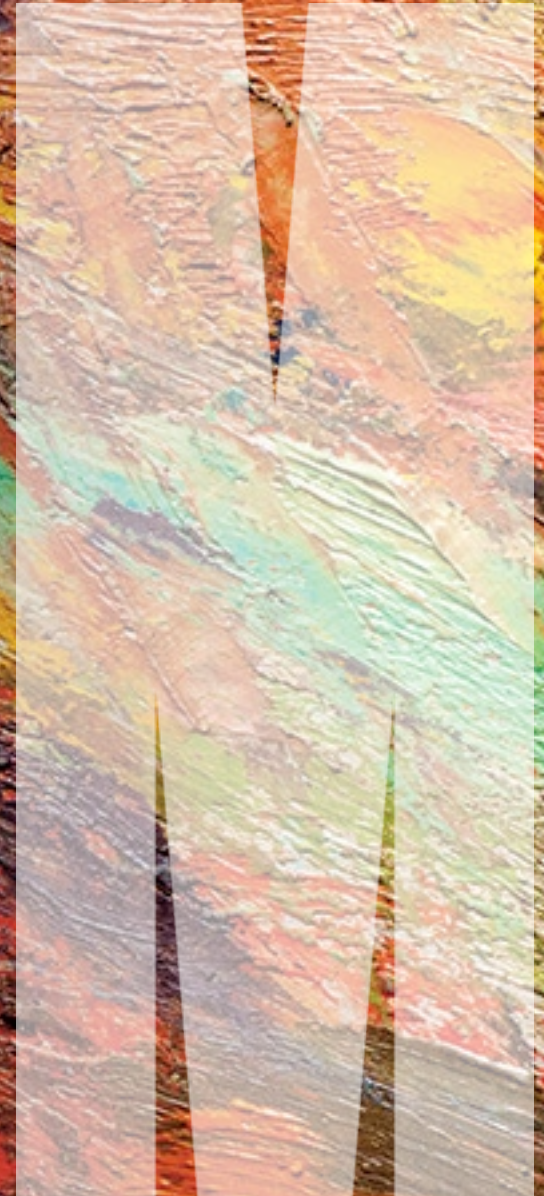




MONASH
University

**INDIGENOUS
RESEARCH
ACTION PLAN**
2021 - 2022



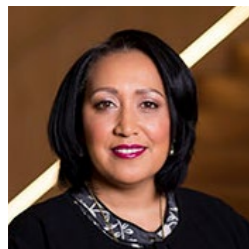
Amid a time of profound social and economic disruption, Monash University is of the firm view that there has never been a more compelling need to foster strong relationships with Indigenous communities across Australia, to build and develop the next generation of Indigenous scholars and thinkers, and to support the advancement of Indigenous knowledges.

We believe the key to Australia's future prosperity and wellbeing lies in a deep connection to land, and a commitment to working with and for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. With collective effort across the University, we will be able to chart a shared destiny that improves the lives of all Australians.

At Monash, we believe this begins with anchoring our work in the principles and practice of Indigenous co-design and fostering the important questions that can lead to new understandings, different solutions, and positive changes.

The inaugural Indigenous Research Action Plan is more than a suite of tactics and strategies. It reflects our ambitions and commitment to working in partnership with and for Indigenous communities. Most importantly, it showcases the contributions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, providing a window into the possibilities and impact that can emerge from asking those important questions and engaging in a genuine process of co-design with communities.

We invite you to consider this evolving story of Indigenous research at Monash and moreover, warmly encourage you to join us in shaping the next chapter of this work.



Professor Jacinta Elston
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)



Professor Marc Parlange
Provost and Senior Vice-President



THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Discovering, creating and sharing knowledge has been at the heart of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander life for more than 70,000 years, well and truly predating Western research frameworks and systems.

As the oldest, continuous living population on Earth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been at the forefront of grappling with the fundamental questions facing society.

Their innovations have transformed our understanding of the environment, have helped foster peace and security, and shaped new forms of art and creativity, among many other contributions.

In advancing Indigenous research within the current context, Monash values and embraces the rich history of Indigenous ways of knowing that came well before the life of the University and which will undoubtedly shape the future of our research and scholarship. This is true of all our disciplines and areas of study, but especially so in

the areas, where we have existing strengths, such as the humanities and social sciences fields.

