



# Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

May 2024 – May 2026



ACADEMY OF  
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN AUSTRALIA



RECONCILIATION  
ACTION PLAN  
INNOVATE



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (the Academy) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work each day, throughout Australia. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, waters, and culture.

We pay respect to the Elders of the Ngunnawal Nation both past and present, on whose ancestral lands our National Office stands and recognise any other peoples and families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

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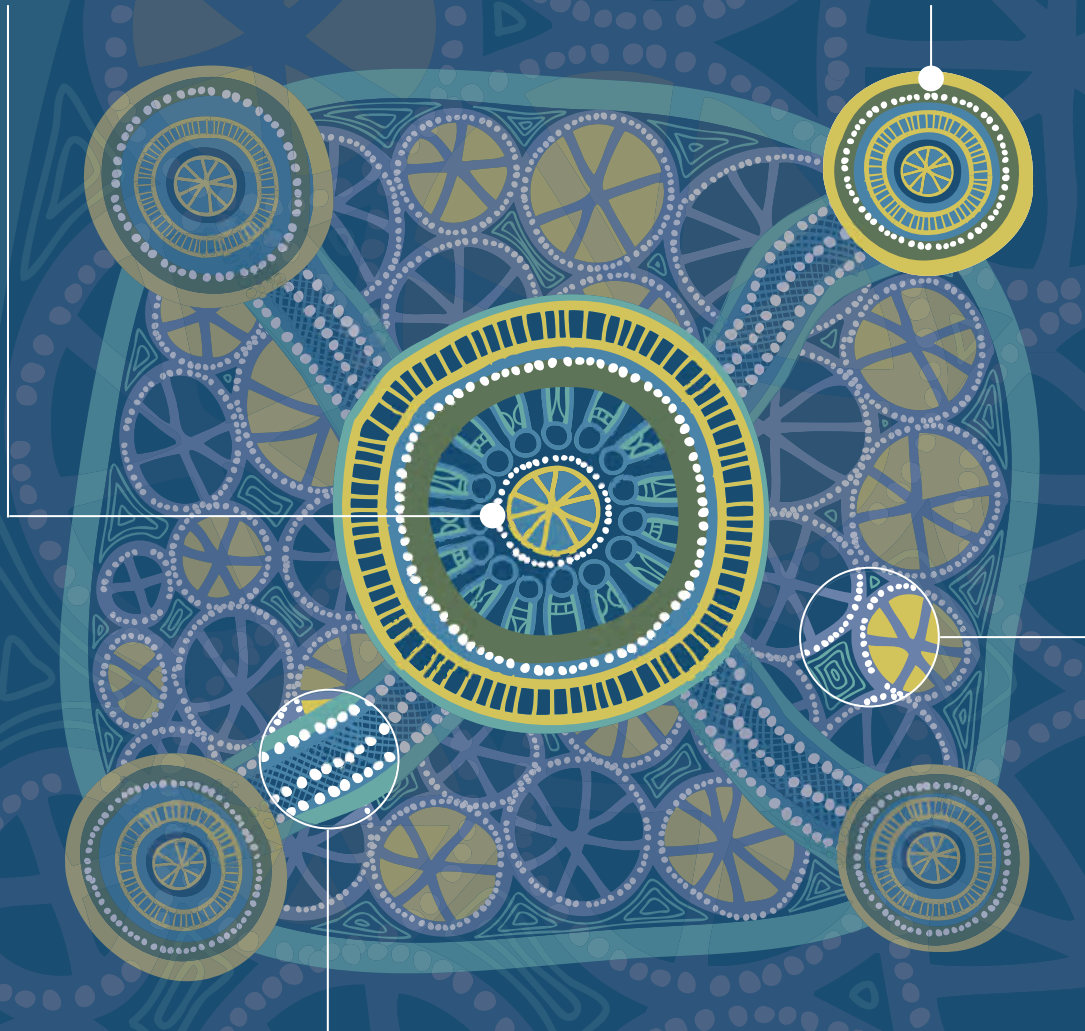
The Academy is not responsible, as a body, for the opinions expressed in any of its publications.

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*The centrepiece of the design represents the work of the Academy and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in this process throughout it's RAP targets*

*This decal is symbolic of the sharing of knowledge and interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Australia.*



*The background element represents social sciences in communities throughout Australia which inform the work of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia.*

*The Academy's connection and sharing of knowledge with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through it's connected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and consultants.*

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia's bespoke artwork was developed by Indigenous design and digital agency ingenious studios, whose stylised design represents the work of the Academy and its Fellows.

The design for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia tells a story about the work of the Academy in improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities through inclusion, knowledge sharing and understanding.



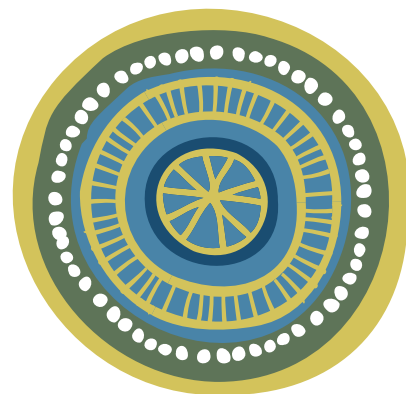


## Our vision for **Reconciliation**

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia envisions a society that fully recognises, values and celebrates the continuing knowledge systems and custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, guided by the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Only when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented and heard at all levels of education, research and leadership in the social sciences, including First Nations scholars elected to the Academy, will we fully realise the significant and inherent value of traditional and contemporary First Nations knowledge to the social systems that shape our lives.

