

JUMBUNNA RESEARCH IMPACT REPORT

2025



Jumbunna
Institute for Indigenous
Education and Research

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal People, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people upon whose ancestral lands our university stands.

We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

The terms **'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'**, **'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people'**, **'Indigenous'**, and **'First Nations'** interchangeably when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

It also acknowledges that these terms **do not reflect the full diversity** of groups, that many people prefer to be identified by **specific nation or clan names**, and that some individuals **do not prefer the term 'Indigenous'** because it is viewed as a broad, government-imposed label.

Jumbunna Research notes that they have used the most specific terms possible throughout, and apologise if the terminology causes any unintended offence.

CONTENTS

- Acknowledgement..... ii
- Who we are iv
- A word from... our Director 1
- A word from... our Laureate Fellow 2
- Our Hubs..... 4
- Community-led enquiry 2025 5
- Supporting Indigenous HDR Students 6
- Social and emotional wellbeing at Jumbunna..... 8
- Spotlight: Jumbunna Research Archive project..... 10
- Hub activity 2025
- Indigenous Policy Hub 12
- Truth-Telling Hub 14
- Child Protection Hub..... 16
- Indigenous Nation Building and Governance Hub..... 18
- Indigenous Law and Justice Hub..... 20
- Legal Strategies Hub 22
- First Nations Land Justice Hub..... 24
- Indigenous Archives and Data Stewardship Hub..... 26
- Cultural resilience Hub 28
- Centre for Indigenous People and Work 30
- Spotlight: Reforming funding – embedding self-determination in justice 32

WHO WE ARE

The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research aims to produce the highest quality research on Indigenous legal and policy issues and to develop highly skilled Indigenous researchers. We are guided by three central principles - the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and communities, their sovereignty, and Indigenous led research. Our commitment to excellence, agility and genuine outcomes shapes our understanding of shifting landscapes and how to effect change within them to benefit Indigenous peoples and communities. We know our impact is greatest for our communities when focused on their stories, knowledge and experiences that consolidate our teams' rich sets of skills and expertise towards a shared goal.

A WORD FROM... OUR DIRECTOR

I am proud to present the 2025 Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research (Jumbunna Research) Impact Report.

This report reflects our continued commitment to advancing Indigenous-led research and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. The following pages capture the breadth and depth of our work, highlighting the collective efforts of our dedicated staff, research partners, and community collaborators.

At Jumbunna Research, we seek to generate knowledge that empowers Indigenous peoples and informs policy, practice, and real change. In 2025, we have continued to centre Indigenous voices in all aspects of our enquiry, ensuring that our research is led by, with, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our projects have ranged from community-led initiatives addressing pressing local issues to national projects influencing broader policy debates. Each project has been grounded in respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural protocols, guided by the expertise of our scholars and Elders.

Our team has contributed to major submissions on issues such as Indigenous data sovereignty, health equity, education, and justice reform. By drawing on both academic rigour and lived experience, we have positioned Jumbunna Research as a trusted advisor and a catalyst for systemic change.

Supporting the next generation of Indigenous scholars remains a cornerstone of our work. In 2025, we have provided tailored support to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students, offering mentorship, professional development opportunities, and a nurturing academic environment. Our alumni continue to make significant contributions across academia, government, and community sectors, embodying the values and aspirations of Jumbunna Research.

I am once again immensely proud of what our team has been able to achieve and while our key achievements are outlined further in this report, there are a few that deserve special mention.

At the start of 2025 Jumbunna Research was selected to undertake the inaugural **Indigenous led Close the Gap Review**. In what was an intense piece of work that had to be completed in the first half of the year, I was particularly impressed at the ability of our team to come together and contribute to an historic project such as this.

In other landmark pieces of work, Jumbunna Research delivered a comprehensive **Review into over-representation of First Nations People in the ACT Justice**

System. This review, led by Professor Chris Cunneen, made 99 recommendations which are currently under review by the ACT Government.

In November, Industry Professor Lorena Allam and the team from The Guardian Australia won a **Walkley Award** for their series **The Descendants** which examined the truth about Australia's violent colonial past.

Looking ahead, we are committed to further strengthening our research and amplifying Indigenous voices in local and national conversations. One of the projects that will contribute to this is our on-going work with the **NSW Treaty Commission** where we are travelling around NSW with the Treaty Commissioners and talking to our mobs about Treaty and what it may look like. Again, this is a significant piece of work where our peoples are being asked about Treaty for the first time in a formal process.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge and thank **Emeritus Professor Daryle Rigney** and **Dr Tracy Barber** who both retired in 2025. Even in retirement Daryle continues to provide guidance and support to team members and is still recognised as the leading thinker on Indigenous Nation Building, while Tracy will leave an excellent legacy of work, particularly in evaluation and the wonderful work we continue to do with the **Goodes O'Loughlin Foundation**.

On behalf of the entire team, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Elders, communities, partners, and supporters who have entrusted us with their knowledge and aspirations. Your guidance and collaboration are the foundation of our success. Together, we will continue to honour the legacy of the traditional custodians of these lands and work towards a more just and equitable future for all.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement with Jumbunna Research.



**Director of Research, Jumbunna Research,
Professor Lindon Coombes**

A WORD FROM... OUR LAUREATE FELLOW

2025 was a year that demanded steadiness, clarity and care. In a national environment shaped by divisive political debate and ongoing discussions about justice, voice and recognition, Jumbunna Research continued to be guided by a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people leading the research, stories and strategies that shape our futures.

As Laureate Fellow, I am immensely proud of the collective impact of this work. What stands out is the depth of relationships, seriousness of purpose, and care with which it has been carried out. Across the Fellowship, researchers have focused on building structures that support self-determination and centre Indigenous knowledge in places where they have too often been marginalised.

A central focus this year was rebuilding trust in institutions, particularly in the legal sphere. Through the decolonising legal education stream, we expanded networks with First Nations scholars in Canada, the United States and Aotearoa New Zealand, while supporting early-career Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori legal academics. At a time of hostility and misinformation around Indigenous content in law curricula, this work has provided space for repair and reflection on the future of legal education.

This Legal Studies stream has continued its work on the National Bench Book on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the Legal System. By embedding Indigenous perspectives, lived experience and strengths-

based frameworks into judicial education, the Bench Book represents an important step towards improving how courts understand and respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Significant progress was made on drafting and review in 2025, with strong engagement from judicial officers and work continuing into 2026.

Now in its third year, the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Fellowship also continues to provide a culturally safe, Indigenous-led space for First Nations women and non-binary scholars to come together, share knowledge, and support one another's wellbeing and leadership. In a sector where cultural load, burnout and institutional racism are very real, the KFF demonstrates that care and collective responsibility are essential. Gatherings, online yarns, creative practice and the launch of the Centring Journal in 2025 have further strengthened this work.

At the heart of the Laureate Fellowship remains the ARC-funded research project on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). In 2025, the ATSIC project made significant progress as oral history interviews



Yuwaalaraay country, Dist. Prof. Behrendt.



Arnhem Land filming for the High Court project, *Dist. Prof. Behrendt.*



After Story published in French, *Dist. Prof. Behrendt.*

were conducted with participants in South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland, ensuring that diverse regional experiences are captured and preserved. An online seminar series expanded opportunities for reflection and knowledge exchange around ATSIC's relevance, which continues to build research capacity.

PhD candidate Pauline Brown successfully passed her Stage 1 milestone this year, advancing research examining the experiences of Indigenous women within ATSIC. Post-doctoral researcher Associate Professor Paddy Gibson continued his work on the life of Ray Peckham, with an upcoming book that will make an important contribution to labour history and Aboriginal political activism.

One of the most meaningful developments this year has been the beginning of work with former ATSIC CEO and lifelong leader in Indigenous governance Aunty Pat Turner on her autobiography. Supporting this work ensures the voices of those who built, led and defended them are preserved with dignity and authority.

Across all of this work runs a strong commitment to mentoring and intergenerational knowledge-sharing. Support for higher degree researchers, early-career academics and practitioners widens possibilities for their families, communities and the academy.

On a more personal note, 2025 reinforced the importance of story as a tool for truth-telling beyond the university. *After Story* was released in French translation, extending its reach to new audiences, and *One Mind One Heart* won the NSW Digital History Prize, highlighting the reach and impact of Indigenous storytelling across borders, platforms and disciplines.

Looking ahead, the Laureate Fellowship remains focused on building the conditions for long-term change by continuing to invest in Indigenous leadership, insisting on institutional accountability, and holding space for truth-telling even when it is uncomfortable. In a time when symbolic gestures are often favoured, Jumbunna Research continues the harder work of building foundations. I am deeply grateful to the researchers, partners, Elders and communities who make this work possible. Together, we are shaping what comes next.



Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt AO

OUR HUBS

Jumbunna Research comprises 10 interconnected hubs, each led by a Hub Leader and focused on key issues impacting First Nations peoples, communities and Country. Grounded in lived experience, the hubs work in close partnership with First Nations communities, organisations and leaders. Our hubs are:

INDIGENOUS POLICY



Lindon Coombes

As a leading provider of culturally safe and appropriate research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations, the Indigenous Policy Hub is recognised for providing research collaborations with high impact across a diverse range of policy areas that impact social justice for our communities.