This also includes a commitment to ensuring Indigenous research is conducted with and for Indigenous people and communities, and wherever possible, being led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and expertise. Monash embraces a genuine partnership approach that fosters mutual learning and respect.

The university takes a proactive approach to building greater awareness about culturally sensitive Indigenous research, including the role of decolonising knowledges and practices.

Monash is committed to Indigenous research, both for the advancement of Indigenous peoples and communities, but also in doing so, in benefit for the whole of Australian and global society.

OUR COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Growing research contributions to address and serve the needs of Indigenous people and communities is a central pillar of the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework: 2019 – 2030.

This pillar sets out a range of strategic priorities, including:

- Targeted investment to support recruitment of Indigenous researchers;
- Refining and upholding best practice Indigenous research systems and practices, including developing a partnership program of Indigenous research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations;
- Establish and maintain a visiting Indigenous researchers program to encourage new national and international collaborations;
- The development of Indigenous research capacity by providing an appropriate environment and resources to encourage Indigenous students to pursue careers in Indigenous research;
- Fostering Indigenous research partnerships both within Monash and across universities;
- Ensuring our Indigenous research has meaningful impact both locally and globally.

The achievement of these priorities will involve close collaboration between various stakeholders at the University and is at the heart of the work advanced by the William Cooper Institute.



“We recognise the vital importance of Indigenous research as a responsibility to Indigenous Peoples and a key contributor to reconciliation.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019 – 2030



“This is not easy or comfortable work, but it is also deeply uplifting. I’m constantly fascinated with the representation of Aboriginal Australians in popular media. My research involves interrogating how these representations have come to be known by those that have written and spoken about Aboriginal people, and what this means for how we find meaning in these representations today.”

In doing so, I’m not only uncovering the past, but interpreting it through different lenses to provide new meaning. It is about finding a way to preserve the humanity in a dry and dusty parchment.”

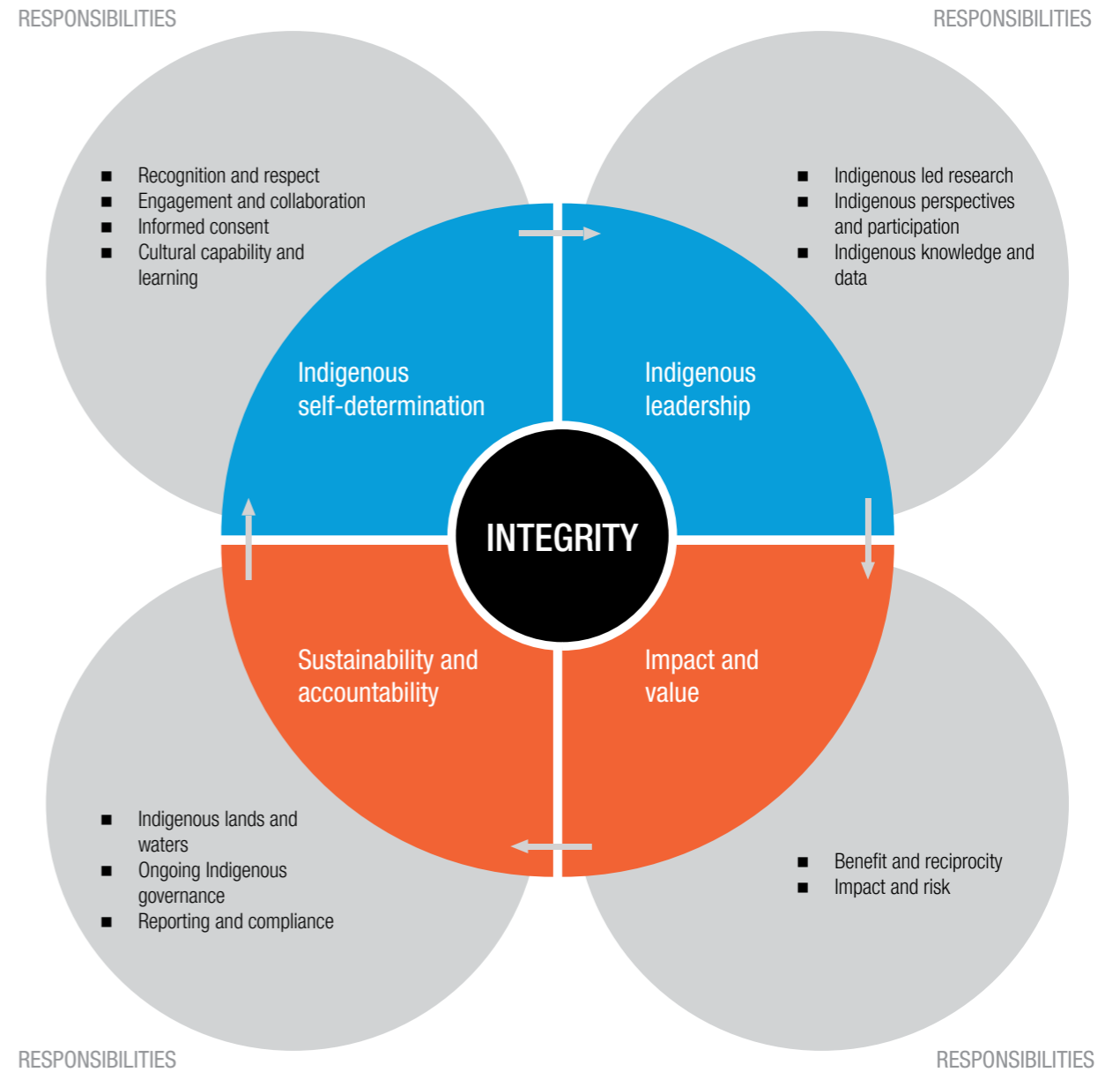
Professor Lynette Russell AM
Director, Monash Indigenous Studies Centre
Faculty of Arts



