



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

The University of Sydney

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Ngarangun: ‘we learn, think and listen together’

Indigenous Research Strategy

We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.



On the cover
***Garabara* (2018)**
Robert Andrew

Located at the entrance to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Building, the word Garabara, from the language of the Gadigal, means to sing, to dance and to conduct ceremony. In Australian English it has become the word 'corroboree'.

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Indigenous Research Strategy

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Foreword

As one of world's leading universities, the University of Sydney plays an important role in providing people from all backgrounds with opportunities to realise their potential and pursue research which advances our knowledge and challenges the status quo.

The University has committed to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation at all levels of education, research, teaching and professional services. Work to increase Indigenous participation began with the University's first Indigenous strategy, *Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu* and will continue with the 2021-25 '*One Sydney, Many People*' Indigenous strategy.

The *Ngarangun* Indigenous Research Strategy will support these strategies and is designed to act as a guide to help the University become a leader in futures-thinking Indigenous research. *Ngarangun* will play an important role in helping the University increase the number of Indigenous researchers and the diversity of Indigenous research conducted across the University.

This Strategy represents the vision of a diverse range of stakeholders. I would like to thank all the communities and individuals involved for their input and efforts during the consultation and drafting stage of the Strategy.

Professor Duncan Ivison
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)



Statement of Intent

The intention of this initial strategy, Ngarangun, is to lay the foundation for a long-term view across generations.

The development of the Strategy has been led by the Director, Indigenous Research within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), in collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services). Responsibility for the Strategy and its implementation will continue to be shared between the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services).

The workplan for the initial Strategy will be in place until the end of the 2016–2020 University Strategic Plan and provide the basis for the interoperability of this Strategy with others with which it interconnects. In particular, it will inform and be informed by the new strategy of the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services).

Ngarangun means ‘we learn, think and listen together’ in the language of the Gadigal, on whose Country the Camperdown campus of the University of Sydney is located. This language is the language of all Aboriginal clans located in the Sydney Basin.

Professor Jakelin Troy
Director, Indigenous Research





Image: *SPINE 3* (2018), Dale Harding

Introduction

Ngarangun will provide the University of Sydney with the capacity to enhance and increase work with Indigenous communities in Australia and worldwide to identify the greatest challenges they face into the future.

Indigenous populations are growing rapidly and continue, on all indicators, to be the most disadvantaged people in the world. It is only with strategic research of the highest quality that communities will be able to interrogate these challenges, influence decision-makers and funders, and create for themselves the futures to which all aspire.

The University of Sydney is the oldest and one of the most influential universities in Australia and has an obligation to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to engage in community-driven, high impact research. This will require strategic activity and investment by the University to work with communities, to define and find solutions to problems and the research questions that Indigenous people want investigated.

The University will provide the physical infrastructure, technology and collegial environment required to attract, and retain talented and innovative Indigenous research teams. It will bring together both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers in a supportive environment that will create the highest quality research that will meet all our targets for excellence.

These research teams will leverage existing partnerships and strategically develop new partnerships across the University and with other research institutes, government and industry.

Indigenous communities will have a key role in the design and delivery of research. Our research will ensure engagement, impact and sustainability by responding to real-world, real-time issues. We will create an interdisciplinary research and education program that will nurture and grow our Indigenous researchers.

The results of our efforts will influence public debate and shape public policy to ensure global societal benefits not only for Indigenous communities, but for all of humanity.

Guiding Philosophy and Background

The University will work hand in hand with Indigenous communities to ensure that our research authentically engages with the issues identified by communities as needing research attention.

We will also have an effort focused on the future that, while not neglecting the past, provides communities with solutions to current and upcoming concerns. These principles are reflected in the Vision and Mission statements.

Ngarangun, the University of Sydney's Indigenous Research Strategy, is a strategy for all researchers. It is the initiative that will deliver the University's objectives in Indigenous research for all who are involved in Indigenous research, whether or not they are Indigenous. It will also support Indigenous researchers whether or not they are undertaking Indigenous research.

The University is bound to meet targets in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research under the Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu Strategy, including to create an Indigenous research strategy for the University. Ngarangun builds on existing initiatives at the University, including the specifically Indigenous 'Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu Strategy'. Ngarangun was developed by the University Executive Research Committee Indigenous Research Strategy Working Group following extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in 2016-17.



Image: Attendees at Sydney Knowledge Feast and Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference December 2019

The Director, Indigenous Research conducted wide field consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia that have provided us with strategic priority areas for collaboration.

These are the Strategic Themes:

- Indigenous languages and cultures
- health
- governance

The development of the Strategy was supported by a short project to begin mapping the Indigenous research effort at the University of Sydney. The University's Strategy Office has also prepared an analysis of our Indigenous research effort. It is very clear that the main efforts lie in the Faculty of Medicine and Health and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Our Strategic Objectives are focused on creating an enduring program of research and education that responds directly to research and higher degree education needs identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Attaining these objectives, implemented through an operational plan, is achievable and aligned with the University's strategic pursuit of ongoing national and global success, Indigenous community engagement in research and the creation of multidisciplinary, collaborative, impactful, industry-responsive research.

This document has been developed with reference to the University of Sydney 2016–2020 Strategy discussion papers and Strategic Plan and the Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu Strategy which is the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Integrated Strategy.