# President's foreword



## We are pleased to present the Academy's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

This plan reaffirms the Academy's commitment to reconciliation and our commitment to working in close collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities as well as other partners within our sector. In following through on the actions in this plan we will continue to reflect on policies and programs that will not only support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars, but also help to centralise their knowledge and perspectives within our academic discourse and practices.

As a sector, we need to do more to facilitate engagement and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the social sciences at all levels, from school education through to senior academic pathways. We need programs and policies that will create mutual benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as our educational, professional and academic institutions.

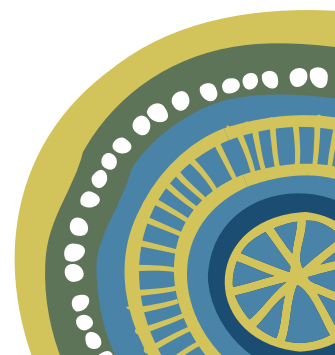
Since the launch of our inaugural Reflect RAP in 2021, the Academy has made significant strides towards our reconciliation goals, including a steadily growing number of First Nations scholars within our Fellowship, deeper engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars and institutions, and a substantial new grant program supporting early- and mid-career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

There is still much work to be done. Understanding and reconstructing a groundwork for respectful civil discourse following the outcome of the 2023 Voice Referendum is a key role for the social sciences, as is ensuring common understanding and protocols regarding Indigenous data sovereignty and epistemologies.

Our role extends beyond fostering representation; it involves advocating for systemic changes that respect and integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge across the wider academic and professional spectrum. As President, I am personally committed to leading our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, ensuring that our efforts are deeply integrated into all facets of the Academy's operations.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our Fellows and staff whose invaluable contributions have shaped this plan, and I look forward to working alongside the new members of our working group to implement these important initiatives.

Professor Richard Holden FASSA  
President



# Message from the CEO



The Academy acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, water and communities.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

As we introduce our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, it is essential to reflect on the unique position Australia holds as home to the world's oldest continuing culture. The enduring wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and leaders has particular relevance to the many ecological and social challenges that test our resilience and adaptability.

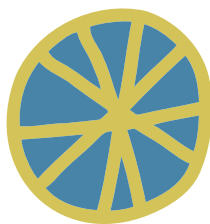
The moral imperative to address past injustices and build a path forward together is clearer than ever and I am enthusiastic about the transformative potential of this plan.

Our Innovate RAP not only reflects a commitment to increasing the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices within our fellowship, but also to ensuring that these voices are central in shaping the future of social sciences in Australia. It is my privilege to work alongside our Fellows and staff to oversee our progress against the actions in the plan.

I would like to acknowledge the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group for their ongoing contributions to this important work and encourage everyone to embrace this plan.

Dr Chris Hatherly  
Chief Executive Officer

# Innovate RAP CEO statement



## Reconciliation Australia commends the Academy of Social Sciences Australia (the Academy) on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for the Academy to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, the Academy will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of

relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. The Academy is part of a strong network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals the Academy's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations to the Academy on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia





*Academy Fellow Professor Tom Calma AO was a guest on the Academy's Seriously Social podcast in 2023 (pictured with podcast host Ginger Gorman).*



## Our business

With over 50 years of history, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia is one of five Learned Academies in Australia.

As an independent, not-for-profit organisation we draw on the expertise of our fellowship to provide practical, evidence-based advice to Australian governments, businesses and communities on important social policy issues. We actively promote understanding of the social sciences and champion excellence across its many fields of learning.

The Academy's national office is based in Canberra, on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples, but our operations, fellowship and reach extends across Australia to encompass the social sciences ecosystem from schools to tertiary education and research. We also actively engage with the international social sciences community through our membership of the International Science Council, management of secretariat of the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils, and our collaborative research grant programs.

The Academy is also piloting an education program to expand teaching and learning materials across social science subjects, that are high quality and free to access for all Australian schools. Respectful civil discourse is a focus of this work, with the first pilot booklet and video, focused on The Uluru Statement from the Heart and Post Referendum conversations for secondary high school students.

We are proud to count 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellows, representing just under 2% of our fellowship. The Academy does not currently employ any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our team of ten, but we continue to ensure our recruitment practices and employment conditions position the Academy as an employer of choice for First Nations peoples.







*The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP with Rechnitz Fund recipient Dr Josephine Bourne.*

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

## Acknowledgement and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a core principle for the Academy – underpinning everything we do.

As the pre-eminent organisation in Australia representing excellence across the social sciences, we have both the responsibility and opportunity to lead by example.

