

The Language of Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

THE LANGUAGE OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Introductory Guide

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PART I

CONTENT

1.

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The University of Queensland, St Lucia QLD, Australia

2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which UQ operates. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and descendants, who continue to have cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Additionally, we would like to acknowledge and pay respect to UQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, Elders and visitors who come from many nations across Australia.

To learn more about acknowledging Country, you can view the [In Practice chapter. Acknowledgement of Country palm cards \(PDF, 749KB\)](#) are available digitally.



Digital reproduction of UQ's Reconciliation Artwork, "A Guidance Through Time" by Casey Coolwell and Kyra Mancktelow. © The University of Queensland

Learn more about Reconciliation Action Plans and UQ's Reconciliation Artwork in the [Reconciliation Action Plan chapter](#).

3.

PRODUCTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF RELATIONSHIPS GUIDE

The *Language of Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – Introductory Guide* (hereafter ‘Language of Relationships Guide’) was created to support the UQ community to build stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples across the university. The Language of Relationships Guide aims to inform students and staff of appropriate language and provide tools for non-Indigenous peoples in the context of formal, academic communication and everyday conversations that will build and enhance those relationships.

We recognise that students and staff will have varying degrees of knowledge and confidence in building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge too that some people may experience a range of emotions and / or discomfort in learning about the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Therefore, you may like to talk with a trusted friend, health professional or counsellor if it feels important to unpack and process emotions further.





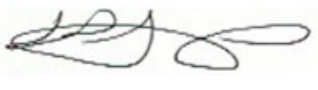


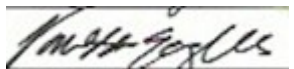

2021 Student-Staff Partnership Program

The Language of Relationships Guide was produced as part of a 2021 Student-Staff Partnership (SSP) Project. This approach empowered students and staff to collaborate as equal partners and mutual learners. It also provided the opportunity to connect varied skills, talents and voices across the UQ community that facilitated a positive experience for those involved. During the design phase of the Language of Relationships Guide, students and staff worked on tasks in smaller project teams to capitalise on strengths and facilitate learning. Decisions about the design, writing and editing were made collectively by the whole SSP Team.

Resources including a ‘Five things to Know’ fridge magnet, and five videos for the Language of Relationships Guide involved the SSP Team and members of the [UQRAP Network](#). You will find those videos in various chapters and the fridge magnet is part of the Welcome Kit when you join the UQRAP Network.

The Project Team and authors included:

The Project Team

Name	Connection to Country	Position	2021 SSP Team	Signature
Professor Tracey Bunda	Ngugi, Wakka Wakka woman	Head of Academic Programs, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit	Semester 1 and 2	
Kealey Griffiths	Family ties to the Yuggera people and born on Iningai land	Student, Faculty of Science	Semester 1 and 2	
Lucas Schober	Wuthathi, Yadhegana & Kaurareg man, with family ties to the Yindjibarndi people	Student, Faculty of Engineering, Architecture & Information Technology	Semester 1 and 2	
Mia Strasek-Barker	Gamilaraay/ Yuwalaraay woman	Reconciliation Action Plan Manager, UQ Library	Semester 1 and 2	
Nell Angus	Non-Indigenous woman born on Gunaikurnai Country	Project Manager (Indigenous Engagement Initiatives), Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)	Semester 1 and 2	
Sybilla Wilson	Non-Indigenous woman born on Ngunnawal Country	Senior Service Improvement Manager, Student Services	Semester 1 and 2	
Thomas Scanlan	Jarowair man from the Bunya Mountains	Student, Faculty of Science	Semester 1 and 2	
Vanessa Eagles	Non-Indigenous woman born (living and working) on Gumbaynggirr Country	Student (graduated mid-2021), Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Semester 1	
Keiko Mishiro	Non-Indigenous woman of Mino-land in Gifu (Japan)	Student, Faculty of Medicine	Semester 2	

Name	Connection to Country	Position	2021 SSP Team	Signature
Professor Tracey Bunda	Ngugi, Wakka Wakka woman	Head of Academic Programs, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit	Semester 1 and 2	
Dr Laura Deane	Non-Indigenous woman working on Kurna Country (Adelaide SA)	Principal Research Administration Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit	Editing and proofreading, publication support (2023)	

Writing Style

It is important to recognise that the SSP Team intentionally decided on a specific writing style, one that is conversational or informal in tone, yet should be regarded as authoritative. This decision is reflective of how the SSP Team chose to work through the lifecycle of the project and hopes to provide a sense of sharing and encouragement that extends beyond the physical guide.

How we worked

The SSP Team was respectful of each other's workload and capacities, which allowed for an informal collaborative approach that was structured by regular meetings and soft deadlines. Meetings were held online or in person with follow up actions and communication occurring through email or Microsoft Teams. To facilitate easy access and live version control, resources and working documents were saved on Google Drive and Microsoft Teams. The Team also engaged with individuals or teams outside of the project's immediate members, such as Marketing and Communication and the Library's Digital Experience Team to ensure a sophisticated final product.



Some of the SSP Team members in Semester 1 (Left to Right)

Back row: Sybilla Wilson, Prof Tracey Bunda, Nell Angus

Middle row: Thomas Scanlan, Vanessa Eagles, Lucas Schober (image on laptop);
Kealey Griffiths

Missing: Mia Strasek-Barker and Keiko Mishiro



Photo: Mia Strasek-Barker, UQ Library and SSP team member Semesters 1 and 2



Photo: Keiko Mishiro, Faculty of Medicine student and SSP team member, Semester 2

“We hope you find this guide informative and easy to understand, as we know these topics can be tricky at times. Our group really enjoyed learning and working together and we hope it may offer some learnings for you too”. (SSP Team 2021)

PART II

PEOPLE

4.

ENGAGING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

The ability to know how to appropriately engage is an important skill for developing genuine, positive and quality relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Colonisation and its continuing effects have adversely impacted on relationship-building between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples. Positive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires being aware of the history of colonial relations so that respectful relationships can be built from shared positions of power, understanding and responsibility. In this way, relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can maintain the cultural principle of reciprocity, whereby that which is given in an engagement is returned with equal value.