LEGAL STRATEGIES



Craig Longman

The Legal Strategies Hub works with Indigenous communities to advocate for their domestic and international rights and interests. Drawing on the traditions of strategic and rebellious lawyering, we collaborate with our clients on justice campaigns through litigation, reform and activism.

TRUTH-TELLING



Lorena Allam

The Truth-Telling Hub produces research that lays the foundations for long-term processes of truth telling in Australia. Our work supports communities, industries, institutions and individuals seeking to understand and interrogate their colonial connections.

FIRST NATIONS LAND JUSTICE



Jason De Santolo

The First Nations Land Justice Hub investigates land justice resurgences, incursions on the exercising of authority in Indigenous homelands and analyses the ongoing impacts of colonisation as climate crisis.

CHILD PROTECTION



Paul Gray

The Child Protection Hub works and stands alongside First Nations families, communities and their organisations to better protect and promote the rights and interests of our children. The Hub also helps to shape government agendas by advocating for structural and practice changes to transform systems and prioritise self-governance in child protection decision making.

INDIGENOUS ARCHIVES AND DATA STEWARDSHIP



Kirsten Thorpe

The Indigenous Archives and Data Stewardship Hub supports Indigenous archiving futures to protect Indigenous knowledges. Through collaborative partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities, industry stakeholders, and sector representatives, we strengthen our work on the care and protection of Indigenous data and archives.

INDIGENOUS NATION BUILDING AND GOVERNANCE



Daryle Rigney

The Indigenous Nation Building and Governance Hub is an internationally recognised centre for research in Indigenous Nation (re)building (INB), self-determination and governance. We develop links between UTS, Australian and international Indigenous Peoples, communities and organisations, governments, universities and key industry partners.

CULTURAL RESILIENCE



Pauline Clague

The Cultural Resilience Hub promotes, supports, and embodies the exercise and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sovereignty and Self-determination, by leading innovative practices in Media and Storytelling in the arts.

INDIGENOUS LAW AND JUSTICE



Chris Cuneen

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub's vision is to enhance and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination. We aim to prioritise First Nations' voices, improve Indigenous justice outcomes, and ensure access to justice as defined by First Nations peoples.

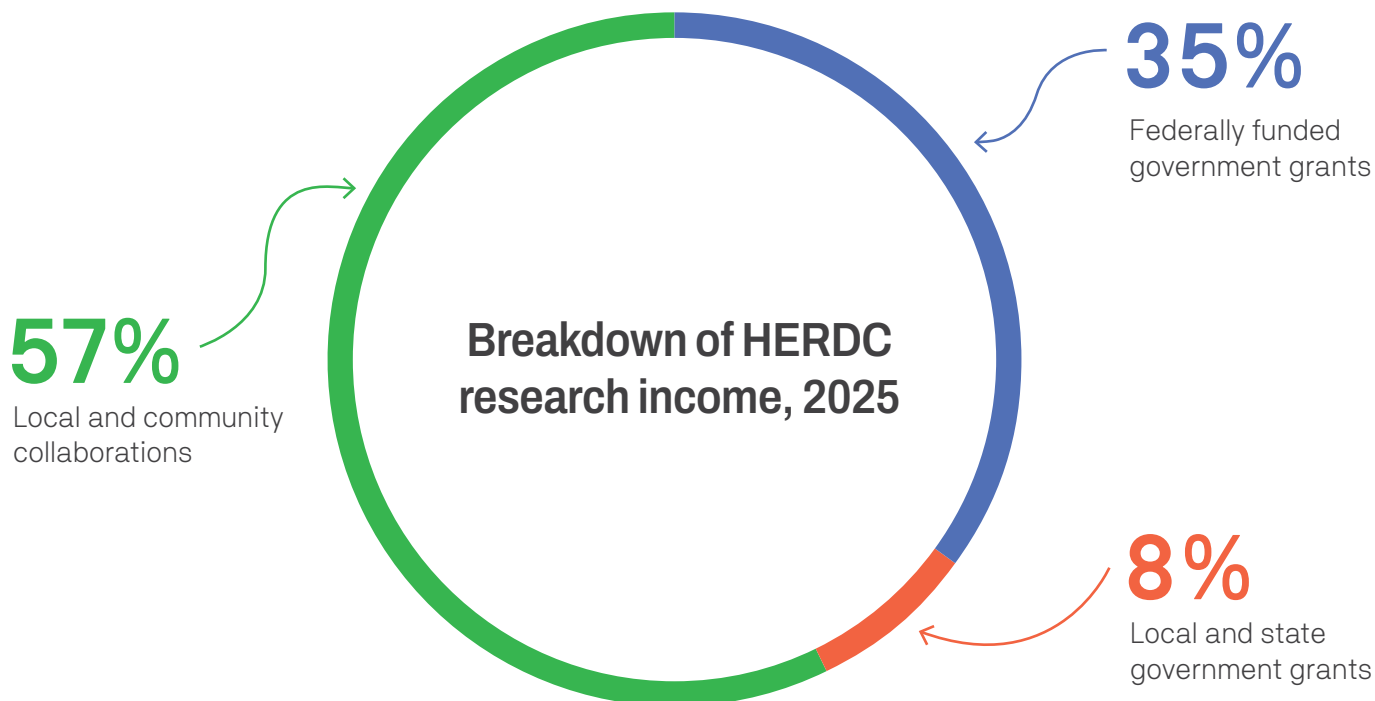
CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND WORK



Nareen Young

The Centre for Indigenous People and Work is a partnership between Jumbunna Research and the Business School. It aims to address systemic inequities - including racism, underemployment and exclusion from management and leadership positions - experienced by Indigenous Australians in the employment and labour markets.

COMMUNITY-LED ENQUIRY 2025



FUTURE RESEARCH

2026 Collaborations



Flinders University,
ARC Centre of Excellence for
Prisoner Reintegration



University of Queensland,
ARC Discovery Indigenous: Evaluating
justice reinvestment: Understanding
First Nations' justice



Monash University,
ARC Discovery: From Care to Corrections:
Preventing the criminalisation of care
leavers

2026 Awarded Grants

- > Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative Research Library and Archive
- > Knowledge in Community Hands through Self-Determined Stewardship
- > Youth Action Meetings (YAMS)
- > Understanding the impact of community policing on First Nations communities in NSW

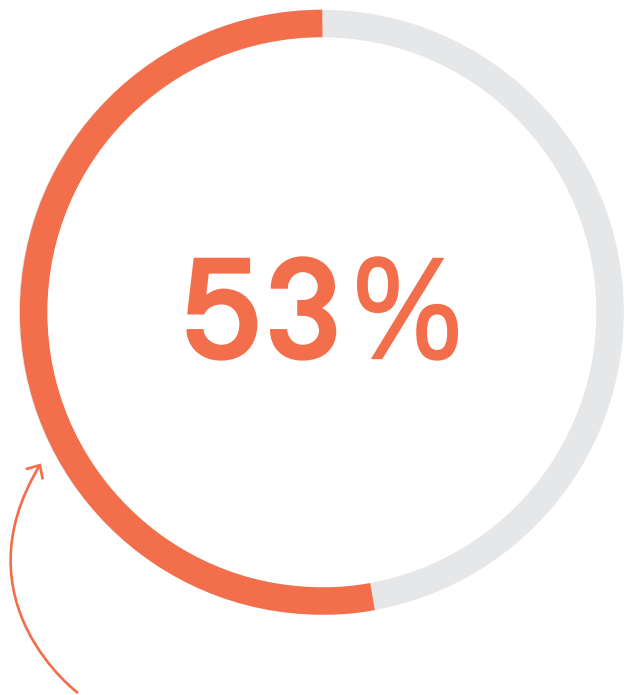
Ongoing research projects

- > A First Nations Sovereign Approach to Decolonising Colonial Institute
- > Policy for Self-Determination: the case study of ATSIC
- > ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures
- > Police Collecting of Ancestral Remains and Cultural Property, 1825 - 1930
- > The Aboriginal Archive 2.0

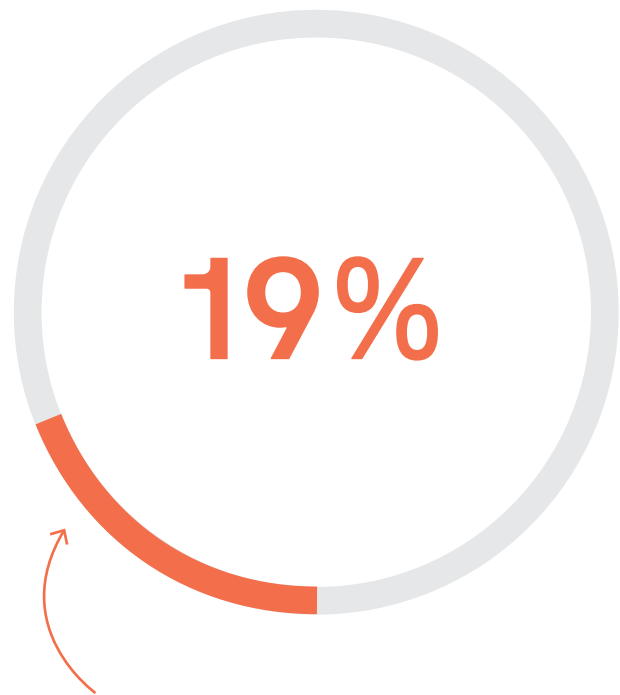
JUMBUNNA RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- > ADR, Jumbunna Research - Lachlan McDaniel
- > Manager, Jumbunna Research - Missi Mel Pesa
- > Project Manager - Mandy Price
- > Research Administrator - Ruth Jessop-Smith

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS HDR STUDENTS



UTS Indigenous HDR cohort **supervised** by Jumbunna researchers.