For the Academy, this starts by acknowledging that the social sciences have harmed and excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities over a long period of time. Whether through colonial attitudes in teaching and scholarship, research questions focused primarily on 'deficits', acquisition of data and knowledge without consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty or community benefit, or the pervasive structural barriers that make it so hard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enter and succeed in academia.



*In April 2023 the National office team learnt about Indigenous plant use (Ngunnawal and other nations) at the Australian Botanical Gardens in Canberra.*

With this understanding, we can begin to make a positive difference; through our voice and leadership in the sector, through election of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars to our organisation, through grants and awards to emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and through genuine engagement with those who wish to see change.

Our RAP is championed by our CEO Dr Chris Hatherly and by our President, Professor Richard Holden who Chairs our RAP Working Group and acts as a key connection to the Academy Executive Committee.

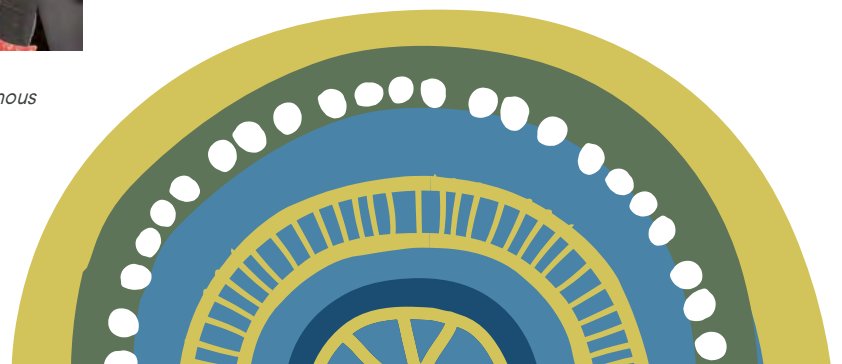
Our RAP Working Group was established in June 2021 and has met six times. It is composed of the Academy President, CEO, National Office team members and Academy Fellows. A highlight for our first year was the appointment of two Aboriginal advisors to the RAP Working Group, Dr Jacob Prehn and Natalie Bryant. Going forward, we will aim to appoint a Torres Strait Islander representative to the group.

### Academy Fellows and advisors

- Professor Richard Holden, Chair, President
- Ms Natalie Bryant
- Emeritus Professor Heather Goodall
- Dr Jacob Prehn
- Emeritus Professor Terri Seddon
- Emeritus Professor Margaret Thornton

### Academy staff:

- Dr Chris Hatherly, CEO
- Ms Cindy Bin Tahal, Education Director
- Michelle Bruce, Fellowship, International & Awards Director
- Ms Bonnie Johnson, Communications Director
- Ms Andrea Verdich, Policy Director





# Our Reconciliation journey

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia has a long history of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and knowledge to help advance and promote understanding, recognition, equity and policy development both within and beyond our disciplines.

One of the Academy's first major research projects starting in the 1960s focused on Indigenous Australia and was published by ANU Press between 1970 and 1975. The 12-volume series covers topics that are still relevant today, ranging from Indigenous demography and history; the highlights and lowlights of employment relations in urban and agricultural settings, and ongoing disparity and challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the health and legal systems and legal rights and culture.

Another highlight was the establishment in 2002 of a Summer School for Indigenous Postgraduate Students. This initiative was led by Academy Fellow Professor Marcia Langton AO and then President Professor Leon Mann AO who were successful in securing significant government and philanthropic funding to support around 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attend a two-week workshop in Melbourne each year. This successful program continues today under the leadership of the University of Melbourne.

Building on our history, we were pleased to launch our Reflect RAP in 2021. Our Reflect RAP was a turning point for our organisation; one that galvanised our efforts, motivated staff, and many of our members, and provided a coherence to the activities we already had underway. It also provided significant learnings which are detailed in our Reflect outcomes report and informed the development of this Innovate RAP. A key learning for the Academy has been about capacity, both our own capacity to deliver ambitious targets and the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellows and researchers who often face overwhelming demands to participate and advise on RAP actions and activities. To address this, we will prioritise collaborations with other Learned Academies and like-minded organisations to streamline requests for First Nations academics to implement actions in this Innovate RAP, where possible.



## 2020

- Acknowledgement of Country video developed and used for all online Academy events.



## 2021

- Developed Reflect RAP: 53 actions.
- Reconciliation page launched on Academy website.
- Two Aboriginal members appointed to the RAP Working Group.
- Academy staff cultural awareness survey complete.
- *State of the Social Sciences* Report launched with a focus on First Nations involvement in the social sciences.
- RAP Working Group appointed.

### 2021 - 2022

*Can Australia achieve meaningful reconciliation?* and *Democracy and constitutional change*, Academy panel discussion broadcast on ABC Big Ideas.

Reflect RAP launched in Canberra with Professor Marcia Langton.



### 2021 - 2023

Cultural capability initiatives delivered including National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.



## 2022

- Professor Chelsea Watego delivers annual Fay Gale lecture *No room at the inn* on rethinking critical race studies.
- Commenced scoping of a First Nations grants program and award.
- Academy facilitates BBC StoryWorks feature *Giving life to old languages in Australia*.