In the absence of such respect, relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples are maintained as transactions in which the benefit of engagement favours non-Indigenous people and what they seek from the relationship. When relationships are continuously conducted in a transactional manner, engagements become exhausting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because there is an unspoken expectation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do the disproportionate amount of work in the engagement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples constitute the minority within society and hold differential positions of power, usually having less authority than non-Indigenous peoples.

Transactional relationships that only benefit non-Indigenous peoples mean that non-Indigenous needs are always met. In addition, engagement practices that are dependent on meeting non-Indigenous outcomes deny the building of quality and respect in relationships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are denied the ability to be truly human and equal to non-Indigenous people. These types of engagements are ultimately not beneficial for either group and replicate practices of colonisation in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only exist to serve non-Indigenous peoples. It is critical that engagements move away from the transactional towards an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'Ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing' (Karen Martin, Noonuggal, Gwandamooopa and Pitjara, 2008, [*Please Knock Before You Enter*](#)). Developing such an understanding can allow relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples to become more respectful and reciprocal so that Indigenous needs can also be met and quality relationships can be retained for the future. In this way, engagements move towards greater senses of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples.

In building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is important

to understand your own beliefs, biases, stereotypes and views. Watch the two videos below to learn more about racism and bystander action against racism.

What does Racism and Bystander Action against Racism look like?

Watch [What is racism? \(YouTube, 9m55s\)](#) as Professor Tracey Bunda (Academic Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit), Associate Professor Sandra Phillips (Associate Dean, Indigenous Engagement, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) and Dr Seb Dianati (Digital Curriculum Designer, Senior Teaching Fellow, Director, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Lab and Deputy Chair, Cultural Inclusion Council, School of Languages and Cultures) explore this question.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=114#oembed-1>

Watch [Bystander Action against Racism, YouTube, 9m58s](#) as Dr Seb Dianati (Digital Curriculum Designer, Senior Teaching Fellow, Director, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Lab and Deputy Chair, Cultural Inclusion Council, School of Languages and Cultures), Caroline Williams (UQ Chief Librarian), Dr Jenny Setchell (Senior Research Fellow in Physiotherapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) and Sybilla Wilson (Senior Service Improvement Manager – Engagement, Student Affairs) explore what bystander action looks like and things you can do.



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Sometimes the only evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within an organisation is the prominent display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, but no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed by the organisation. This practice can be understood as: *‘the only worthy engagement is with the aesthetics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures’*, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not worthy to be employed by that organisation. In such situations, organisations can

offer a seemingly ‘logical’ explanation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not apply for advertised positions. As a ‘natural consequence’ of this explanation, the organisation cannot be at fault if there are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Actions at the individual and organisational levels can powerfully transform engagements from the transactional to becoming respectful and applying the principle of reciprocity in relationships. When engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is important to remember that there may be a range of perspectives and views on what respect and reciprocity in relationships look like. In the following video, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people respond to some Frequently Asked Questions.

Social and Academic Examples

Watch the [You can't ask that style video \(YouTube, 10m04s\)](#) to hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff give their views on five frequently asked questions.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=114#oembed-3>

Checklist

Things to remember

- Educate yourself about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, knowledges, cultures, languages, protocols, achievements, sheroes and heroes, perspectives and matters.

- Deeply reflect on your own beliefs (ask questions such as “Is this true and how do I know it is true?”) and challenge stereotypes, biases and negative views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, knowledges, cultures, languages, achievements, sheroes and heroes, perspectives and matters.
- If you witness racism in action, record and report the incident, and support the person experiencing racism.



Honorary Professor Dale Chapman talks with students and staff at the 2021 Bush Foods BLOOM Lunch at St Lucia © The University of Queensland.



UQ NAIDOC Festival 2019 crowd watching Traditional dancing by Muja Mundu Creations at UQ Gatton campus © The University of Queensland.

5.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF UQ CAMPUSES AND SITES

Who is a Traditional Owner?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been here since the beginning of time. You might have heard the term ‘Traditional Owner’ when people are acknowledging Country and some people also use the term ‘Traditional Custodian’.

Traditional Owners as researchers

At the 2019 National Indigenous Research Conference, three Aboriginal women from large regional centres undertaking higher degree research at Central Queensland University shared how they approach research on Country as Traditional Owners. Dr Melinda Mann, Samantha Cooms and Joann Schmiderl presented reflections and future considerations of their particular geo-cultural research relationships with Darumbal, Noonukul – Quandamooka, and Mamu – tropical rainforest peoples.

The presentation highlighted research design considerations to meet the University PhD requirements alongside cultural responsibilities and imperatives. The presenters proposed that Traditional Custodians are not only well-positioned on their Homelands as researchers because of their access and knowledge of local land and people, but their cultural imperative for protecting, maintaining and creating knowledge as Traditional Custodians posits them as critical contributors in the future research agenda.

[Traditional Custodians as researchers: Experiences of researching with our Mob on our Country](#) contains an abstract, podcast and slides of the presentation by Dr Melinda Mann, Samantha Cooms and Joann Schmider. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2019)

How do I find out who the Traditional Owners of an area are?

Check the table below to locate Traditional Owners, if known, of UQ campuses and sites. Colonisation has disrupted, and continues to disrupt, some family lines, meaning knowledge of some Countries' custodians has been lost. One of the consequences of Australia's colonial history is that in some areas, Traditional Owners are not known, or there may be different understandings of families and family connections to Country.

When there is no Community agreement or Native Title Registered Body, local families claiming Traditional Owner connections to Country may sometimes be in dispute and engaged in an ongoing process of resolution. This can take many, many years to resolve. Non-Indigenous people or organisations cannot resolve this situation for families nor choose who the Traditional Owners are. It is the families who, in their own time and way, work towards agreement and resolution. An example of communities in an ongoing resolution process is in the Brisbane region where UQ's Brisbane City, Herston and St Lucia campuses and numerous sites are located.

If known, you can add the Traditional Owners to an Acknowledgement of Country. Wording and when to include an Acknowledgement are available in [Part 4: Protocols](#).

If you are acknowledging Country on a UQ site that is not listed, please contact the local Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander corporation or organisation or relevant region of Queensland Government Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Find regional contacts under the [Regional Service Centres](#).

Known Traditional Owners of UQ Campuses and Sites listed Alphabetically

Information on Traditional Owner Groups was sourced from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), Queensland Government, March – June 2020. Please note spelling of Traditional Owner groups may vary and the spelling in this guide is based on DATSIP recommendations.