UTS Indigenous HDR cohort **employed** by Jumbunna research.

ADR STATEMENT

Jumbunna Research has a deep commitment to cultivating the next generation of Indigenous scholars who will carry forward our commitment to Indigenous led and community driven research. This commitment supports the UTS 2030 Strategy by ensuring a new wave of Indigenous scholarship that strengthens respectful engagement with Indigenous peoples, their Knowledge Systems, the ongoing restoration of Country, social justice and research translation. We achieve this by providing culturally grounded supervision, personal and community-centred mentoring, structured skill development and clear pathways into meaningful employment in Indigenous-led research.

ADR, Lachlan McDaniel



“Through this process, we will not only recover words and grammatical features but also rekindle the deep connections between language, place, story and tradition,” Callum says.

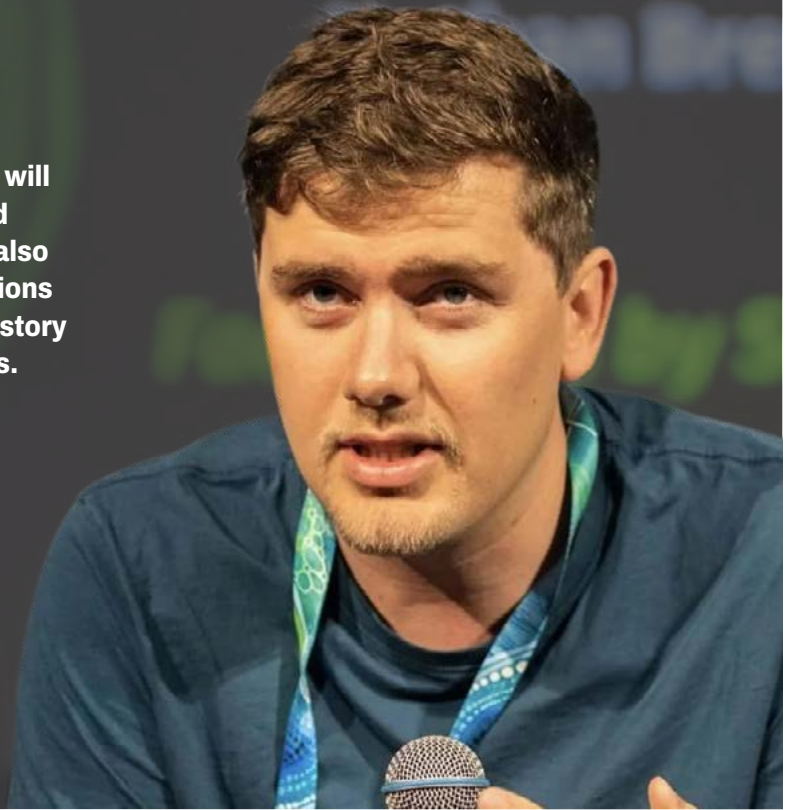


Photo: Dr Callum Clayton-Dixon.

HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Dr Callum Clayton-Dixon is an Ambēyang / Anēwan researcher and language revivalist with bloodlines from the southern end of the New England Tableland, around Walcha, Woolbrook, and the Ingleba Aboriginal Reserve. Supervised by Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt and Professor Jason De Santolo at Jumbunna Research Callum’s doctoral research produced the first comprehensive grammar and dictionary of the Aboriginal language of southern New England. On conferral of his PhD Callum was successful in being awarded a Chancellor’s Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship. His postdoctoral project, *Kyūna Wangana, Kyūna Uyina* – ‘Understanding Country, Speaking Country’:

Reclaiming Lingo From Place’, extends his language-revival work by mapping and interpreting traditional place names across the high-country of the southern New England Tableland, reconnecting those names to their meanings, cultural contexts, and associated Country. A continuation of his work as the inaugural Ern MacDonald On-Country Research Fellow, the project aims to regenerate suppressed Indigenous knowledge systems and enable community members to speak, sing, and understand Country through language grounded in place-based knowledge and traditions. It centres language, land, and cultural resurgence as interconnected forms of self-determination and knowledge renewal.

FUTURE SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS HDR

Jumbunna Research academics Dr Gemma Sentance, a former UTS PhD candidate, and Professor Juanita Sherwood are developing a series of training modules that will support all Indigenous HDR students at UTS. These modules introduce Indigenous research methodologies and guide students through the HDR process.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AT JUMBUNNA



Photo: Aunty Deb and Aunty Juanita Sherwood.

MAINTAINING OUR WELLBEING

- > We acknowledge that we need to ensure that our workplaces are respectful of our circumstances. Academia is a place that can and does make a significant difference to the world of ignorance and violence, it can provide strategies informed by the truths of our people to shift the claims of those who are set upon unrest and harm.
- > We revisit what social and emotional wellbeing means for First Nations Peoples our ways of knowing, celebrating our peoples and our ways of being and doing have been our strength for well over 65, 000 years.
- > We ensure that we listen, we enable opportunities for people to raise their experiences of racism, harm and injury and provide the culturally safe referrals for healing and care.
- > We care about our people, our students and staff. When they are hurting we make sure they are cared for and nurtured.
- > We reflect on the injuries that have occurred in this Country and those that continue to be rolled out. These are the features and causal agents of intergenerational trauma, and sadly they are replayed through
- > We provide opportunities for celebrating our culture, embedding further our ways of knowing, being and doing.
- > We promote respect and celebrate our work and our responsibilities.
- > We make time to have some fun, get out into the sun, connect with our People, participate in conferences, support our organisations.
- > We support that the university's Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Action Plan will strengthen cultural safety and belonging at UTS, while ensuring our community has the support and resources needed to prevent and respond to racism.

NO ONE SHOULD
HAVE TO PUT UP
WITH **RACISM**

Artwork by Yuluwiribea

**REPORT
IT!**

We turn reports from
mob and allies into
proof that systems
must change

Reports are
safe and
confidential

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racism, every time



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OUT**

**FIRST NATIONS
RACISM REGISTER**

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OUR VOICES ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

SPOTLIGHT

JUMBUNNA RESEARCH ARCHIVE PROJECT



The Jumbunna Research Archive developed out of a two-day staff retreat in 2023, when our team began asking questions about how we began. By building partnerships with communities on Country, both in Australia and internationally, we are working to fill the gaps in our story.

This project is a reflection of cultural values like truth-telling, data sovereignty, and ethical stewardship. It's about making sure Indigenous knowledge systems are respected, protected, and carried forward.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The archive aims to become a living archive that celebrates leadership, projects, and collaborations, while ensuring Indigenous stories are cared for now and in the future. The strength of this project lies in preserving the stories of the people who established the Jumbunna Research Indigenous House of Learning, capturing how it was formed as part of Australia's national history.

Supporting the multiple projects we work across, the archive will provide a central access point, while telling the stories of our research and its impact. For our partnerships with communities, it will keep a record of collaboration stories, care for materials on request by communities, and preserve stories as an evidence base for future research.

LOOKING FORWARD

REFLECTION FROM COMMUNITY

Community feedback has long highlighted the need for ethical stewardship in caring for these histories which are part of a broader national story.

Given the importance of accessing and managing this content in ways that respect cultural protocols and in culturally safe ways, the Jumbunna Research Archive is guaranteeing that the people represented in these histories retain control over their stories and how they are shared.

ETHICAL AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The archive is informed by key principles that uphold Indigenous rights and cultural heritage. These include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage and knowledge. It respects Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and adheres to the ATSILIRN Protocols for Libraries, Archives, and Information Services. It also aligns with IDSov and IDGov principles articulated by the Maiaam nayri Wingara Collective.



HUB ACTIVITY 2025

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

In 2025, our team delivered a significant number of projects across all hubs. While this report highlights two case studies from each hub, we acknowledge and deeply appreciate every partner, collaborator, and community we worked alongside throughout the year.

INDIGENOUS POLICY HUB

138 years of government policy for Indigenous People hasn't worked. Let's try something new.