OUR WAYS OF WORKING

Monash and its researchers apply the highest standards in ethics and rigour when engaging in work with and for Indigenous communities. This includes adhering to guidelines such as the *National Health and Medical Research Council's Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018*, the *Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters*, among other such frameworks.

Furthermore, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has created the *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* to ensure that research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples follows a process of meaningful engagement and mutual benefit between Indigenous individuals and communities and the researcher. Monash believes these principles provide a strong foundation for co-designing research with Indigenous communities for impact.





UNDERPINNED BY THE MONASH RESEARCH AGENDA

Since its inception in 1958, Monash University has changed the world.

The university's Research Agenda outlines four, disciplinary-focused thematic areas which forms a framework for the university's continuing cross-disciplinary research efforts:

- Artificial intelligence and data science
- Better governance and policy
- Health sciences
- Sustainable development

The Research Agenda reinforces the university's commitment to enhancing opportunities for Indigenous research and researchers.

It sets out a blueprint for improving upon the excellent fundamental investigator-led research carried out by the university and ensuring that research discoveries are translated into real-world solutions.

In the context of Indigenous research, the Research Agenda outlines a range of opportunities to engage talented Indigenous faculty and students and build enduring partnerships with Indigenous communities, organisations and places.



"We need to champion and build capacity around Indigenous knowledges. My research aims to build Indigenous knowledge about seafood consumption in the Northern Territory, moving beyond a Western biomedical approach."

Not only do I seek to give back to my community, I aim to provide a forum for Aboriginal people to be connected with their nutrition which is central to their way of life. I hope to help advance the understanding of seafood from an Aboriginal perspective and contribute to the limited academic literature and understanding by policymakers and health organisations."

Beau Cubillo (Larrakia and Wadjigan peoples)
PhD student, Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Unit
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences



"Working with and for Indigenous communities is an important part of the process of reconciliation. It's the local experiences, capabilities, and governance structures that are critical to understanding and improving nutritional practices."

An enduring priority of my research approach over the years is to involve key Indigenous people in the conceptualisation and design of projects. This leads to not only better outcomes for the research, but more so for the community."

Associate Professor Julie Brimblecombe
Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Unit
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences



“There is a vital need to understand how to create health services that are culturally safe and responsive for Indigenous people. My research focuses on increasing Indigenous peoples’ access to the health professions and to educate healthcare workers to respectfully engage with Indigenous patients.”

I believe that the path forward needs to be a staunchly anti-racist approach. Healthcare learning and teaching needs to include what Indigenous health service consumers want and include assessment so we can research learning students are gaining. The First Peoples of Australia deserve the utmost respect and cultural safety from this country.”