### 2022 - 2023

Podcast episodes - *I'm not racist, but...* and *The Weird and wonderful world of micronations* released.



# 2023

Reflect Outcomes Report published: 52 actions complete and one transferred to our Innovate RAP.

New First Nations Business section on website.

*Exploring Australia's complex history with The Hon Dr Barry Jones AC* video released in collaboration with the Australian Academy of Humanities and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Adopted RAP Network Voice Referendum education opportunity commitments.

Our journey continues, Innovate RAP registration complete.

Academy statement in support of the Voice referendum released.

Applications open for Rechnitz Fund Grant Program: \$20,000 grants to support early-career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social scientists.

Podcast episodes featuring First Nations perspectives released: *Who does Australia lock up and Truth, change and hope.*



Paul Bourke Award winner Dr Denise Angelo is recognised for her collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and their communities, in her work at the intersection of linguistics, education and policy.

Academy Workshops Program awards two grants: Revitalising Indigenous-State Relations: Knowledge Exchange to Support Transformations in Indigenous Governance and Decolonisation in Australia and our region in the 20th century and today.

Inaugural round of the Rechnitz Memorial Fund: three grant recipients awarded \$20k for projects to further First Nations knowledge in the social sciences.



# 2024

*Respectful Civil Discourse* module release for the Seriously Social education program, using the Uluru Statement from the Heart as the case study.

*Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure 2024-33* released, highlighting First Nations-led as a key principle to prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' self-determination in social science research infrastructure planning.

## Five principles for fit-for-purpose social science research infrastructure

- 01 Design for diversity**  
Design research for a diverse range of world systems disciplines, sectors and methods. Address the design, implementation and delivery of infrastructure for the 2030s. Build on existing infrastructure, including the knowledge of the First Nations community, to ensure that infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the future.
- 02 First Nations-led**  
Design research for a diverse range of world systems disciplines, sectors and methods. Address the design, implementation and delivery of infrastructure for the 2030s. Build on existing infrastructure, including the knowledge of the First Nations community, to ensure that infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the future.
- 03 Iterative ethical and responsible research**  
Design research for a diverse range of world systems disciplines, sectors and methods. Address the design, implementation and delivery of infrastructure for the 2030s. Build on existing infrastructure, including the knowledge of the First Nations community, to ensure that infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the future.
- 04 Open to partners and community**  
Design research for a diverse range of world systems disciplines, sectors and methods. Address the design, implementation and delivery of infrastructure for the 2030s. Build on existing infrastructure, including the knowledge of the First Nations community, to ensure that infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the future.
- 05 Build equitable access**  
Design research for a diverse range of world systems disciplines, sectors and methods. Address the design, implementation and delivery of infrastructure for the 2030s. Build on existing infrastructure, including the knowledge of the First Nations community, to ensure that infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the future.





## Case studies

### Respect



*Rechnitz Fund recipient Dr Olivia Evans pictured with Mr Julian Leaser MP (left) and the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP (right).*

In 2022, the Academy established the Wilhelm, Martha, and Otto Rechnitz Memorial Fund which aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in the social sciences. The fund provides grants of up to \$20,000 each year to enable innovative and meaningful research projects and to nurture the next generation of First Nations leaders in research disciplines.

In 2023, the fund awarded grants to three outstanding researchers in its inaugural round:

- Dr Josephine Bourne from the University of Queensland received a grant to study leadership and governance practices among Western Torres Strait Islander women of Badu Island. Her project focuses on capturing women's experiences and navigating governance requirements in the cultural context, contributing to intergenerational knowledge transfer and the maintenance of Badu's nationhood.



#### The Wilhelm, Martha, and Otto Rechnitz Memorial Fund

- Dr Olivia Evans from the Australian National University led a project investigating online racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during the lead-up to the Voice to Parliament referendum. The grant empowered her to develop new research skills and uncover insights into prevailing attitudes and narratives, aiming to recommend strategies to prevent and reduce online racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Dr Jacob Prehn from the University of Tasmania conducted research on the support experienced by First Nations youths for their cultural identity. His project aimed to contribute to better understandings of achieving socioeconomic outcomes and targets of the Closing the Gap Strategy by exploring how schools can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in fostering cultural identity.

These projects exemplify the fund's commitment to supporting impactful research and fostering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in the social sciences.

The Academy intends to expand the initiatives in 2024 to include the Rechnitz Fund Award. This award will be made annually recognising excellence in research leadership in advancing knowledge of any aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society, culture and language.



# Relationships



## Empowering Indigenous Sovereignty in the Decadal Plan

Between November 2022 and April 2024, the Academy embarked on the development of the *Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure 2024-33*. Decadal Plans are one of the key mechanisms employed by Learned Academies to advocate for the interests of their disciplines.

The Decadal Plan presented an opportunity for the social sciences sector to align with the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement. For decades, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars and organisations have advocated for self-determination in access and use of Indigenous data in research and policy, both within Australia and as active leaders in the global Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) movement.

If the Academy was to embark in a deliberate exercise to outline a future vision for the use of data in research, it was critical that such vision was not only compatible with IDS, but boldly supported the data futures envisaged by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in Australia.