STAFF

- > Lindon Coombes, Director, Jumbunna Research
- > Larissa Lavarch, Laureate Fellow
- > Jai McAllister, Research Assistant
- > Juanita Sherwood, Professor
- > Giovanni De Santolo, Research Fellow
- > Kirsten Gray, Associate Professor
- > Amy Thunig, Research Fellow
- > Cecilia Anthony, Industry Professor
- > Samantha Nolan-Smith, Desktop Researcher

The Indigenous Policy Hub was proud to have been asked to conduct the inaugural independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Review of the Closing the Gap National Agreement. This significant piece of work emphasised the importance of self-determination and the inherent strengths of Indigenous communities.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is an agreement between Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations to work together to close the gap in life outcomes and end the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This first independent review focused on three areas: How Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and government are managing systems, policies and programs aligned to the four Priority Reform areas, how they are adapting to new ways of working under the National Agreement partnership, and whether the Agreement is working in ways anticipated by those involved.

Taking place in the first six months of 2025, more than 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia were consulted including members of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, policy experts working in the Policy Partnerships, Indigenous peak bodies, local government representatives and community members and their organisations. Among the key findings and recommendations, Jumbunna found that while the architecture of Closing the Gap and the National Agreement is sound and provides a solid framework supported by all Parties, implementation challenges persist. This reflects a deeper tension between fundamentally misaligned visions from governments on one hand, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations on the other.



Photo: Professors Lindon Coombes and Juanita Sherwood with community members in Maningrida, NT, during consultations on the Closing the Gap review. Source: Jumbunna Research.

There was little evidence of the transformative work required on the part of governments as all three levels to support the systematic and structural changes that will be needed to underpin successful and sustainable outcomes under the National Agreement.

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap is due to respond by end of February 2026 but has recognised the critical role the review will play in shaping future implementation of the Agreement.

The Review outcomes will be part of considerations for the next iteration of the National Agreement. It is one of the Hub's, and the Institute's most impactful pieces of work to date.

In 2025, and continuing through 2026, the Indigenous Policy is supporting the independent NSW Treaty Commissioners, Naomi Moran and Aden Ridgeway. The NSW Government has appointed them to undertake a 12 month consultation with Aboriginal people and communities in NSW to determine if there is support for a treaty or formal agreement making among Aboriginal peoples in NSW, what a future treaty process could like, and any other matters deemed appropriate in relation to a pathway to a treaty or agreement making if there is support.

This is the first time in the 238 history of the state that Aboriginal people have been asked to share their thoughts, opinions and dreams about formal treaty with the State. The independent Treaty Commissioners' work follows a long history of advocacy and activism on the part of Aboriginal people in NSW. Jumbunna is supporting the Commissioners as the official scribes for the consultation period, led by the Indigenous Policy Hub and involving members of the broader

Jumbunna team. The Hub is also managing an online survey for the Treaty Commission open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, and overall data analytics that includes written submissions lodged.

“We are sitting with community in places and spaces that are really important and significant and sacred to them so that we can have these really deep conversations around treaty.”
Treaty Commissioner Naomi Moran

“It’s important to finally be given that opportunity to hear what Aboriginal people think, what they are being asked, build up that baseline of information because that’s the foundation that allows us to step forward but it’s also making sure that we don’t just get defined by the last 237 years. I want to be defined by the 65,000 years before that. It’s about two generations past, the current generation we are in, and then thinking about those generations in the future.” Treaty Commissioner Aden Ridgeway

By the end of the year, the Hub had attended community sessions in eight regions across NSW with the Treaty Commissioners and will continue this work until August 2026. The consultation period is at the halfway mark, and after its conclusion, a final report will be submitted to the NSW Government in late 2026. It is an honour for our team to be a part of this significant and potentially history making process.

Photo: NSW Independent Treaty Commissioners Aden Ridgeway and Naomi Moran, 2025 Koori Knockout, NSW Treaty Commission.



The expert Jumbunna team has been an ideal evaluation partner for our Yanalangami: Strong Women, Strong Communities program, aligning with our Indigenous methodologies and commitment to amplifying participants’ voices.



Jumbunna’s report identifies and highlights our program’s strength and impact, shares our story and provides learning that will drive programmatic and systems-level change.”

Dr Belinda Russon, Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd

LOOKING FORWARD

transformation
community government
research partnership meaningful
Indigenous decolonising
policy action change

PUBLICATIONS

- > Anthony, C., Coombes, L., Gray, K., Laforteza, E., and Tilly, J. (2025) *A systematic literature review for the Australian Human Rights Commission’s study into the impact and prevalence of racism in Australian universities*, Australian Human Rights Commission 18 March 2025
- > Behrendt-Lavarch, L., Coombes, L., Gray, K., Anthony, C., and Nolan-Smith, S (2025) *Closing the Gap Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Review*, Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations June 2025
- > Sherwood, J (2025) in Mackean TJ et al.(2025) Decolonising primary health care practice: a definition and its importance. *Med J Aust.* 2025 Jul 7;223(1):9-12.

TRUTH-TELLING HUB

“Let’s get over it. Just tell it right. Tell it truthfully first. You can’t get over something if you don’t even know what happened.”

Theona Councillor (Naaguja Yamato)



STAFF

> Staff: Lorena Allam, Industry Professor

From March to August, the Hub conducted an investigative collaboration with Guardian Australia examining how the legacies of frontier violence continue to shape families today. This work reflects our commitment to creating an environment that builds on the achievements of our First Nations researchers who are leaders in storytelling, analysis and creative practice.

Published across digital and print from 4–8 August, The Descendants told six stories dealing with different aspects of the colonial frontier legacy. The series reached more than

Photo: Naaguja children play among the trees at Bootenal Springs. Photograph by Tamati Smith (Yamatji).

two million readers and listeners, supported by a two-part podcast series for Guardian Australia’s Full Story that attracted thousands of downloads, and received the 2025 Walkley award for excellence in Indigenous Affairs reporting.

With Guardian Australia’s reach of 3.2 million monthly print readers, 18.4 million monthly digital readers and 113 million monthly unique browsers, the collaboration achieved national visibility.

The project’s impact will continue, with a book version of the series scheduled for publication in 2027.



Congratulations on an amazing series of stories. The work is an example of how The Guardian in Australia matters. No other media outlet would have done this at this kind of depth and with this sensitivity and integrity. You have revealed historical facts, and articulated their claim on the present with enormous clarity and impact. As a white Australian, I am ashamed. As a Scott Trust member, proud. Hard to hold both of those emotions together.”

Margaret Simons is an award-winning freelance journalist and the author of many books and numerous articles and essays. She is also a journalism academic and Honorary Principal Fellow at the Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne.

“Congratulations to the Guardian Australia Indigenous Affairs team for winning a 2025 Walkley Awards for The Descendants series. Following their 2019 Walkley-winning series The Killing Times, The Descendants explores the deeply personal process of truth-telling for Australians confronting their families’ roles in frontier violence, examining some of the most horrific incidents from both sides of the frontier.”
The Balnaves Foundation.

LOOKING FORWARD



Photo L-R: Industry Professor Lorena Allam, Sarah Collard, Ella Archibald-Binge and Calla Wahlquist.
Photo credit: Adam Hollingworth, The Walkley Foundation.

CREATIVE OUTPUTS

- > Allam,L. (2025, August) “The Descendants episode 1: decoding a massacre – Full Story podcast” Guardian Australia
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/audio/2025/aug/04/the-descendants-episode-1-decoding-a-massacre-full-story-podcast-ntwnfb>
- > Allam,L., Collard,S., Archibald-Binge,E. (2025) “These brothers grew up revering their great-uncle Bill. Then the full story came out”
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/aug/04/family-nt-police-constable-bill-mckinnon-history-ntwnfb>

CHILD PROTECTION HUB

“As Grandmother's Against Removal and others in our community have insisted, ‘Sorry means you don't do it again’”.



Photo: International Symposium on Self-Determination in Indigenous Peoples Child Protection - Day 2 participants.

ENGAGING GLOBALLY

In 2025, the Jumbunna Child Protection Advocacy Hub, in collaboration with UTS Law and the University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine, hosted the International Symposium on Self-Determination in Indigenous Peoples Child Protection.

Building on a special edition of the journal *Genealogy* focused on the same topic, co-edited by Professor Terri Libesman (UTS Law), Professor Paul Gray, Associate Professor Kirsten Gray, and Dr Wendy Hermeston (UniMelb), the Symposium brought together leading international voices in Indigenous child and family welfare for two bespoke events.

A meeting of collaborators shared research and identified opportunities for shared research, policy development and advocacy for the benefit of Indigenous children, families and communities. The Symposium also provided an opportunity for discussion with Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander leaders, and state and territory government officials, on the implications arising from research and international experiences.

The Symposium was a resounding success and was a valuable meeting point for those who attended. Researchers appreciated the opportunity for dialogue across jurisdictions, identifying opportunities for collaboration and future work. Community partners and government representatives reflected positively on the insights offered to shape future systems and practice.

STAFF

- > Paul Gray, Professor
- > Gemma Sentance, Senior Research Fellow
- > Mahlia Garay, Research Fellow
- > Candice Butler, Research Fellow
- > Kiri Olsen, Research Assistant
- > Michelle Ah Matt, Node Administrator



Photo: Child Protection team presenting at SNAICC'25 Conference, Brisbane. Photo credit Artificial Studios.

We continued our ongoing partnership with AbSec, Aboriginal Legal Services (NSW/ACT), Dr BJ Newton (UNSW) and the Justice and Equity Centre, to advance the vision and recommendations of the Review.

