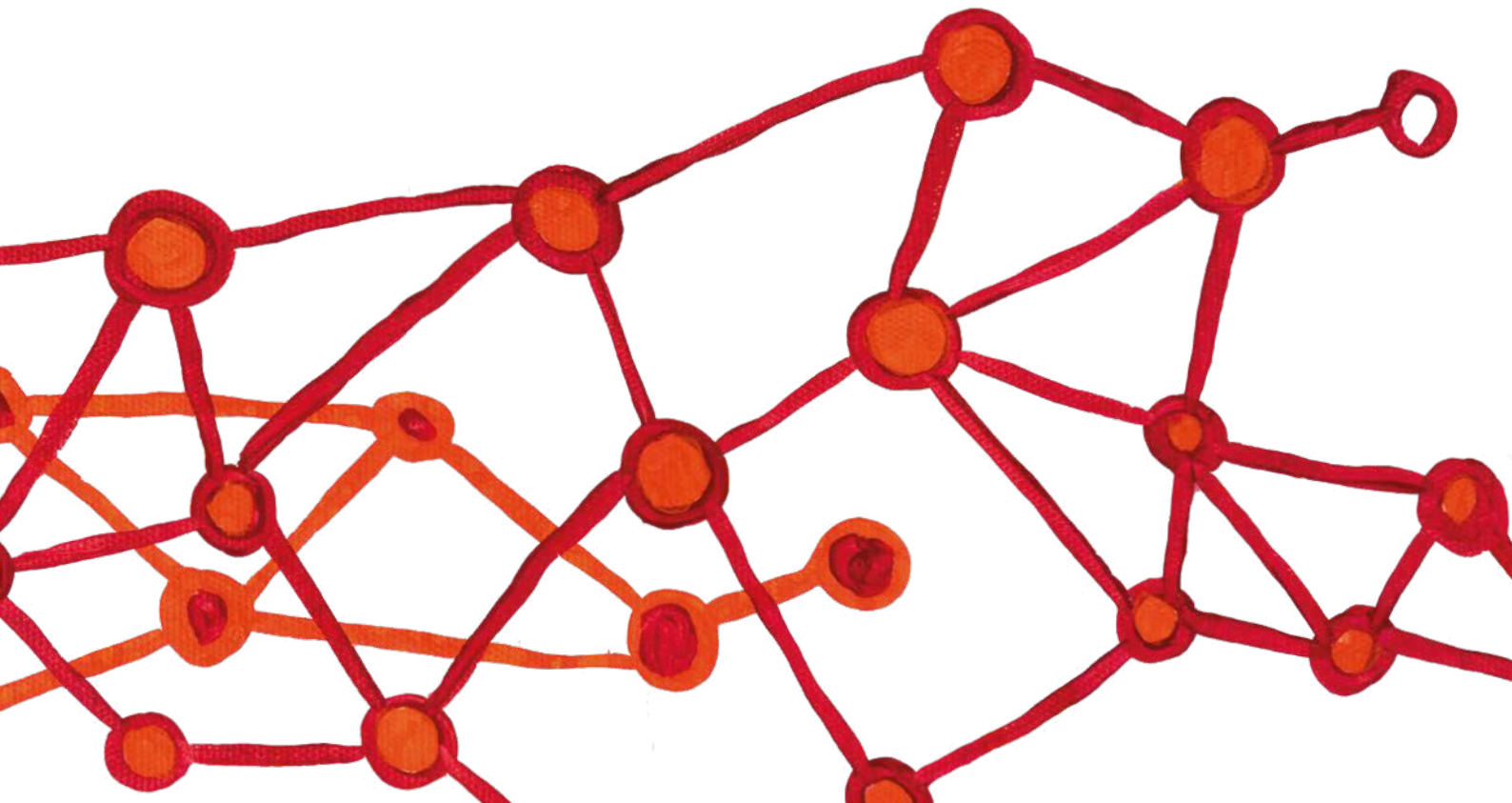
In 2021, we will work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led partnership structures to design a Framework for measuring, monitoring and evaluating success. Importantly, this Framework will be able to act as a lead indicator to empower the University, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and partners to adapt and adjust to achieve better outcomes.

Data sovereignty is a principle that the University supports. We are guided by the AIATSIS Code of Ethics, and our own Human Research Ethics Committee. We will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through our partnership structures, determine what data is collected, how, when, by who and for what purpose. We will seek to develop alignment across the University on data collection, principles for analysis and use and a single reporting framework that shares accountability and responsibility across all of us.

We are committed to sharing our experiences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research with Indigenous communities and people in our region, Australia and beyond.

ALIGNMENT TO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS CONTAINED IN STRATEGIES

- Reconciliation Australia Barometer (Bi-Annual Reporting)
- Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy (Annual Reporting)
- The University of Newcastle's Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025 (Quarterly Reporting)
- World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (Annual Reporting)



CONTACT

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LIST OF RESOURCES WOVEN INTO THIS FRAMEWORK

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020)
 - Larissa Behrendt, Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (2012)
 - The University of Newcastle, Cultural Capability Framework 2020 - 2025
 - The University of Newcastle, Indigenous Research Strategy 2020 - 2025
 - The University of Newcastle, Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025
 - The University of Newcastle, Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025
 - The University of Newcastle, Reconciliation Action Plan
 - The University of Newcastle, Yearning to Yarn: Using Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning to support clinical placement experiences of Aboriginal health professional students (2018)
 - The Wollotuka Institute, Cultural Standards - Our Lands Our Places Our Cultures (2013)
 - The Wollotuka Institute Strategic Plan
 - Uluru Statement from the Heart - Voice. Treaty. Truth. (2017)
 - United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
 - Universities Australia, National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities (2011)
 - Universities Australia, Indigenous Strategy 2017 - 2020
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