## Five principles for fit-for-purpose social science research infrastructure

01

### Design for diversity

Engage researchers from a diverse range of social science disciplines, sectors and technical skill levels in the design, implementation and review of initiatives shaping the ARISS. Social science disciplinary and professional associations, major social research centres, universities and disciplinary peak bodies, including the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, play pivotal roles as advocates and conduits to ensure comprehensive representation from across all corners of the sector.

02

### First Nations-led

Prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' self-determination in social science research infrastructure planning, by engaging Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS), Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) experts at the earliest stages and highest levels of decision-making for research infrastructure design, investments and policy.

03

### Streamline ethical and responsible research

Invest in robust systems for secure and ethical sharing of human and culturally sensitive data, which cut through complex regulatory frameworks, align with evolving social licence expectations and Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDG) mandates and reduce time and cost burdens on researchers.

04

### Open to partners and community

Ensure that the benefits from research infrastructure extend to research partners and the broader community, in line with the *FAIR Principles for scientific data management and stewardship* (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and Australia's data-related commitments under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

05

### Enable equitable access

Publicly funded infrastructure operates on business and delivery models that offer affordable access options to researchers at all levels and to projects of all sizes, including for exploratory research and training purposes. Additional capacity for training, in particular, is essential for enhancing digital literacy and infrastructure usage. Costs and resources are allocated based on principles of transparency, equity, innovation and impact.

The Plan, which involved input from seven IDS experts, was launched on 10 April 2024 and sets out a number of actions including:

- Four-page case study presents Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) aspirations and present challenges.
- Introduces 'First Nations-Led' as a principle for future decision-making in matters of national research infrastructure.
- Out of the 26 implementation steps proposed in the plan, 12 explicitly advance Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

The Academy looks forward to continuing to strengthen the relationships that formed in the development of the Plan, and to establish new ones as we pursue the implementation of Plan's vision and priority actions.

# Relationships



Explore the Academy's Seriously Social videos online at [seriouslysocial.org.au](https://seriouslysocial.org.au).

The Academy launched its Seriously Social schools program in May 2024, which provides teachers and students with free, high-quality social science resources. These resources are fact checked by Australia's leading social scientists.

The goal of the *Civil Discourse* module is to educate students on the importance of respectful and fact-based conversations, particularly on issues of national significance. It encourages students to express their opinions in a manner that avoids stereotypes and denigrating language, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among individuals with diverse perspectives.

The resources also address significant events such as the 2023 *Voice to Parliament* Referendum, highlighting the ongoing relevance of initiatives like the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and the continuous efforts towards reconciliation in Australia.

As part of this initiative and in support of reconciliation, the Academy developed the *Civil Discourse: Post Referendum* resource. Designed for students and teachers in Years 7 to 10, the resources consist of two booklets containing educational videos, reading materials, classroom displays, learning experiences, student reflections and assessment



## Cultivating Respectful Conversations—Civil Discourse Education Module

guides. These resources have undergone rigorous fact-checking and peer review by Fellows of the Academy who are experts in the fields of constitutional law and history.

Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program, The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and Education Services Australia (ESA) also provided advice and peer reviewed the resource. These organisations are assisting to promote and distribute this resource.

Teachers can access these resources through the Seriously Social program's website, which provides links to educational videos and booklets tailored for different year levels. The *Civil Discourse* module plays a crucial role in equipping students with essential knowledge and skills to navigate civil discussions effectively, contributing to a more inclusive and respectful Australian society. For more information about Seriously Social, visit [seriouslysocial.org.au](https://seriouslysocial.org.au).

# Relationships



## Amplifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voices

The Academy is committed to amplifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through a range of communication activities aligned with its RAP goals.

One of our key communication channels was the Seriously Social podcast, which featured a special interview (and video) with Fellow and 2023 Senior Australian of the Year, Professor Tom Calma AO. This episode, released in November 2023, provided insights into the aspirations and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities post-Voice Referendum, aligning with our RAP goal of promoting cultural understanding and respect.

In addition to this podcast, we produced another thought-provoking episode titled *'Who does Australia lock up'* in September 2023. This episode delved into incarceration rates and offered perspectives, including that of Aboriginal advocate Justen Thomas, highlighting our commitment to promoting social justice and advocating for vulnerable populations.

We selected the Indigenous Literacy Foundation as the beneficiary charity for our Social Sciences Week major event in September 2023, reflecting our dedication to education and empowerment.