“Enquiry is a relational and collective story of our knowledges and of our worlds. For some time, that knowledge and story has been taken, appropriated and at times used against our people. We now have a world where research can occur in a shared and equitable way. Ngarangun gives importance to our voices and places us and our ancient stories and knowledges at the centre of our research.”

Our Commitment

The following vision, mission and strategic themes underpin these commitments:

Our Vision

Our Mission

Our strategic themes



To position the University of Sydney as the leader in futures-thinking Indigenous research that is demonstrated to be responsive to community identified needs and which has high impact and engagement and industry, in its broadest sense, focused in Australia and overseas.

To support all Indigenous research and those undertaking Indigenous research, whether or not they are Indigenous.

To support Indigenous researchers to be the best they can in their chosen field or discipline, whether or not it is Indigenous research.

To create a University research program and environment, in partnership with Indigenous communities in Australia and overseas, that will make the University of Sydney the place of choice for Indigenous communities for research.

To ensure that our current and future Indigenous researchers at the University of Sydney are supported to be researchers of excellence, producing high quality research outcomes that demonstrate outstanding engagement and impact.

‘Languages and cultures’, ‘health’ and ‘governance’ were chosen as initial themes because:

- these themes were put forward as particularly important by Indigenous communities
- the University already has strength in these research areas and a capacity for growth
- there is a high level of demonstrated potential for industry engagement and government focus
- there is demonstrated potential to produce research that is high on impact and engagement measures (increased ERA focus), and
- they are also sufficiently broad to encompass a broad range of research.

Objectives

Ngarangun will focus on an initial four objectives that are enablers in the form of scholarships, funding for specific initiatives and structural support.

1. Researcher support and recruitment

Provide career development for Indigenous researchers, tailored to individual needs, and create programs for developing Indigenous research.

| Key success indicators | KPIs |
|--|---|
| Annual initiatives with programs and research student support systems in place | Increase in the number of successful Higher Degree Research (HDR) student completions |
| | HDR students report that they are supported at the University of Sydney and are aware of the University's HDR support programs |
| | Researchers and HDR students have higher media attention |
| | HDR students are supported to produce scholarly academic writing and other research outputs of the highest quality |
| Researcher workshops are provided every year that are targeted at Indigenous research staff and students but which are integrated as part of the existing services for researcher development currently provided by the Research Portfolio | Increase in awarded grants and research funding |
| | Increase in peer reviewed high impact publications |
| Sponsorship and fellowship program to support research activities | Identified fellowships including Indigenous Robinson and Sydney Research Accelerator |
| Established mechanism to enable strategic hires of Indigenous research talent when opportunities emerge | Merit Appointment Scheme and other hiring programs are in place to provide the University with the capacity to hire Indigenous research talent through targeted recruitment |

2. Data Capture

A strategic approach to the capture of Indigenous research quantum that builds on the capacity of the existing research capture by the Research Reporting, Analysis and Data Systems team within the Research Portfolio.

| Key success indicators | KPIs |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Publications profiling | A statistical mechanism is developed to profile and identify Indigenous research, research funding, publications and students |
| Identify Indigenous research funding | |
| Profile HDR students | |
| Dashboard for Indigenous research | Establishment of a dashboard for Indigenous research |
| Data governance strategies | A mechanism is constructed for a fulsome Indigenous data governance procedure |

3. Ethical practice in Indigenous research

Ethical practice in Indigenous research as core business for all researchers.

| Key success indicators | KPIs |
|---|--|
| Clear protocols harmonising the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, National Health and Medical Research Council and other ethics management processes across the University | Academics have demonstrated knowledge about ethical conduct in Indigenous research |
| Academics have demonstrated knowledge about ethical conduct in Indigenous research | Development of a mechanism such as the establishment of an ongoing advisory group to support the management of ethics applications with Indigenous content and to provide considered general advice about the relevance of Indigenous matters to all ethics applications, in collaboration with the Ethics teams within the Research Portfolio |

4. Indigenous Research Hub

The main initiative proposed, to bring the other initiatives into operation, is a multi-disciplinary initiative style 'Indigenous Research Hub' to coordinate the Indigenous research effort at the University and provide mentoring and development for academics and Higher Degree Research students.

The Hub will support all Indigenous research efforts, regardless of discipline, and all people doing Indigenous research, whether or not they are Indigenous. The Hub will also support all Indigenous researchers whether or not they are doing Indigenous research.

The Indigenous Research Hub is to be managed by the Director, Indigenous Research within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and working in close collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services).

The Indigenous Research Hub will have oversight of all the initiatives of the Strategy. However, responsibility for undertaking the individual initiatives will sit with the work areas that are identified as having a program of work that most closely aligns with the initiative. The Hub will also provide specialist Indigenous support to these work areas as initiatives are developed. These are noted against each KPI.

The initiatives in general sit within the work of the Research Portfolio, where the Director, Indigenous Research is located.

Responsibility for recruitment and management of Indigenous research and researchers largely rests with faculties and schools. However, it will be important to consider each initiative as one that has relevance to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services).

| Key success indicators | KPIs |
|--|---|
| A multi-disciplinary hub to host and coordinate Indigenous Research. Mentoring and development for academics and HDR students. A focal point for Faculties and Schools to engage with in developing and supporting Indigenous research and researchers | Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – academic staff members – HDR students – course completions – grants submitted – industry engagements – communities engaging with our researchers and publications – publications, conferences, symposia, research events |

Image: Constellations represented by lights on the boardwalk to Redfern Station



Research Portfolio

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