WORKING LOCALLY

The Child Protection Hub continued to partner with Aboriginal communities and their organisations in NSW and across Australia to drive change in child and family systems. This included our ongoing partnership with AbSec, Aboriginal Legal Services (NSW/ACT), Dr BJ Newton (UNSW) and the Justice and Equity Centre, to advance the vision and recommendations of the Family is Culture Review.

Our work promoting the reform vision of the Family is Culture Review continues in support of NSW Aboriginal peak bodies, and in response to the pressing need to transform child protection systems and practices to safeguard the rights, interests and wellbeing of our children and families. 2025 saw the development of two key resources for AbSec –

discussion papers on achieving self-determination in the NSW child protection system, and conceptualising and embedding greater accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the child protection system in NSW. These papers build on the findings of the Family is Culture Review and provide a framework for action and implementation.

Speaking on this partnership, AbSec CEO John Leha said:

“AbSec’s close work with Jumbunna has strengthened our child protection reform priorities, connections and advocacy, particularly in advancing innovative, Aboriginal-led system accountability. Their culturally grounded, evidence-based expertise and collaborative approach add immense value. Jumbunna’s impressive Aboriginal academics and researchers bring cultural authority and insight, and we look forward to continuing this strong partnership for years to come.”

LOOKING FORWARD

Kids with family and community
 Self-determination Rights based
Advocacy Relationality
 Justice centred
Community led
 Accountability Family is culture
 Strengthening indigenous evidence Children and young people
 Bringing our kids home
 Transformation Decolonise

PUBLICATIONS

- > Libesman, T., Gray, P., & Gray, K. (2024). The Shackles of Terra Nullius in Child Protection ‘Reforms.’ In *Legal Education Through an Indigenous Lens* (pp. 53–70). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003473404-5>
- > Butler, C. (2025). The Time Is Now: Reclaiming Child Protection Decision Making Within Australia. *Genealogy*, 9(3), 90. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy9030090>
- > Gray, P., Garay, M., Sentence, G., Gray, K., Olsen, K., Ah Matt, M., Coombes, L., Behrendt, L., Gielingh, A and Selvanera, G. (2025) *Self-Determination and Aboriginal child protection: Considerations for implementation in NSW*, AbSec and Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, available https://absec.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/AbSec_Self-determination-and-Aboriginal-child-protection_Sep2025-FINAL.pdf

INDIGENOUS NATION BUILDING AND GOVERNANCE HUB

Affirming the principles in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Australian and international evidence could not be more clear that self-determination is a prerequisite to Indigenous Peoples achieving their cultural, social, economic and community development goals.

Research produced by the INBG Hub shows that Indigenous Peoples - regardless whether they define themselves as First Nations, clans, communities, tribes or other kinds of political groups - need to be self-governing to achieve self-determination. Put another way, Indigenous Peoples need to have community-wide decision-making structures and processes that the community considers to be legitimate to enact their own policies and achieve their collective goals.

One of the INBG Hub's most important priorities is to translate our research findings into accessible information and useful tools to assist the self-determination efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations and communities.

Two initiatives we have put in place to spread the INB story is to create a book series on *Indigenous Self Rule* with the leading international publisher Bloomsbury Academic, edited by Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt, Distinguished Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Emeritus Professor Daryle Rigney, and managed by Associate Editor Dr Simone Bignall.

BOOK RELEASE: INDIGENOUS NATION BUILDING IN AUSTRALIA

The first book to be published in the new Indigenous Self-Rule series is a book written by the INBG team itself. Called *Indigenous Nation Building in Australia*, the book tells stories about the ongoing work of the Gunditjmarra People and Ngarrindjeri Nation in asserting their sovereignty and building governance structures to increase their self-determination over Country and resist settler-colonialism. Led by authors Daryle Rigney (Ngarrindjeri) and Damein Bell (Gunditjmarra), the book is honest about the extreme challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia and the ongoing strategies Gunditjmarra and Ngarrindjeri Elders and leaders use to overcome them, or at a minimum, hold them at bay.

Readers who are expert in the scholarship and practices of Indigenous Nation Building attest to the urgency and value of this research:

STAFF

- > Daryle Rigney, Director and Professor (LSL/retired September 2025. Appointed Adjunct Professor October and Emeritus Professor November 2025)
- > Alison Vivian, Associate Professor
- > Steven Hemming, Associate Professor
- > Simone Bignall, Senior Researcher
- > Jonathan Jones, Chancellor's Postdoctoral Indigenous Research Fellow
- > Anthea Compton, Research Fellow
- > Mandy Price, Research Project Manager



These authors know exactly what is at stake for Indigenous Nations, and they share research that is strengths based in the truest sense of the word; deeply sensitive to complexity and lived experience and wholly committed to Indigenous authority. ... This book is also a powerful and generous gift of knowledge from the Gunditjmarra People and Ngarrindjeri Nation. By sharing their stories of resistance and rebuilding challenges faced and victories won, these nations show what can be achieved for Country and culture, and the next generation who will carry responsibility for both.” (Professor Nikki Moodie, Gomeroi, University of Melbourne)



“From the legacy and actions of our old people, these shared insights inspire Indigenous nation building and leadership in practice to shape the future of our coming generations.” (Donna Murray, Wiradyuri citizen and nation building practitioner)



INDIGENOUS LAW AND JUSTICE HUB

‘If you don’t think racism exists come take a walk with us’

Over the last five years, members of the Hub have worked with the National Justice Project to develop, launch and maintain the online First Nations Racism Register Call It Out. Launched in March 2022, it is the first national register for racism against Indigenous people in Australia.

In 2025, we launched a phone app to make reporting easier for people in the community. We also launched two Call it Out reports, the first was released in March which was titled: ‘If you don’t think racism exists come take a walk with us’: *The Call It Out Racism Register 2023-2024*. The webinar was attended by more than 200 people online, with another 120 views for the webinar. There were also 95 media mentions with an estimated 120,000 views.

The ‘*Call It Out Racism Register 2024-2025 Annual Report*’ was launched in November. The webinar had 187 online attendees and 441 registrations.

This year, we have continued to engage with community, universities, statutory authorities, media and government. The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission have both actively promoted Call It Out.

We have also collaborated with various First Nations organisations including the Cape York Institute and the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency. Working alongside the Kalgoorlie community, we hope to grow the reports from this region and then return data to the community for local action.

During 2025 the Hub worked with the Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department to discuss a new National Hate Crimes and Incidents Database. We provided advice

to the ACT Public Service Culture & Pathways Team and WA Aboriginal Health on Call it Out and racism. Discussions with the NSW Premier’s Department and Deakin University has led to a potential collaboration on their new Mapping Online Hate in Australia.

Despite the widespread community support and engagement, Call It Out has struggled to find ongoing funding. This has limited our ability to improve community engagement, expand the reporting mechanisms into First Nations languages and make timely interventions into public discussion of racism.

STAFF

- > Christopher Cunneen, Professor
- > Fiona Allison, Associate Professor
- > Haylee Davis, Research Assistant
- > James Beaufils, Senior Research Fellow
- > Michael Bryden, Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Indigenous Research Fellow
- > Sophie Russell, Research Assistant
- > Ayse Selcuk, Research Assistant
- > Mekayla Cochrane, Indigenous JR Cultural Consultant
- > Terleaha Williams Oliver, Indigenous JR Cultural Consultant
- > Ian Brown, Indigenous JR Cultural Consultant
- > Judith Duncan, Indigenous JR Cultural Consultant
- > Debra Moyle, Indigenous JR Cultural Consultant
- > Tatiana Corrales, Senior Research Fellow
- > Rebecca Lewis, Research Fellow

The logo for 'Call It Out' features the words 'CALL IT' in large, bold, black capital letters on the top line, and 'OUT' in the same style on the bottom line. Between the two lines of text is a stylized graphic consisting of three overlapping triangles pointing to the right: a red triangle on the left, a yellow triangle in the middle, and a blue triangle on the right.

I wanted to report the incident, but do not have the emotional and physical strength to fight through courts or formal complaints processes at the moment. For now, wanted to make a report to Call it Out as part of the healing process.” (An Aboriginal woman reporting to Call it Out)

“I shared my story on [social media] and one of the moderators there pointed out [Call It Out] to me to share my story. If not justice, then this gives me at least catharsis.” (An Aboriginal man reporting to Call it Out)

In 2025, we completed and released the Independent Review into the Over-Representation of First Nations People in the ACT Criminal Justice System, commissioned by the ACT government. The research took two years to complete and was the first significant review of its type undertaken in the ACT.

The review focuses on the criminal legal system, including youth justice, policing, bail, sentencing, imprisonment and post-release reintegration. It also considers systems and

issues that sit outside the criminal legal system and are deeply connected to the problem of over-representation, such as education, child protection, health, and housing. The 440 page Review makes 99 recommendations across the breadth of concerns identified in the research.

The review involved extensive interviews with Aboriginal community members, Aboriginal organisations, non-Indigenous organisations, government agencies and statutory authorities. We conducted community dialogues with the assistance of Aboriginal organisations and yarning circles with people detained in the adult and juvenile prisons.