Professor Karen Adams (Wiradjuri)
Director, Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Unit
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences



“It’s important that we stop incorporating Indigenous perspectives as an exotic add-on or guest lecture. Where relevant, in Australian education and research, Indigenous knowledges and perspectives should be a core part of our teaching and something our students should learn to think about.”

My goal is to demonstrate that Aboriginal knowledges have a place in contemporary education and in society as a whole, and that all knowledges should be accepted. As commonly said by Aboriginal people, we need to ‘grow ears’ or to listen. If more people were able to listen, and understand the value of listening, they would also become more intelligent. Not just academically intelligent, but emotionally intelligent too, about learning how to be in this world.”

Associate Professor John Bradley
Deputy Director, Monash Indigenous Studies Centre
Faculty of Arts



INDIGENOUS MENTORING

Developing lasting Indigenous research capability at Monash is underpinned by a commitment to building the next generation of Indigenous researchers through mentoring and high-quality supervision.

Several faculties have innovative mentoring initiatives in place to support their emerging Indigenous research talent. For example, the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences’ Graduate Research Circle meets monthly to provide peer and vertical mentoring and the Faculty of Arts sponsor weekly peer mentoring sessions for higher degree by research students.

Excitingly, Monash is home to the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Mentoring Fellowship. The Mentoring Fellowship is a residential program for 5-10 Indigenous women early career researchers per year and focuses on creating a support network to help shape their research careers. It draws on the expertise of leading Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, with an emphasis on developing the careers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women researchers in the humanities and social sciences, education and law.

Harnessing the existing successful practice in faculties, the William Cooper Institute will provide tailored mentoring support and additional professional development opportunities for PhD and other higher degree by research students.





“Coming from a large family, art naturally became my sanctuary. I’m passionate about embedding Indigenous cultural practices into the world of academia in the creative arts.”

As blackfella academics, we have a responsibility to assist in decolonising spaces, whilst bringing Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. As Indigenous peoples, relationality to others is an intrinsic attribute. We don’t own knowledge, we transmit knowledge.

I believe that improved Indigenous employment is key to advancing the Indigenous research agenda at Monash. I’m confident in the university’s ability to keep building and improving the capacity of our mobs.”

Dr Brian Martin (Bundjalung, MuruWarri and Kamilaroi peoples)

Associate Dean, Indigenous
Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture



ACTIONS TO ENHANCE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Underpinned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019 – 2030 and the university’s Research Agenda, the Indigenous Research Action Plan outlines the flagship strategies to advance Indigenous research at Monash.

These strategies are not an exhaustive list. In line with changing priorities and directions, the action plan will evolve year on year to meet the needs of Indigenous communities and the university.

In developing this Indigenous Research Action Plan, there is also the recognition that many other initiatives to support Indigenous research are already carried out by individuals, faculties and centres at the university.

This plan aims to build upon these efforts through four targeted areas of action. They include:

- Improving cultural competence
- Investing in Indigenous talent
- Strengthening Indigenous capacity
- Building a community of Indigenous research

Initiatives and strategies to support these areas of action have been co-designed with Indigenous researchers at Monash and drawing on community expertise beyond the University.

Improving cultural competence

- Cultural awareness training embedded across the University
- Tailored “decolonising research” initiative – for early and mid-career researchers

Investing in Indigenous talent

- Identify and expand opportunities for undergraduate Indigenous students to undertake research
- Develop William Cooper Institute doctoral cohort program for emerging Indigenous scholars
- Enhance William Cooper Institute HDR scholarship funding and incentive structure
- Scope an Indigenous Fellowship scheme to invest in high-potential Indigenous researchers

Strengthening Indigenous capacity

- Review of Indigenous ethics processes
- Establish regular monitoring that synthesises active Indigenous researchers, Indigenous authored publications (including with community) and partner grants
- Improve recruitment pathways to grow Indigenous PhDs through pathway scheme and recruitment campaign

Building a community of Indigenous research

- Convene an annual Indigenous Research showcase
- Strengthening partnerships with local Indigenous communities
- Dedicated physical space for PhD students and postdoctoral fellows



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monash.edu/indigenous-australians