Campus or Site	Traditional Owner	Pronunciation
Brisbane City	We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship	
Bundaberg Rural Clinical School	Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang and Taribelang Bunda peoples	Bailai – Bay-lee Gooreng Gooreng: Goo-rang Goo-rang Gurang: Goo-rang Taribelang Bunda: Dah-rib-a-lung Boon-dah
Herston	We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship	
Gatton campus	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship	
Heron Island Research Station	Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang and Taribelang Bunda peoples	Bailai – Bay-lee Gooreng Gooreng: Goo-rang Goo-rang Gurang: Goo-rang Taribelang Bunda: Dah-rib-a-lung Boon-dah
Hervey Bay	Butchulla people	But-cha-lah
Ipswich	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship	
Laidley North	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship.	
Lawes	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship.	
Logan	In order to determine who the Traditional Owner/Custodian(s) is for a specific location within the Logan LGA, please contact the DATSIP SEQ South office on phone 3080 4700.	
Meadowbrook	We acknowledge the Yugambah Speaking Peoples, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet.	You-gum-bear
Moreton Bay Research Station	Quandamooka people	Quan-da-moo-ka
Redland Hospital	Quandamooka people	Quan-da-moo-ka

Rockhampton Rural Clinical School	Darumbal People	Dah-rum-bull
Roma	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship	
Sladevale	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship	
St Lucia	We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship	
Toowoomba Rural Clinical School	We acknowledge all the Traditional Owner Groups of the area and their custodianship	
Veterinary Practice Dayboro	Kabi Kabi people	Kub-ee Kub-ee

6.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER GRADUANDS

A graduand is a person who has completed the academic requirements of a degree and is waiting to graduate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are an integral and growing part of the student community. Indigenous student enrolment has more than doubled from 9490 students in 2008 to 21,033 students in 2019 ([Universities Australia 2012 \(PDF, 1MB\)](#)).

In 2019, nearly 3000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Australian universities completed a sub-Bachelor, Bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification by course work or research (Universities Australia 2021).

Upon graduation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students wear a stole which identifies and celebrates Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. An Aboriginal student will have a stole emblazoned in the colours of the Aboriginal flag, whereas a Torres Strait Islander graduand will have a stole in the colours of the Torres Strait Islander flag. A graduand whose heritage is both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander will wear a stole that has the colours of both flags.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sashing Ceremony is an opportunity to celebrate students' academic and developmental achievements, while recognising land, culture and deep-rooted heritage.

Watch the [UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sashing Ceremony – 2020 \(YouTube, 1m06s\)](#) below. Notice the colours red, yellow, black, and blue, green and white. These colours represent not only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduands, but also their homes, heritage and history. Graduands wear the striped stoles during the Sashing Ceremony as an expression of pride, celebration and achievement.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=122#oembed-1>

Hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduands' advice for students currently studying or thinking about studying at university in the [2020 UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sashing Ceremony – Student Messages video \(YouTube, 3m19s\)](#).



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PART III

KNOWLEDGES

7.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge, sometimes called Traditional Knowledge*, refers to the practices, skills, innovations, and know-how of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. That knowledge has been developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over tens of thousands of years and has been shared intergenerationally through oral transmission. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge is based on individual and collectively learned explanations of the natural world and is verified by Elders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge can be encapsulated in language, song, and stories; visual works and expressions of art; rituals or ceremonies and lore; and management and use of the land, including flora (plants) and fauna (animals).

** Naming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges as ‘traditional’ can risk relegating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges to the past. It is important to affirm that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges shape contemporary understandings and continue to be upheld in the present.*

Story telling

Oral traditions such as storytelling substantiate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives about the past, present, and future and are an imperative part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultures. Storytelling, like other forms of communication, serves to pass down concepts and beliefs from generation to generation. While commonly understood as an oral tradition, stories can be passed down through various media such as message sticks, rock and sand art, song, dance, and body painting. Stories generally fall into four broad categories: collective histories; spiritual narratives; cultural practices; and life histories. However, there are some stories told by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that do not fall into these categories, such as fiction stories.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies reflect the diversity and complexity of the cultural and spiritual practices of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and can take various forms. Generally, ceremonies are used to share and spread knowledge between people, but it is important to understand that specific beliefs, stories, and lore of The Dreaming are individually owned and sustained by specific members of a language group. On top of this, participation in ceremonies can be restricted by gender and age. Roles in ceremonies vary considerably depending on the purpose of the ceremony, with men and women undertaking different roles. Most sacred sites are restricted to one gender, and often these areas, and their associated knowledge, are referred to as 'women's business' or 'men's business'. Neither gender has greater spiritual responsibilities or needs, but rather, as Queensland's [Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#) explains, men and women have different – and sometimes separate – roles or functions in ceremony.

Ceremonies can also serve as a vehicle for communication between different language groups. For example, ceremonies may communicate the discussion of lore, set out any consequences for breaches of protocol, or explain how to trade gifts and items such as food, raw materials, and special objects.

[The Little Red, Yellow and Black Book Online](#) offers information about the diverse cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as resources for teachers.

Lore and Knowledge Keepers

'Knowledge keepers' are responsible for upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lore, which is the embodiment of creation and governs the relationships people have with themselves, others, with animals, plants, and with the land and waters. These knowledge systems are designed to ensure the survival of specialised knowledge of all aspects of human existence.

Visual Works and Expressions of Art

Art is used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a form of communication and a teaching tool, and has a significant role in ceremonial practices. The sheer diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice cannot be classified into one form or style.

Art is developed and shared for a variety of purposes. It is used to express Traditional Knowledge, set out relationships between people and other communities, and to explain the purposes of positions held in society. Art also expresses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

peoples' political aspirations and political relationships, depicts historical events, and explains communities' beliefs and relationalities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is art that has been developed by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist, just as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge is knowledge that has been developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The forms of media used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art can be broadly categorised into three forms:

- 2D forms, which include collage, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, etc.
- 3D forms, which include ceramics, fibre art, installations, sculptures, wearable art, body adornments, etc. and
- Time-based forms, which include performance art, sound art, electronic imaging, film and animation, and other digital artforms.