The core recommendations revolved around improved First Nations decision-making, greater government accountability, systemic racism and cultural safety. In relation to criminal law agencies there were recommendations focussed on youth justice, policing, bail, courts and sentencing, imprisonment, parole and reintegration. There were also recommendations on key areas feeding into the criminal justice system, including child protection and education.

The ACT government released an Interim Response to the recommendations in September 2025 and has committed to a staged approach to the recommendations. In line with the Review, it will establish an interim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led oversight body.



Cover artwork: "Journey To Justice" by Erica-Jade Church, Jayde Mitchell, Damon Brown Erica-Jade Church (18), Jayde Mitchell (15), Damon Brown (15).



Jumbunna has provided the ACT Government with a comprehensive blueprint for tackling the problem of First Nations over-representation in the criminal legal system.

Our report has practical recommendations for reform related to a range of matters involving child protection, youth justice, policing, bail, sentencing, the AMC and post-release support.”

Chris Cunneen, Professor of Criminology at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney

LOOKING FORWARD



PUBLICATIONS

- > Allison, F., Cunneen, C., Lewis, B. and Selcuk, A. (2025). *'Everywhere I go no matter where, I feel a hate vibe. It feels like I am being watched'. The Call it Out Racism Register 2024-2025*, Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Educations and Research, University of Technology Sydney. ISBN 978-06456996. 140 pages.
- > Cunneen, C., Allison, F., Beaufils, J., Corrales, T & Selcuk, A. (2025) *Strategies and recommendations for reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Over-representation in the ACT criminal justice system*, Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Educations and Research, University of Technology Sydney. ISBN 9780645469943. 453 pages

LEGAL STRATEGIES HUB

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and legal professionals, to effect change in the Australian legal system.



Photo: Consult with UN Youth Australia's Aotearoa Tour Delegation, September 2025.

This year the Legal Strategies Hub remained focused on the development of a Bench Book for the federal courts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice, a project commissioned by the Australasian Institute for Judicial Administration (AIJA) and funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Following the completion of consultations during 2024, this year's focus was on producing the content for the Bench Book. This has included engaging experts for review and feedback on content. We have also commenced Phase 3 of the project, which is focused on the development of PDF and Website versions of the Benchbook for publication in June 2026, to be hosted on the AIJA website.

This Bench Book project seeks to elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to contribute to improvements in the way that judges, lawyers and policy-makers engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice issues. It is also the first of its kind at the Federal level, and will be a publicly available resource. The project hopes to highlight and redress some of the unconscious biases faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities seeking access to justice through the courts in Australia. In 2025 more than half of the content of the Bench Book was drafted and the team are on track for its publication in 2026 in line with the project deadline.

STAFF

- > Craig Longman, Professor of Practice
- > Alison Whittaker, Senior Researcher
- > Michelle Toy, Research Fellow
- > Latoya Rule, Research Fellow
- > Zara Horton, Research Assistant



Artwork: "Our Ways" for the Benchbook by Kirsten Gray.



What I valued most about my time at the Jumbunna Legal Strategies Hub, was the chance to produce research which directly informs legal practice & decision making. Working on the bench book showed how community-centred methods, culturally safe engagement, and rigorous analysis can be translated into practical tools that shape practice and policy. Collaborating with lived-experience experts and a purpose-driven team sharpened my research skills, encouraged creative approaches, and taught me to prioritise community leadership in problem-solving. I left convinced that many solutions already exist. The challenge is implementing them. I will bring these perspectives and approaches to future roles, applying community-centred thinking and creative problem-solving across different professional contexts.” Maryam Mahvash, Research Assistant

Following legislative changes to the Commonwealth Fisheries Management Act in 2017, Commonwealth government agencies now have an obligation to take into account the interests of Indigenous groups when making decisions about how Commonwealth fisheries are managed.

Working with a group of capable Indigenous experts and community leaders with relevant knowledge and experience in fisheries and Sea Country matters the project aims to develop a strategy to guide effective engagement between Indigenous fishing interests and management agencies responsible for Commonwealth fisheries, and with applicability to appropriate state and local level processes.

The team has worked with relevant government agencies to build clear commitments to engaging with Indigenous groups in the process of managing Commonwealth fisheries. Prof. Craig Longman provided legal expertise in relation to the legal obligations of the Commonwealth in relation to Commonwealth fisheries and the need for Commonwealth consultation with Indigenous communities.



“Since 2023 The Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA) has enjoyed a valuable working relationship with the team from the Legal Strategies Hub [of the Jumbunna Institute] as they develop the AIJA’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the Law Bench Book. Throughout the process the Jumbunna team has been committed, responsive and consultative and the AIJA is eagerly awaiting the release of this significant resource in 2026. Jumbunna understands and works with cultural authority and those who hold it.” Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration

LOOKING FORWARD

deaths in
custody clinic
litigation
country

PUBLICATIONS

- > Longman, C and Behrendt, L. (2025 forthcoming). Side by Side: Partnering with First Nations Communities in Strategic Lawyering in E. Birchall (Ed.), Strategic Human Rights Litigation in Australia.
- > Whittaker, A. (2025) Why language matters for deaths in custody in Criminal Laws: Materials and Commentary on Criminal Law and Process in New South Wales, 8th ed.
- > Whittaker, A. (2025 forthcoming) So White So What in Meanjin: First Nations Writing.

FIRST NATIONS LAND JUSTICE HUB

“Country is a living entity, a teacher, a source of knowledge and authority unconstrained by the power structures of colonisation.”

Paddy Gibson’s post-doctoral research project *Black Power – Workers’ Power: Socialists, Trade Unions and the Aboriginal rights movement 1946-72* is documenting important and inspiring stories of activism that defeated the racist “Protection” system.

In 2025 Paddy has helped to uncover the largely hidden history of the Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League in the 1950s and 60s. The League was led by courageous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activists, many of whom were heavily involved in the trade union movement and the Communist Party. Working closely with non-Indigenous allies, the League stood up to extreme police persecution and violence to expose the injustices suffered by Aboriginal people being segregated on reserves.

Paddy’s work has involved extensive archival research locating source materials produced by the League, and visits to Cairns to share primary source documents and photos with families who were involved, preparing a research base for a documentary film project.

Paddy also worked closely with legendary Aboriginal unionist Ray Peckham to document his role in the fight against the NSW Aborigines Welfare Board. Sadly, Uncle Ray passed away in June, aged 95. Work done by Paddy along with Prof. Wendy Bowles and John Nolan on Ray’s biography was read in a eulogy at Ray’s funeral and published in a five-part series honouring Ray’s life in the Dubbo Photo News.

Photo: Ray Peckham addresses a union meeting at the Tallawarra power station to build support for Aboriginal rights, February 1960.

STAFF

- > [Jason De Santolo, Professor](#)
- > [Paddy Gibson, Postdoctoral Research Fellow](#)
- > [Callum Clayton-Dixon, Ern MacDonald On-Country Research Fellow](#)
- > [Jacqueline Katona, Research Fellow](#)
- > [Birrigan Dunn-Velasco, Administrative Assistant](#)

In 2025, the First Nations Land Justice Hub worked collaboratively to develop new research support methods for Elders undertaking doctoral studies. This case study is generously contributed to by respected Elder, poet and activist Uncle Ken Canning, supervised by Paddy Gibson.

Uncle Ken, who helped create Jumbunna Research alongside the late Aunty Frances Peters-Little, began his doctorate in his 70s with determination. It has been a privilege for the team to support him, ensure Jumbunna Research’s resources were available throughout his candidature, and help amplify his incredible intellect and life story.

His research project, “Aspects of Freedom,” is an autobiographical podcast documenting his experiences of incarceration, from a boys’ home at age 10 to almost a decade in Boggo Road prison in the 1970s.

In his first year, Uncle Ken developed his methodology and examined existing literature primarily through listening, due to glaucoma. He draws on audiobooks, podcasts and oral storytelling traditions, dictating his analysis for transcription and review with supervisors.

As Uncle Ken explains:

“I cannot read printed books easily because of glaucoma, but that is not the full story. I have chosen to build my literature review and analytic process around listening because it connects me to my culture and to the way I have always learnt. As a child I sat with my great-grandmother and heard her stories about our people, about her own history—things you would never find in a schoolroom. I was illiterate until the age of twenty-two. Everything I learnt in those early years was absorbed by listening, reflecting, and holding on to words. This mirrors my broader research output, where the podcast is central. Just as I listen to others’ voices, I want others to listen to mine—to hear the anger, the grief, the humour, the survival that cannot be carried fully on the page”.

We are excited to see the development of this distinct methodology and hopeful that it can contribute to creating a research environment and practice that will encourage more Elders to undertake doctoral research and document and share their vital knowledge.