#SeriouslySocial

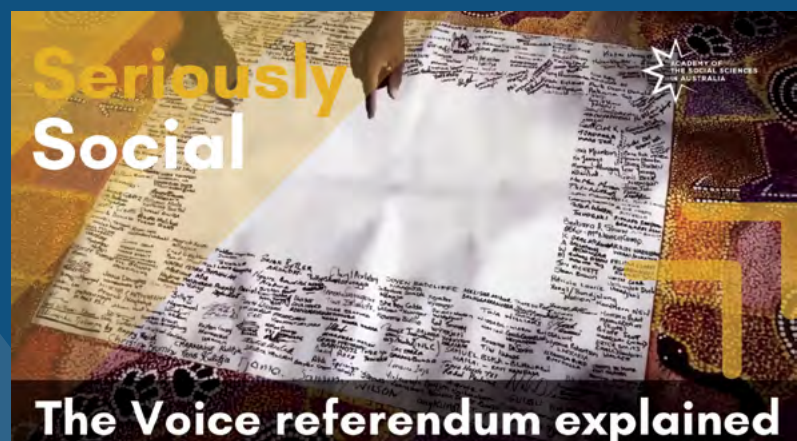


**Justen Thomas**  
Youth Justice Advocate

Furthermore, our public statement in October 2023 in support of the Voice Referendum showcased our commitment to democratic processes and respectful dialogue, essential elements of reconciliation. We also actively participated in NAIDOC Week 2023, promoting content from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Academy Fellows to celebrate their contributions and promote cultural understanding.

Through these communication initiatives, the Academy continues to uphold its RAP commitments, striving for reconciliation, respect, and a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Australians.

Explore the Academy's Seriously Social videos online at [seriouslysocial.org.au](https://seriouslysocial.org.au).



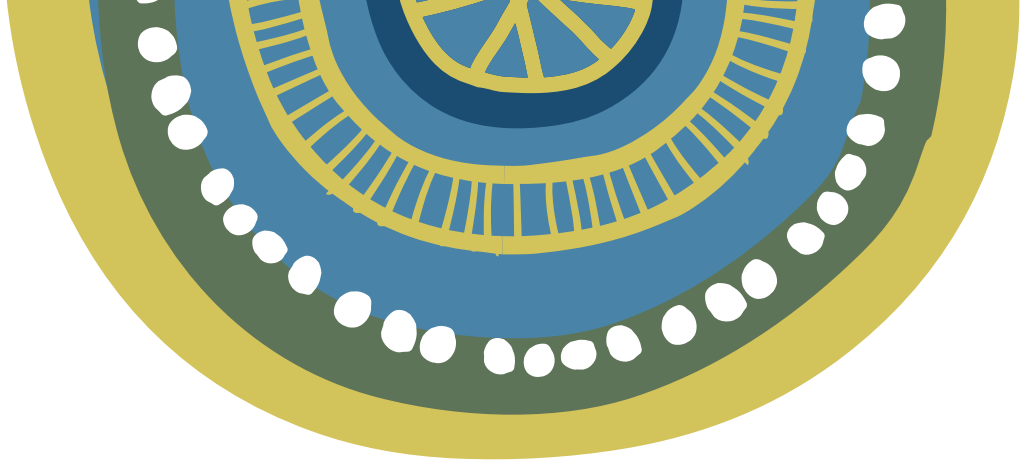


## RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are central to the Academy's reconciliation journey. These relationships give structure and direction to our plans and activities, and they give meaning to what we do. Most importantly, through our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations we can gauge the value and impact of our reconciliation journey; the relationships growing and prospering an indicator that we're on the right path.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	• Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	August 2024	CEO
	• Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	November 2024	Policy Director
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	• Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to Academy Fellows and staff.	May 2024-26	Policy Director/ Communications Director
	• RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June, 2024-26	RAP Working Group Chair
	• Encourage Academy Fellows and staff to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June, 2024-26	CEO
	• Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June, 2024-25	Policy Director
	• Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's website.	May 2024-26	Policy Director
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	• Develop and implement an engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across the Academy Fellowship and our staff.	August 2024	Policy Director/ Communication Director
	• Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	August 2024	Academy President/CEO
	• Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	November 2024	Policy Director
	• Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	November 2024	Policy Director
	• Promote and disseminate best practice approaches and resources for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and data to Fellows and the broader social science research sector.	March 2025	CEO
	• Engage with AIATSIS on opportunities to promote Yumi Sabe and make social science research findings more accessible, contestable and useable, especially by Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities.	May 2024	Communications Director





Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence. <i>(continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali - Reconciliation in Education team and other like-minded organisations to identify opportunities to collaborate on the development of social sciences teacher resources covering civil discourse, geography and history.</li> </ul>	August 2025	Education Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly recognise and champion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and causes across the Academy communication activities including the events program.</li> </ul>	May 2026	Communications Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participate in the RAP Network to learn from the practices of other RAP organisations and share your experience.</li> </ul>	May 2026	Policy Director
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination and anti-racism strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination and anti-racism provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	August 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.</li> </ul>	February 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the social sciences to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.</li> </ul>	November 2024	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate Executive Committee members and staff on the effects of racism.</li> </ul>	February 2025	CEO