Yarning Circles

Yarning circles, or dialogue circles, are an important aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and have been used by indigenous peoples around the world since the beginning of time. They allow individuals to learn from a collective group and build meaningful and respectful relationships, and serve to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge. Yarning circles are becoming a more frequent practice in contemporary Australia and allow people, particularly young children of non-Indigenous descent, to learn about the importance of respectful relationships. They encourage harmonious, creative, and collaborative discussion and foster accountability, while providing a safe place to be heard and to respond. In some instances, yarning circles can have a 'no language' form, where the primary method of learning is through observation. This method originated from watching the Elders interact and communicate with each other.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges, and the ways these are shared among people, are characteristic of the holistic conception – and interconnectedness- of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The physical, human, and sacred worlds are all interconnected, as is the Knowledge that describes these worlds. The connections between these aspects give rise to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' 'ways of knowing, being and doing' (Karen Martin 2008) and, in turn, form the basis of their Knowledge. Understanding the interconnectedness of these aspects is critical to understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Knowledges. It can also assist in understanding the disconnection from culture experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Given the depth and breadth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges, it is not surprising

that they are becoming a valued source of information in domains including agriculture, technology, ecology, medicine, biology, psychology, and archaeology. As the owners of the land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been applying their Knowledge to care for Country, generating benefits for themselves and the environment. Such Knowledge provides an insight into the land, society, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures that Western knowledge cannot offer. The need to use both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges and Western science is becoming increasingly evident.

Watch Albert Wiggan, a Bardi-Kija-Nyul Nyul man from Boddergron (Cygnet Bay) on the Dampier Peninsula, which is North of Broome in Western Australia. He is passionate about culture, Country and Indigenous science and in this Ted^x Talk, he argues for the recognition of Indigenous Knowledge as science. ([The case to recognise Indigenous knowledge as science, YouTube, 10m26s](#)).



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=126#oembed-1>

Researchers and policy makers, who are given the difficult task of combatting Australia's complex environmental challenges, are noticing the positive impact of the application of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To learn more about how the health of Australia's ecosystems can be improved, read the [Indigenous Knowledges Key: 'Healing Country'](#), originally published in UQ's *Contact* magazine. Further work by UQ, such as efforts to cement an [Indigenous-led Bushfood Industry](#) and the involvement of Traditional Owners in [UQ's Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining](#), highlights how important Traditional Knowledge is to improving both Australian and global society.

8.

TERMINOLOGY, LANGUAGE AND NAMING

The use of language and language terms can be a ‘taken for granted’ practice in communicating to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Ways of communicating – how language is used and how it is imbued with value and meaning – show that power relationships are encoded in language. It is important to consider the ways in which historical practices of communicating with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to prejudice and racism.

As an example of an historical practice, past government policies that sought to set Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples apart from non-Indigenous Australians used classificatory systems that named Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in particular ways and were based on now outdated ideologies of race. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could be named as ‘full-blood’, ‘half-caste’ or ‘quarter caste’. Such terms ensured that the ‘ideal and valued’ person was non-Indigenous. Using such terms sent the message to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that the ideal and valued social position could never be reached. Additionally, those classificatory systems set Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples apart from each other as being either more authentic in identity (‘full-blood’, ‘dark-skinned’, ‘traditional’ and ‘desert living’) or less than authentic (‘quarter-caste’, ‘light-skinned’, ‘without culture’ and ‘urban living’).

Such beliefs and the language used to express these beliefs ensured that the power of determining who was and who was not worthy was held by non-Indigenous people. The language used to keep these belief systems in place appeared natural and neutral; however Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples well understood the ideologies underpinning those beliefs and practices and the power of language to dominate, belittle and devalue.

The authors of this Language of Relationship Guide do not believe that those racist terms would be used today by the majority of non-Indigenous peoples; however, communication practices do continue that work to set Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples apart from the rest of the community. For example, the questioning of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person’s identity appears innocent. Yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may take a different view of the type of question or statement being made. Those questions and statements can be seen to revert back to colonial practices where non-Indigenous people position themselves as having the power to know more, and to determine who is and who is not authentic.

In the university, correct language, terminology and naming are highly valued. Using appropriate and respectful language, terminology and naming in the building of relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples helps to activate reconciliation. The terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Torres Strait Islander’ are not only acceptable ways of naming, but importantly, acknowledge that there is a difference between identifying as an Aboriginal person and as a Torres Strait Islander person. Aboriginal peoples and Torres

Strait Islander peoples have different languages and cultures. These terms, however, should never be reduced to the acronym 'ATSI' or 'A&TSI'. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples find this insulting and it should not be used when speaking or writing.

While these ways of naming allow speaking across difference, it must be remembered that these terms were created within non-Indigenous terms of reference.

A Note on Terminology

For some members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the term 'Indigenous' is too generic, referring to Indigenous peoples all over the world. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seek to be named in ways that do not erase the particular experiences of Australian colonial racism and violence which sought to dispossess Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their lands. The term 'Aboriginal' may have been imposed, but many Aboriginal people use it because it means 'original inhabitants'. Similarly, while the term 'First Nations' is increasingly used on media and social media platforms, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people view it as a term derived from Canada and the Americas, used to refer specifically to Native American and Canadian Aboriginal peoples (see Bidjara/Birri Gubba and Juru scholar, Honorary Professor Jackie Huggins' acclaimed work, *Sistergirl: Reflections on Tiddaism, Identity and Reconciliation*, UQP 2022, p. 216.)

Both the term 'Indigenous' and the term 'First Nations' are contested.

It is best practice, where it is known and appropriate, to use the preferred ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identify, that is, in ways that reinforce their relation to Country or language group, for example, as Bundjalung, Nunukal, Arrente, or Wiradjuri people.