This project will bring to light the untold story of the extreme violence practiced within these institutions in the 1960s and 70s, and the impact on body and mind. It will also demonstrate how aspects of freedom can be gained even in the most oppressive conditions. I will share and reflect on strategies I utilised to find freedom, both while incarcerated and post-release. This will include my writing practice, particularly short-stories and poems, my escapes from custody, acts of humour and defiance in the face of the prison regime and experiences on the streets fighting for justice for my people.” Uncle Ken



LOOKING FORWARD



PUBLICATIONS

- > Gibson, P. (2025). Aboriginal leadership and anti-fascist protest in Australia. *The Helsinki Notebooks*, 2(4).
- > Gibson, P., Bowles, W., & Nolan, J. (2025, November). Ray Peckham (1929–2025): Communist, trade unionist and Wiradjuri leader. *Labour History*, 129, 227–234.
- > Gibson, P. (2025, Summer). The communist-led campaign to stop a “punitive expedition” in Arnhem Land in 1933. *Radical Currents, Labour Histories*, 4, 13–15.

INDIGENOUS ARCHIVES AND DATA STEWARDSHIP HUB

Indigenous self-determination requires Living Indigenous Archives that enable community control of data, knowledge, and memory.

STAFF

- > Dr Kirsten Thorpe, Associate Professor
- > Dr Lauren Booker, Postdoctoral Fellow
- > Dr Monica Galassi, Research Fellow
- > Emma Ramsy, Research Officer

Community-controlled archives that dismantle colonial models and reconnect materials with communities are essential for Indigenous wellbeing. The Hub is establishing Indigenous Librarianship and Indigenous Critical Archives as distinct scholarly fields, contributing foundational scholarship, professional development, and network-building that positions Indigenous perspectives as central to archival and library theory and practice. This work is advanced through publications, research projects, and sector partnerships.

In partnership with the Australian Library and Information Association ALIA, the Hub launched the online course *Respect and Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Cultures and Country in Australian Libraries*, translating research into practical action across the sector and strengthening engagement and collaboration across the knowledge ecosystem.

The Hub completed the *Find & Connect Web Resource: Stolen Generations project with Find and Connect* (University of Melbourne). The project was survivor-led by a First Nations Reference Group, which guided the development of the Stolen Generations Survivors Style Guide for Descriptive Practice to support reparative description and establish a Survivor-led approach. By aligning research with sector needs and leveraging the Hub's capabilities, this project



Photo (L-R): Kirsten Thorpe, Jennifer O'Neal, Monica Galassi, Lauren Booker.

demonstrated how collaborative research partnerships can create solutions that directly address systemic gaps in archival practices.

Other key projects in 2025 included archival research for the Sydney Harbour Trust on Aboriginal men incarcerated as convicts on Cockatoo Island/Wareamah between 1839 and 1869; a new partnership with the Healing Foundation focused on Better Access to Stolen Generations Records; and the Tracking Tandanya project, which, in partnership



Developing Respect and Recognition: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning for the Library Sector with Jumbunna has been a proud collaboration. This course builds a national baseline of respect and recognition of Indigenous peoples, Cultures and Country, strengthening cultural capability and creating a more inclusive and respectful library profession across Australia.”
Cathie Warburton, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) CEO

with Monash University and the Australian Society of Archivists, established a baseline for the implementation of the International Council on Archives (ICA) Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration in Australia.

Supported by the Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF), another key project undertaken by the Hub was the evaluation of the Aboriginal History Archive established at Victoria University by Professor and activist Gary Foley. This evaluation addresses a critical gap in archival studies by exploring how to measure the value and impact of community archives through Indigenous methodologies and research approaches.

Finally, through our international partnership with Washington State University in the United States, as the NSW Australian Mukurtu Hub, we also launched a Mukurtu CMS series to promote digital Living Indigenous Archives on Country, strengthening community-controlled archiving practices. By centring community accountability and Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles in these initiatives, we amplified shared values with our supporters and deepened relationships that enhance the impact and sustainability of community-led archival research.

In 2025, the Clegg Foundation Project *Preserving Cultural Heritage: The Role of Indigenous Data Sovereignty* advanced research, leadership, and sector engagement.

The Hub is advancing research and dialogue on Indigenous Data Sovereignty in archival practice, supporting community control of data, knowledge, and memory and Indigenous rights to own and manage cultural heritage materials through culturally appropriate protocols. The Hub enacts this work locally, nationally, and internationally through community engagement, research partnerships, and professional networks.

Building international momentum, the Hub hosted Assistant Professor Jennifer O'Neal (University of Oregon) and established the International Indigenous Archival Sovereignty and Data Research Group (IASDRG), launching a collaborative book project and sustained research exchange between Indigenous scholars across Australia and the United States. Nationally, the Hub marked the 30th anniversary of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and

Information Resources Network (ATSILIRN) Protocols with a symposium for GLAM sector leaders, demonstrating the Protocols' foundational and enduring influence through a report to be released in 2026.

The Clegg Foundation Project enabled the Hub to develop the *Strength Through Unity Reconciliation Festival Anniversary Exhibition* at the Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum with Knowledge Holder Brad Steadman. On display in late 2025, the exhibition recovered and returned archival footage and photographs from the original 1995 festival that had never been shared with the community, enabling dialogue, cultural continuity, and truth-telling on Country.



Working with Jumbunna on the Strength through Unity Festival's 30th Anniversary Archival Research Project, the event was reimagined to connect generations by sharing stories. Stories of an event that happened in a place that, through the process of following, learning and transmitting knowledge piece by piece, led to and revealed Brewarrina as the celebration ground. It connected across generations of people as the flow of the river, of intersection and interaction as a unified practice which was, is, and will be understood and known as an ongoing collaboration and participation in the present's future history." Brad Steadman, Festival Co-organiser

Festival logo designed by Brad Steadman

LOOKING FORWARD

Living Archives Stewardship
 HDR Research
Community
 Indigenous Data Sovereignty
 Capability Community-Control
Archive
 Strengthen toolkits
 Leadership
Country Critical Methodologies

PUBLICATIONS

- > Thorpe, K. (2025). Living Indigenous Archives. Routledge.
- > Barrowcliffe, R., Thorpe, K., Sentance, N., Booker, L., & Faulkhead, S. (2025). Honouring Indigenous knowledges: Guidance for respectful practice and attribution in academic works. In B. Bennett & K. Menzel (Eds.), *Indigenous research knowledges and their place in the academy* (Vol. 7, pp. 15-29). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-927034_2
- > Thorpe, K., Booker, L., & Galassi, M. (2025). Introducing the Indigenous Archives Collective position statement on the right of reply to Indigenous knowledges and information held in archives. In *The Indigenous right of reply to archives* (1st ed., pp. 14). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/97810034812252>

CULTURAL RESILIENCE HUB

Making sure our community is supported and nurtured.

The 'The Centring Journal'-The Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship is a distinguished ARC award that each year supports an outstanding woman researcher in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences to lead a major five-year research program, provide national academic leadership and act as an Ambassador for Women in Research by creating mentoring and career development opportunities for early career women scholars across Australia. This was awarded to Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt who engaged Prof. Juanita Sherwood and Dr Gemma Sentance and the Cultural Resilience Hub in the program.



I just wanted to say a massive thank you for supporting and nurturing the KFF this year, we really appreciate your leadership and innovation in this space. It has been so enriching coming down to yarn and learn different things, it just expands my knowledge and I always walk away feeling so grounded for which I am very grateful." Gemma Sentance

STAFF

- > Pauline Clague, Industry Associate Professor
- > Ashley Little, Research Assistant

This year the Cultural Resilience Hub were engaged in the program to sustain and support communal mentorship and a way of mentoring that is based on cultural values. The Cultural Resilience Hub engaged in regular check-ins and helped lead cultural workshops on weaving, communal gathering, possum cloaks for graduation. Our final contribution was the creation of a centring journal for our community of women Academics in the Indigenous space. This journal was designed to help reach them in their own time to look after themselves and give some tools and learning that will culturally ground them.

This work has been crucial in our work to make sure that our community is supported and nurtured even if they are not on campus, as a large number of our Academic Researchers are around the country, working on Indigenous-led research in various communities.





Thank you for the possum cloak, made me cry. It was so lovely to have my story so beautifully designed on the possum Cloak”. Aunty Rita Wright – Coota Survivor

From 1912 until 1969 the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls in New South Wales operated as a state-run institution in which Aboriginal girls were forcibly removed from their families under the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act 1909 and its successors. The girls were trained for domestic service and separated from their families, culture, language and Country.

In 2013 a group of former residents established the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation to reclaim their stories, assert agency, create healing networks, reconnect to culture, mob, Country and language and elevate the legacy of their experience and that of their families. The Corporation supports reconnection to culture, mob, Country and language, provides spiritual and traditional healing supports, facilitates collective healing events and gatherings, builds trauma-informed networks specific to the Stolen Generations, delivers truth-telling and education sessions about the Stolen Generations, raises awareness of inter-generational trauma, organises exhibitions, films and community events, develops educational resources, undertakes survivor-led change and policy advocacy, preserves archival material including a digital archive, and offers social emotional and spiritual support including advocacy for interactions with government and non-government services.

The Cultural Resilience Hub supported the recording of a high-quality audio-visual survivor stories, ensuring it is suitable for long-term preservation and future reproduction. A written account of the survivor’s story was also developed to support respectful, enduring preservation and sharing over time.