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, languages, sciences, governance, economies, customs and philosophies have evolved and developed for more than 60,000 years; hundreds and sometimes thousands of times longer than those of our Western institutions and disciplines. The social sciences are focused on understanding and learning from people and their institutions. Living and working on unceded lands and surrounded by millennia of learning and culture demands the respect of Australian social scientists and those interested in this nation. The Academy undertakes to demonstrate and celebrate this respect in all that we do, and to enhance and promote respectful understanding and interaction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, people and communities through our decisions and actions.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	• Update the review of Academy staff cultural learning needs.	July 2024 and annually	Policy Director
	• Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAP Working Group members to inform our cultural learning strategy.	August 2024	Policy Director
	• Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.	September 2024	Policy Director
	• Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group and Executive Committee members to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	May 2026	Policy Director
	• Include and acknowledge the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social scientists in Academy policy and project work.	May 2026	Policy Director
	• Incorporate best practice approaches for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and data into Academy processes and grant programs.	August 2024	CEO
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	• Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	September 2024	Policy Director
	• Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	May 2025	Policy Director
	• Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	May 2026	Events Manager
	• Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of Academy meetings and events.	May 2026	CEO
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	• RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July, 2024-25	RAP Working Group Chair
	• Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	July 2024	CEO
	• Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to Academy Fellows and staff.	First week in July, 2024-25	CEO



## OPPORTUNITIES

By creating and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, we will be able to give life to the Academy's principles and priorities, and begin redressing the inequality and lack of opportunity that was imposed upon Australia's First Nations peoples for so many years. Although only a small organisation with limited resources, we will seek every chance to create these opportunities in our employment and procurement activities, and through our fellowship processes, programs and awards.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.	• Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	May 2024	CEO
	• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RAP Working Group members and staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	September 2024	CEO
	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	March 2025	CEO
	• Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	May 2026	CEO
	• Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	September 2024	CEO
	• Continue to prioritise nomination of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars in the Academy election process.	May 2026	Fellowship Director
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	• Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	April 2025	Policy Director
	• Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September 2024	Policy Director
	• Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	March 2025	Policy Director
	• Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	March 2025	Policy Director
	• Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	May 2026	CEO

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
10. Support the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the social sciences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the social sciences through biannual update to the State of the Social Sciences.</li> </ul>	August 2024	Policy Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a plan to advocate for and progress the First Nations priorities for action identified in the State of the Social Sciences.</li> </ul>	August 2024	Policy Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the Academy Workshop Program funding to identify and support workshops aimed at progressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and policy priorities including increasing the number of First Nations participants and First Nations-led workshops.</li> </ul>	August 2024-25	Workshops Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars in the social sciences, and the knowledge and understanding of the society, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Wilhelm, Martha, and Otto Rehnitz Memorial Fund program of activities.</li> </ul>	August 2025	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise inclusion and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and First Nations knowledge in Academy activities and events such as Social Sciences Week.</li> </ul>	May 2024 and ongoing	Events Manager

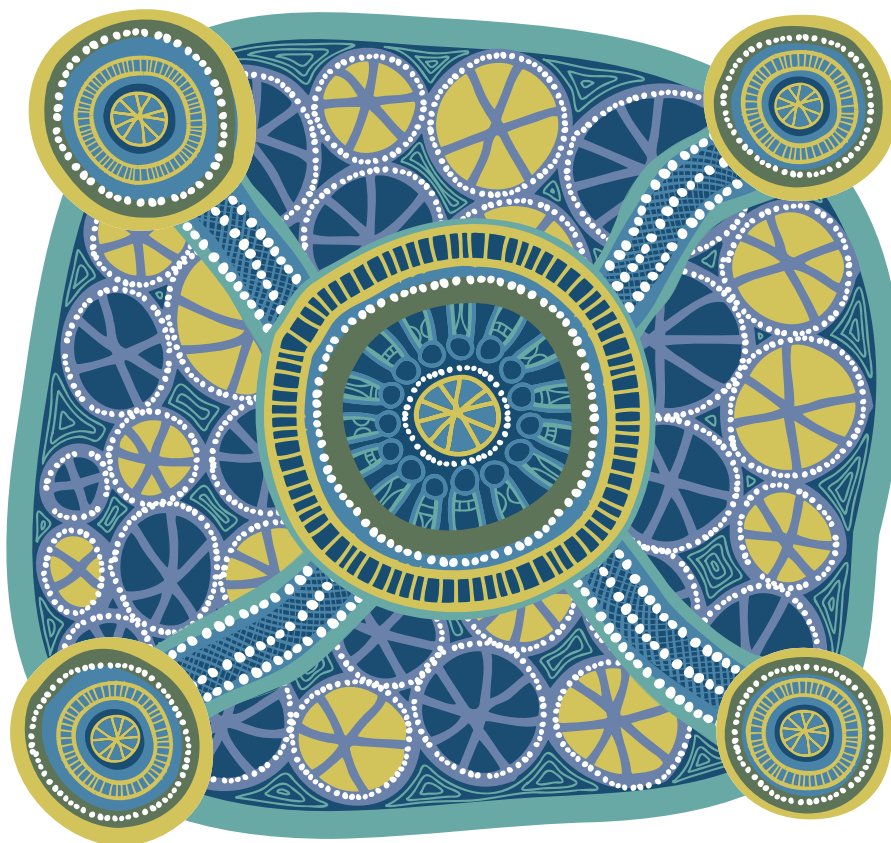




## GOVERNANCE AND TRACKING

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	• Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2025	Policy Director
	• Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	June 2024	Policy Director
	• Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, May, August, November 2024-26	Policy Director
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	• Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	June 2024	CEO
	• Engage Executive Committee members and Academy staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	June 2024	CEO
	• Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	June 2024	Policy Director
	• Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	July 2024	Policy Director
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June, annually	Policy Director
	• Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	February 2026	Policy Director
	• Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Policy Director
	• Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	November 2025	Policy Director
	• Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	July 2025 and annually	Policy Director
	• Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	June 2024	Policy Director
	• Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	May 2026	Policy Director
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	• Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January 2026	Policy Director
15. Reflect on our organisations governance	• Consult with First Nations stakeholders to evaluate the strength of existing governance structures to listen and respond to the voices of First Nations peoples across the Academy's activities.	March 2025	CEO
	• Develop a plan to action feedback from First Nations stakeholders on existing governance structures.	July 2025	CEO