A number of universities offer terminology guides as part of reconciliation. We offer the following list of appropriate terminology to assist in the development of relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Appropriate to use	Discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate to use
Goori/ Goorie and Murri are terms used by Aboriginal people in Queensland when referring to themselves ¹	Non-Indigenous people should not use these terms (unless invited to do so)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (used as a collective name)	ATSI to abbreviate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Aboriginal person or Aboriginal people	Aborigines
Torres Strait Islander person or Torres Strait Islander people	Islanders
Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person	‘full-blood’, ‘half-caste’ or ‘quarter caste’ or other percentage measures
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Groups, Seasonal Occupation, Elders, Spirituality, The Dreaming, Dreaming Stories ²	Primitive, native, nomadic, chiefs, kings, queens, myths, legends, folklore, Dreamtime ²
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived in Australia long before Captain Cook arrived	Captain Cook discovered Australia is a “damaging myth” ³
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples “have always been in Australia, from the beginning of time, and came from the land.” ²	Pre-history, terminology that suggests that Australian history began after European invasion
The arrival of Europeans in Australia was a violent invasion of occupied land. ²	Settlement, post colonisation, post colonial. These terms assume that colonisation has ended, and that Australia was peacefully “settled”. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, colonisation continues.

Sources:

1. University of Southern Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols.
2. University of New South Wales, [Indigenous Terminology](#).
3. [Stan Grant: it is a damaging myth that Captain Cook discovered Australia](#), ABC News, 2017.

As the Australian historian and scholar Patrick Wolfe notes in his much-cited essay, ‘[Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native](#)’, colonial invasion is recognised by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples “as a structure, rather than an event” (*Journal of Genocide Research*, December 2006, 8(4), p. 402). Colonisation is understood as a system that continues to impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

9.

WRITING ABOUT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

As with person-to-person communication, there are protocols to follow when writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Resources for Writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Cultures

The Australia Council for the Arts sets out [cultural protocols](#) to observe when writing about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and stories. It is important to recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and stories comprise Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

The Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts were developed by Meriam/ Wuthathi lawyer, Terri Janke, and Company. Terri Janke is an international authority on Indigenous Intellectual and Cultural Property.

Her book, [True Tracks \(2021\)](#) explains how to engage respectfully and ethically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. [More information about these protocols](#) is available in Chapter 10.

Referencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Writers and Scholars in Academic Work

One of the consequences of colonisation in Australia was to be dismissive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge systems. Historically, non-Indigenous peoples have been the authorities on Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander cultures, histories and societies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were often relegated to being ‘objects’ of research, ‘curiosities’, members of ‘a dying race’. The voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were silenced.

This situation is changing as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people become writers and have their work published. This is also the case within the academy where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars are producing work in the various disciplines.

It is important to reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors because it not only demonstrates an understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the authoritative

voices on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters, but also elevates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges within the academy. This contributes to Reconciliation.

UQ Library Resources

When writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, students and staff are strongly encouraged to use reference materials produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This both demonstrates an understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers are the authoritative voices on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters, and elevates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges within the academy.

UQ Library's [Indigenising Curriculum Resources](#) collection not only provides a rich and curated collection of teaching resources, but also sets out innovative approaches for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges and perspectives in the curriculum. It aims to be the principal resource for developing inclusive teaching practices in UQ programs.

The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Discovery Collection](#) contains materials, images, and literature including theses, languages and guides to assist you in writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Library's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources contribute to truth-telling and healing Country. Embedding and increasing access to these perspectives will help students to have a richer and more accurate understanding of Australia's history and culture, supporting a more reconciled Australia.

The collections include:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages**– this collection includes more than 250 Indigenous languages, also known as AUSTLANG, including 800 dialects that connect people to Country, culture, and ancestors.
- **Activism and resistance**– this collection shows how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been fighting injustice and misconceptions since European arrival, and how activism and resistance led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island grassroots campaigns have brought about change.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors**– this collection celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors, who are a part of the oldest living culture and original storytellers.
- **Images**– this collection includes photographs celebrating the memories, people, places, events, and objects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- **Yarns and spoken memories**– whether it be written, spoken, performed, or produced, exchanging stories is the oldest form of sharing culture and knowledge and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been sharing their stories and yarning for 65,000 years or more. This collection amplifies their voices.
- **Non-Indigenous representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures**– this collection will raise awareness of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are some of the most researched communities from a point of view not necessarily their own.

- **Torres Strait Islands**– this collection showcases the unique culture, linguistic, and geographic qualities of the Torres Strait Islands, which are distinct and different from Aboriginal Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library guides have been developed out of respect, to assist with the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in curriculum and teaching practices. Those resources include [how to reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors](#) and acknowledge their relationship to Country.

BlackWords

The [Austlit BlackWords](#) website also provides a valuable catalogue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. AustLit is a comprehensive database of Australian stories that has been running in different forms for almost three decades and BlackWords is one of its most significant projects. Launched in 2006 by Uncle Sam Watson, BlackWords provides access to a vast record of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders storytellers and their publications. The first national coordinator of BlackWords was Professor Anita Heiss who has remained one of BlackWords' most enthusiastic champions.

BlackWords records information about the lives and works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and storytellers and the literary cultures and traditions that influenced them. It contains records for published and unpublished books, stories, plays, poems, and secondary works and includes works in English, in translation and in Australian languages. It also covers other forms of creative writing including film and television criticism and scholarship by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander critics, academics, and creatives, and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytelling cultures.

BlackWords records information about stories from oral traditions that are part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytelling cultures but which have not been formally published. BlackWords also records details of works that contain stories or oral narratives that are relevant to aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience, such as mission histories, that are not included in AustLit's scope.

Since its inception, BlackWords has benefited from a large team of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, indexers and advisors at a number of institutions who have worked to contextualise all this information through Indigenous-curated datasets and information trails. Most BlackWords records have been reviewed by Indigenous researchers.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers

Reconciliation in the academy means acknowledging that there exist two knowledge systems within this country that can be referred to. Become familiar with works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars.