Photo: Industry Associate Prof. Pauline Clague.

SORRY DAY PARTICIPANTS

We have also received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the broader community. Here’s some of the feedback from attendees:



It gave my children a chance to meet their great Nan and to understand the importance of us coming together and healing.”

“I felt like I could participate in something that would honour my great grandmother’s story, but also represent and stand up for all Stolen Generations children, in some way”.

“There was a strong balance of learning, healing and family, and it was an honour to be part of it.”

LOOKING FORWARD



CREATIVE OUTPUTS

- > P Clague and A Little, Centring Journal, Wellbeing booklet and Care Package, created for Kathleen Fitzpatrick Fellow
- > Speaking Out: ABC Radio: “Rewriting OUR history: Using film to expose our hidden histories, 28th November <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/speakingout/speaking-out/105872330>

CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND WORK

“CIPW: Our leadership, our knowledge, guiding better workplaces for our communities”



In 2025, CIPW conducted Gari Yala 2, the second iteration of its groundbreaking national survey of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Gari Yala – which means ‘speak the truth’ in Wiradjuri language – is Australia’s only national survey of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples’ workplace experiences designed and done by mob, for mob.

In all, 1158 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers filled in the survey to tell truth about what they were actually experiencing in workplaces across the country.

Their experiences will be shared in the *Gari Yala 2* report, which will cover:

- > How often do Indigenous workers experience racism at work?
- > How culturally safe are workplaces for Indigenous workers?
- > What actions are organisations taking to provide culturally safe workplaces, prevent racism, and provide workplace support when it happens?
- > What actions *should* employers and government be taking to provide fair and safe workplaces for Indigenous workers?
- > The report will be officially launched on International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) in March 2026.

Above: Photo taken at the launch of the Centre for Indigenous People and Work in May 2025 and includes from left to right: Katie Kiss AHRC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Josh Gilbert and Professor Nareen Young from CIPW, Aunty Glendra Stubbs Jumbunna’s Elder-in-Residence, CIPW Advisory Panel Members Karen Illes Founder of Legal Practice Violet Co, and Jocelyn King, Chair of First Australians Capital.

Below: National Anti-Racism Roundtable on Racism at Work in Parliament House in Canberra, convened by Professor Nareen Young, Australia’s Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman, and Australian Council of Trade Unions President Michele O’Neil. Attended by academics, community leaders and social justice advocates from across Australia, it called for a national inquiry into racism in Australian workplaces.



SPOTLIGHT

REFORMING FUNDING: EMBEDDING SELF-DETERMINATION IN JUSTICE

REFORMING FUNDING: EMBEDDING SELF-DETERMINATION IN JUSTICE

One of the many ways relationships of power and control are imposed on First Nations people by the state is via government funding models. First Nations people identify being excluded from meaningful participation in government decisions about funding of programs, services and other initiatives impacting their lives. This undermines self-determination and is less likely to deliver genuinely positive First Nations outcomes.

Hub projects are exploring strategies and mechanisms for increasing First Nations control over funding. These centre on reforms designed to improve justice outcomes, but other important objectives are in sight, including shifting power.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT AND FUNDING REFORM

The Hub has long involvement with justice reinvestment. Justice reinvestment is a framework for reducing First Nations contact with the criminal legal system via self-determination, culture, place-based and data driven approaches and systems reform.

More than 35 First Nations communities around the country are currently funded to work with justice reinvestment, including via government-controlled grant programs. Total available grant funding is seen as insufficient, particularly when compared to the significant resources committed to prisons, policing and other parts of the criminal legal system. Communities seek reforms to levels and other aspects of justice reinvestment funding via **reinvestment**.

Hub staff have previously supported First Nations communities in NSW to define what reinvestment means to them. Communities identify wanting to lead or share in decisions about funding likely to impact First Nations contact with the legal system. They want more resourcing for preventative responses to drivers of this contact; increased, sustained and secure funding to scale up justice reinvestment as an approach; and reduced expenditure on the criminal legal system as it impacts First Nations communities.¹

The Hub is currently developing options for a technical model for reinvestment in NSW, informed by these definitions and further community input.

Questions we are exploring include how an Aboriginal-governed 'JR Fund' might be established to increase community control over justice reinvestment resourcing and from where in government this resourcing might be drawn.

The project has a Steering Group with NSW Government representation to help build understanding and engagement



How do you grow up a kid Moree way? That's what reinvestment is. Community gets to set the goals [to inform funding decisions].” Moree participant, NSW reinvestment project

“My brother was locked up at 8-9. When he was 50yrs old he got court-ordered rehab. Why did it take 40 odd years? Think about all the money spent locking him up over the years, as well as the human cost.” Mt Druitt participant, NSW reinvestment project

necessary for advancing this important systems reform. Aboriginal-led organisations and communities are also represented on the Steering Group and the project team, which also has input from Macquarie and Sydney University academics.

In the first quarter of 2026 the Australian Public Policy Institute, as project funder, will be publishing our Insights Paper outlining reinvestment model options.

ARC-FUNDED NATIONAL EVALUATION OF JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Hub staff continue to work with **Justice Reinvestment Network Australia (JRNA)**, a body we initially convened in 2017 to bring together justice reinvestment communities and advocates. In 2025, JRNA became a community-controlled entity and a member of the national Coalition of Peaks, solidifying its key role in advancing systems reform

The Hub, JRNA and the **Indigenous Futures Centre** at the University of Queensland have been funded through an **Australian Research Council Indigenous Discovery** grant to complete a three-year national evaluation of justice reinvestment. *Measuring What Matters: First Nations Community-Led National Evaluation of Justice Reinvestment* will be grounded in the experience and knowledge of communities tackling justice issues and outcomes.

Hub staff highlighted interest in advancing reinvestment nationally in our previous work co-designing the Federal Government's National Justice Reinvestment Program.² Learnings from NSW reinvestment projects are being shared

[1] Allison, F (2022) Redefining Reinvestment: An opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment, Just Reinvest NSW. [2] Allison, F (2023) Design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program, Jumbunna, UTS.



Photo (L to R): Brendan Horowhitu, Aysha Kerr, Justin Power, Kaylene Ball, Krystal Lockwood.

with JRNA and others in the national space. These will also inform outcomes of our ARC-funded evaluation, including via questions exploring sustainability of justice reinvestment in Australia (see Q.3, key research questions right).

VICTORIAN TREATY PROCESS AND FUNDING REFORM

The Hub is currently working with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) to explore how self-determination over justice matters can be advanced through funding reform, particularly via Treaty in Victoria.

The Yoorook Justice Commission has recommended that the Victorian Government should give full effect to the right of self-determination in the criminal legal system. This should occur through negotiation of interim agreements within the Treaty Process that transfer 'decision-making power, authority, control and resources' in the legal system to First Peoples.³

The Hub is to develop options for reform to support implementation of this recommendation. As a starting point, similar to the above definitions of reinvestment, VALS has identified self-determination in a justice funding context as incorporating increased investment in Aboriginal-led, prevention-focused approaches and greater Aboriginal control over funding more broadly.

Input will be sought from stakeholders that include members of Victoria's Aboriginal Justice Caucus on how to achieve these and related objectives in a Victorian context.

Learnings from this project about Treaty as a mechanism for achieving funding reforms should help inform reinvestment strategies in NSW, which is now on the pathway to Treaty development.

[3] Yoorook Justice Commission (2023) Yoorook for Justice: Report into Victoria's Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems, Recommendation 2.

QUESTION 1

What outcomes and mechanisms have First Nations communities developed through justice reinvestment?

Q1 aims to understand key elements of justice models developed by First Nations communities, building a framework that supports advancement of self-determined and community-based justice initiatives.

QUESTION 2

What are the factors and preconditions for positive outcomes of justice reinvestment?

Q1 aims to identify the contextual factors that constrain or enable the implementation of First Nations justice models. Recognising the diversity of First Nations communities, each ?? community will inform "what works in which circumstances and for whom"?

QUESTION 3

What factors can/have been used to ensure sustainability of justice reinvestment?

Q3 aims to identify pathways for sustainability of self-determined First Nations justice models.

QUESTION 4

How can self-determined First Nations justice models inform justice policy and practice?

Q4 is future focused, identifying how Indigenous models of justice can influence justice policy and practises to contribute to good outcomes for First Nations peoples.



'Our Ways' by Kirsten Gray

Kirsten Gray is a proud Muruwari & Yuwaalaraay woman with family connections through her mother's line to Angledool and Brewarrina in north-western NSW. Kirsten is a mother to three young children, and an artist and research fellow at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.

In the piece you can see the laws and governance systems that lie at the heart of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have and continue to maintain our laws, lores and customs as we have done since time immemorial. Land, water and natural resources can be seen in this piece. It pays homage to the land, water and skies that have and continue to nurture and nourish our peoples. You can see how interconnected we are with each other and with country in this piece. The alternate reading of this piece speaks to the way in which western legal systems have enacted laws to control our use of land, water and food sources such as fish and abalone. This has had a drastic impact on our way of life but does not diminish us or the systems and connections which make us who we are as the First Peoples of this land.

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