# The design

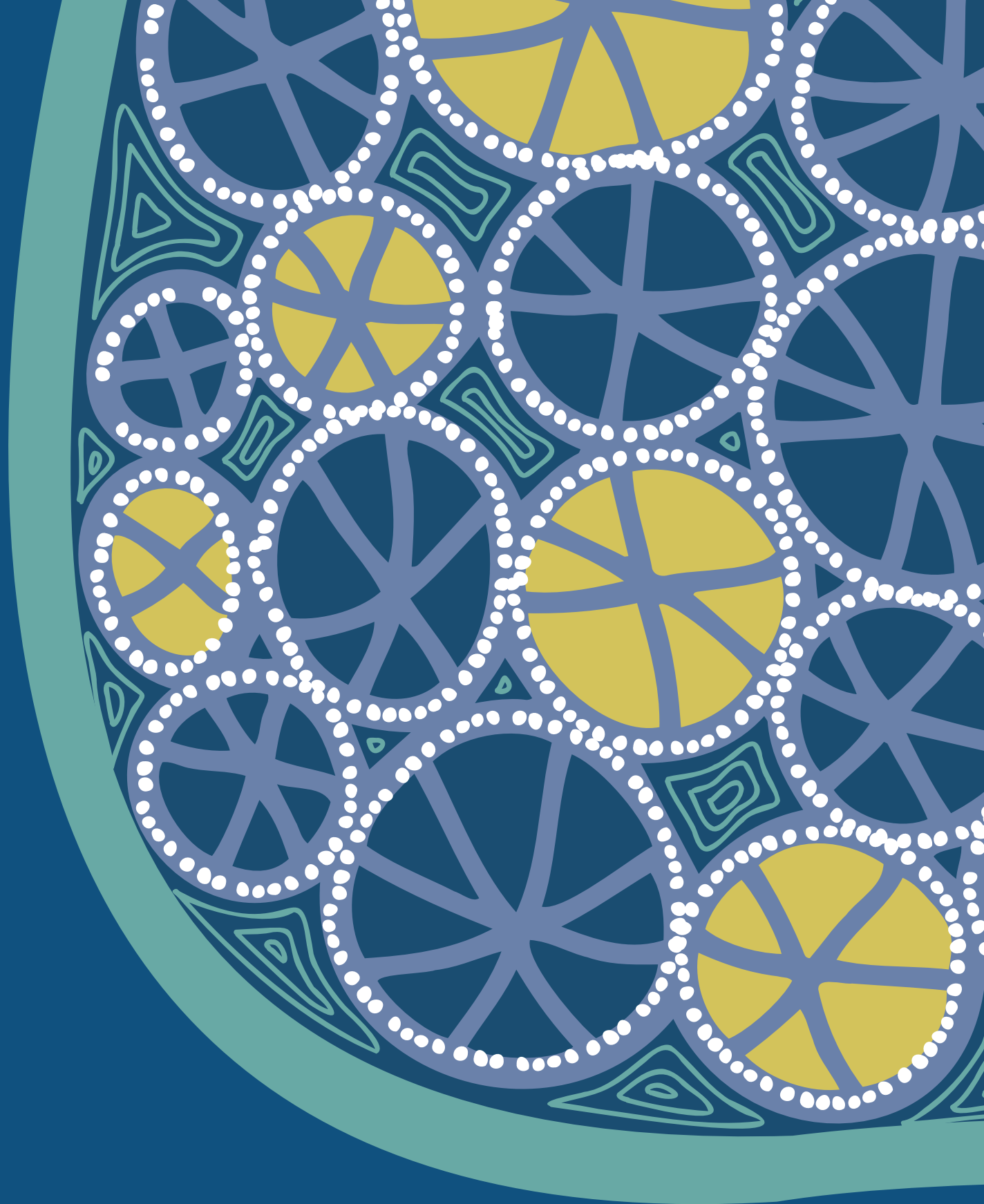


## About the design studio

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia Reconciliation Action Plan bespoke design and collateral elements were designed by Indigenous design and digital agency ingeous studios in Cairns.

Creative Director and founder of ingeous studios, Leigh Harris is a proud Kangoulou and Gungarri man who is also proud of Italian and Welsh heritage, draws upon his Aboriginal cultural heritage and knowledge to influence his design works across all of his design works.

Leigh's work has been a process of many years as an industry specialist and is strongly influenced by his heritage. His inspiration to his design work is inspired from traditional and contemporary styles, while remain stylised and modern.



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