In this video series, produced for Honours students in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Of Indigenous Education, Tracey Bunda (Ngugi/Wakka Wakka), discusses how a Storying methodology can inform the research process. She explains how the stories of her Old People informed her PhD thesis,

and in turn, that thesis offered a means to document those stories in written form. Watch Professor [Tracey Bunda on Storying \(YouTube, 9m33s\)](#)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=130#oembed-1>

Professor of Communications and acclaimed Wiradjuri writer, Anita Heiss, talks about the importance of perspective in her recent works of historical fiction, which intervene into a subjective colonial history to promote truth-telling. Her latest novel, [Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray \(River of Dreams\)](#), won the 2022 NSW Premier's Literary Awards Indigenous Writer's Prize. She has written more more than 20 works of historical fiction, children's literature, and chick-lit. Her non-fiction works include *I'm not Racist, But...*, *Am I Black Enough For You?*, and *Dhuluu-Yala (To Talk Straight.)* Watch [Professor Anita Heiss on truth telling, perspective and subjectivity \(YouTube, 9m56s\)](#)



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Professor Martin Nakata (Torres Strait Islands) is Deputy Vice Chancellor, Indigenous Education and Strategy at James Cook University. He developed Indigenous standpoint theory as a means to engage with more than 200 years of Western colonial theories. His latest work, co-written with Vicky Nakata, is [Supporting Indigenous Students to Succeed at University: A Resource for the Higher Education Sector](#). Watch [Professor Martin Nakata on the cultural interface in the everyday world \(YouTube, 4m12s\)](#)



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Gamilaraay, Wailwan / Biripi lecturer and experimental digital artist, Dr r e a Saunders, discusses the role of research-led practice in their series 'Native'. The series responds to a NSW school, the Native Institute, established in 1914, which sought to educate Aboriginal children. Watch [Dr r e a Saunders on Research-led practice \(YouTube 8m41s\)](#)



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In this video, r e a explains how her digital series ‘Native’ offers a decolonising and Indigenising arts practice. Watch [Dr r e a Saunders on ‘Native’ \(YouTube, 8m40s\)](#)



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Distinguished Aboriginal Scholars at UQ

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) Professor Bronwyn Fredericks is an Aboriginal scholar whose distinguished career spans academic, government and health settings. Her research extends across health, education, community development, policy and Indigenist research methods. She is the recipient of the 2022 NAIDOC education award and the 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award. She has written more than 150 influential works.



Professor Bronwyn Fredericks ©
The University of Queensland

In 2021, Professor Fredericks co-edited [*Yatdjuligin: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing and*](#)

[*Midwifery Care*](#) with Professor Odette Best (Gurreng Gurreng), Pro-Vice Chancellor First Nations Education and Research at University of Southern Queensland.

She has served as a Productivity Commissioner (2016), was the Presiding Commissioner for the 2017 Inquiry into service delivery in Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous communities, and in 2019, was a Commissioner for the Inquiry into Imprisonment and Recidivism.

Emeritus Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Goenpul) is the first Aboriginal person to be appointed as a Distinguished Professor in Australia. Based in Social Sciences at UQ, she was elected as an Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2020. She has been instrumental in the formation of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures.



Emeritus Professor Aileen
Moreton-Robinson © The
University of Queensland

Her PhD thesis, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism* was published in 1999 to great critical acclaim, being short-listed for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and the Stanner Award. A 20th anniversary edition was published in 2019 by the University of Queensland Press.

She has written several influential books in the fields of Critical Race and Whiteness Studies and Critical Indigenous Studies.

PART IV

PROTOCOLS

10.

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

What is Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property?

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) refers to the rights that Indigenous people have, and want to have, regarding their traditional knowledge, cultural practices, spiritual knowledge, ancestral material, and language that has been passed down from generation to generation. ([Terri Janke and Company](#) 1998).

Terri Janke and Company ([1998](#)) write that ICIP can refer to:

- Literary, performing, and artistic works
- Languages
- Types of knowledge, including spiritual knowledge
- Indigenous ancestral remains and genetic material
- Cultural environmental resources
- Sites of Indigenous significance
- Documentation of Indigenous heritage.

Watch the [Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property: Arts Law's Artists in the Black Service video \(YouTube, 2m10s\)](#), produced by Arts Law and CAAMA.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=384#oembed-1>

Why is ICIP important?

In modern Australia, it has been noted that the property rights systems created by Western intellectuals often create individual property rights. Such rights are often subject to transactions and were created to encourage commercial and industrial growth. Michael Davis and Company note that these systems

are conceptually limited in their ability to afford recognition and protection of Indigenous intellectual property and cultural rights (Research paper no. 20, 1996-1997, [Australian Parliament House](#), p.8, p. 35).

In 2007, a [Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector](#) heard evidence that 'current intellectual property laws and moral rights legislation may not provide adequate protection of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property and Indigenous communal moral rights' (*Indigenous Art—Securing the Future*: Chapter 11, 'Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights', p. 157).

ICIP rights are still not recognised by any specific legislation in Australia. ICIP rights may be protected by copyright laws, trademarks, laws around trade practice, and confidential information laws. However, the protection is finite and subsequently, a lot of Indigenous cultural knowledge and expression is not protected ([Jean Kearney and Terri Janke](#) 2018).

In essence, ICIP rights aim to protect Indigenous people from exploitation by:

- enabling Indigenous peoples to own and control ICIP rights
- allowing Indigenous groups to commercialise ICIP rights in accordance with their specific traditional laws
- fostering commercial benefits from the authorised use of ICIP rights
- providing protection of significant tangible and sacred materials ([National Copyright Unit](#)).

To sum up, while ICIP rights are somewhat protected by some Australian laws such as the Copyright Act 1968, the protection is limited ([Terri Janke and Company](#) 1998). Therefore, it is important that non-Indigenous Australians recognise the limitations of Western laws in protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their ICIP. As a result of these limitations, it is important non-Indigenous Australians remain respectful, seek consent, recognise and protect ICIP and maintain the conversation with Indigenous Australians surrounding ICIP.

11.

PASSING OF AN ELDER OR VALUED PERSON

Sorry Business

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have numerous customary practices and protocols when a family member or a member of their community passes. The traditional ceremonies and practices followed during these times of mourning are known as 'Sorry Business'. These customs differ between and among individual language groups and Sorry Business is a time that must be approached with great respect and understanding. Cultural protocols during these times have many intricacies and there may be several duties which a staff or student is responsible to undertake throughout the bereavement period. These are cultural obligations which must always be prioritised over workplace commitments.

It is important to note that bonds and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples transcend immediate family and direct blood relations. Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people value and view themselves as members of their community rather than as individuals; hence, when bereavement is experienced within a family, there is shared mourning and feelings of grief throughout the entire community. Family, in this context, is important to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and should be met with cultural sensitivity and respect.

The passing of Elders, specifically, is highly significant. Losing an Elder not only means losing a member of a community, but also the loss of all of the knowledge that person once held. Deep knowledge of cultural history, practices, and lore is also lost when an Elder passes.

Example of Sorry Business Protocols

When there has been a death in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, it is not unusual for whole communities to 'shut down'. When this happens, protocol will call for the cancellation of planned meetings and any other activities. In some communities, people from outside of the community such as government and non-government organisations who want to do business there are not allowed to enter the community. Any organisation wanting to do

business in the community should be respectful during the grieving period and wait until they have been told it is okay to enter again.

Some additional customs which apply to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during the mourning period can include (but are not limited to):

- restriction on the participation of non-Sorry Business related activities or events
- families living in the same house for extended periods of time
- duties to care for specific members of family or community
- being responsible, as an in-law, for the organisation of some ceremonies
- obligations in undertaking traditional hunting practices (for extended periods of time)
- rehearsal of traditional songs and dances, for performance within ceremonies.

Further protocols which must be followed by all can include (but are not limited to):

- not using the given names of a deceased person (as this may call one's spirit back before they are able to rest)
- not using the images or voices of a deceased person.

These protocols are often followed by media outlets. You may have seen a warning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that a program contains images or voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Or, you may see a statement advising that the deceased person's name has been shortened or changed for cultural reasons. Sometimes, the family will give permission for the person's name to be used.

It is respectful for institutions to fly the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flags at half-mast when an Elder or Valued person passes.

Time Away from Work or School

Students and workers may be required to return to their home communities for the undertaking of ceremonies upon the passing of a family member. Physically being with family and community is of utmost priority. Certain cultural obligations will often dictate the amount of time away from work and/or study which a student or worker may require. It is important to accommodate for extended periods of leave and time away from work and/or studies so that Sorry Business can occur without further distress.

A funeral for someone who has recently passed might not happen immediately due to challenges organising the ceremony. It can take days, weeks, or even months before a funeral takes place. During this

time, other ceremonial events may take place, and people with roles within the family/community will continue to follow bereavement protocols.

Continued Cultural Obligations After the Funeral

Cultural obligations do not cease once the burial of the deceased person has taken place. Some obligations require Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take on the responsibility of looking after family members of the deceased and to remain within their community. Taking on such responsibilities may interrupt the capacity of the bereaved person to work or study.

Tombstone Unveilings (Torres Strait Islander Cultures)

In Torres Strait Islander cultures, the unveiling of a person's headstone is a ceremonial practice which is just as culturally significant and involved as the funeral service. Tombstone/headstone unveiling ceremonies occur within one to five years of a person's passing, after the initial burial.

Tombstone unveilings are large ceremonies which may span many weeks of preparation before the ceremony is held. To be able to properly commemorate and celebrate a person's life after an untimely passing requires much planning time, as the ceremony may involve the entire community.

Staff and students are eligible to take extended leave for Sorry Business ceremony and tombstone unveilings.

Example of Appropriate Communication

It is important to maintain respect throughout all communications during the mourning period and to approach these situations with an open mind and heart. Listening and learning during these situations is important for all, as it will develop the cultural awareness of the University. If you inadvertently cause offence, apologise, and be willing to learn. Below is an example and notes to help supervisors, colleagues and students approach workers or students going through Sorry Business in a study or workplace setting with cultural sensitivity.

Reach out

Send a message to the individual. Maintaining culturally sensitive communications with colleagues/students is important throughout the mourning process.

Say "I am deeply sorry for your loss."

Wait

Allow time for a reply. The physical and emotional labours of Sorry Business will often lead to time away from technology as the focus shifts towards the person's cultural obligations.

Ask

If appropriate, you may wish to ask the person, their family, or an Indigenous Liaison Officer who knows the individual:

“Are there any cultural protocols you need me to follow?”

This may also be an appropriate time to receive clarity about the person's cultural commitments:

“Do you know how much time you might need to be away?” and “Are there any obligations which might affect your capacity to return to your role?”

Notes regarding Sorry Business

- Requesting a death certificate immediately may cause further emotional distress. Where possible, give the person time to provide this.
- Accommodating for additional time off is always valued.
- For Torres Strait Islander workers and students, provide additional time off for Tombstone Unveilings.
- Maintain communication with your colleague or student and meet them with cultural sensitivity.
- Explain the significance of Sorry Business respectfully to other colleagues and students to help spread cultural awareness.

12.

THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAGS

What do the flags mean?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are a pure and enduring symbol of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing spiritual connection to the land.

Following wide acceptance of the flags in Australian society, the Governor General of Australia, William Hayden, proclaimed both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to be ‘Flags of Australia’ on 14 July 1995.

Both flags have permanent positions on all three UQ campuses. At the St. Lucia campus, you’ll see the flags soaring on top of the Forgan Smith Building, as you drive up Sir Fred Schonell Drive. Nearby at Herston, you’ll see the flags flying in front of the Mayne Medical Building and at the main entrance of the Gatton campus. Try to spot these the next time you’re at any of the UQ campuses!



Flags on top of Forgan Smith Building, St Lucia campus © The University of Queensland.

Aboriginal flag

The Aboriginal flag was designed by Harold Joseph Thomas, a Luritja man from Central Australia, to advocate for his people's civil rights. It was first flown on National Aborigines' Day on 12 July 1971 and then at the Tent Embassy in 1972.



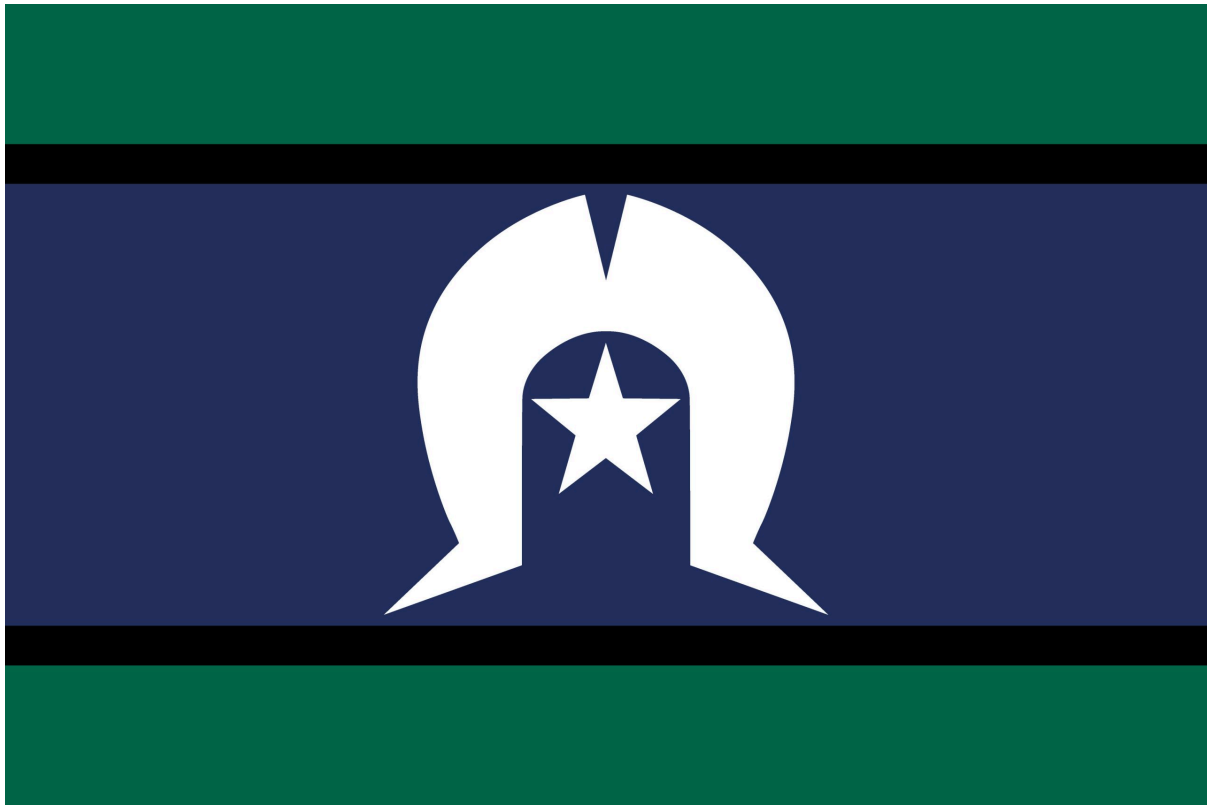
The Aboriginal Flag, designed by Harold Joseph Thomas

The flag's design consists of equal halves of black and red with a yellow circle in its centre. The top of the flag is black and represents the Aboriginal people. The lower half of the flag is red and depicts the Earth and ochre, a precious resource that carries ceremonial significance. In the centre is the sun, the yellow circle, the constant giver of life. Together, these symbols denote the Aboriginal people's deep-rooted relationship to the land, bound and sustained by the sun ([Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#)).

"I've got a symbol that represents me and who I am, whether I live in Redfern or Adelaide or Perth, I'm proud of it." – Harold Thomas ([Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#))

Torres Strait Islander flag

Designed by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island in 1992, the Torres Strait Islander flag symbolises the unity and identity of all Torres Strait Islanders.



The Torres Strait Islander flag is designed by Mr Bernard Namok. Used with permission from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

The Torres Strait Islander flag's design shows the colours green, black and blue in its backdrop, and in its centre is a white *dhari** (a type of dancer's headdress and a pertinent symbol of the Torres Strait) and a white five-pointed star ([Torres Strait Regional Authority](#)).

The green represents the land while the large span of blue symbolises the sea. The black lines dividing the two colours depict the Torres Strait Islander people. The *dhari* in the centre symbolises the identity and unity of Torres Strait Islanders and their culture. The *dhari* is usually worn at night by males for performances (the *dhari's* movement during the dance has been described famously as “a pearl shell dropped in water”). The *dhari* is traditionally made with Frigate Bird and Torres Strait Pigeon feathers ([Queensland Museum Network](#) 1988). The white five-pointed star represents the five island groups (for sea-faring Torres Strait Islander people, the star is a symbol of navigation and direction), while the white colour of the star refers to peace.

* Spelling varies between the islands. For example, in the Western Islands, where Kala Lagaw Ya is spoken, the headdress is called *Dhoeri*. The design and its use may also vary slightly ([Queensland Museum Network](#) 1988).

Why is flying the flags important?

Flying the flags is a visible representation of respect. The flags are flown on significant dates and during significant weeks including NAIDOC Week (the first week in July) and National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June) to celebrate, respect, and promote greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture.

Raising the flags showcases commitment towards and recognition of Reconciliation, and creates a more welcoming and inclusive community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



The flag poles in front of Mayne Medical Building, Herston campus © The University of Queensland.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags at the UQ Gatton campus entrance © The University of Queensland.

What are the protocols for raising and lowering the flags?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown in conjunction with the Australian flag. The flags should be flown upright with the Aboriginal flag to the left of the Torres Strait Islander flag. The Aboriginal flag must always have the black half upward to the sky and the red half downwards. The Torres Strait Islander flag is upright when the *Dhari* appears like a downward horse-shoe. If required to be hung in portrait rather than landscape position, then the top of the flag is to the left.

It is respectful to acknowledge when an Elder or Valued Person passes away. The flags are lowered to the half-mast position as a sign of mourning. The half-mast position is when the top of the flag is approximately one-third of the distance down from the top of the mast. With the passing of Elders and/or Valued Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, the flags remain in the half-mast position until the funeral of the Elder and/or Valued Member has occurred.

What about copyright?

In 2022, the [Australian Government](#) secured the copyright licence for the Aboriginal Flag, following negotiations with flag designer, Harold Thomas. Use of the Aboriginal flag will now follow the same protocols as for the [Australian National Flag](#), where its use is free, but it must be treated with respect and dignity. The Aboriginal flag can be used on UQ websites and social media sites where appropriate, but not in email signatures.

However, [Carroll & Richardson Flagworld](#) still holds an exclusive licence to reproduce or authorise the reproduction of the design of the Aboriginal flag on flags, pennants, banners and bunting and to manufacture, promote, advertise, distribute and sell those products throughout the world.

The Torres Strait Islander flag is also under copyright licence. Permission to use the Torres Strait Islander flag is obtained in writing by approaching the [Torres Strait Island Regional Council](#), subject to the following conditions:

- where appropriate, recognition is given to the original designer, the late Mr Bernard Namok
- original PMS colours are used
- permission must be received in writing from the Council prior to its use.

Do you remember the 'Free the Flag' and #PridenotProfit campaign?

Prior to the Australian Government securing copyright of the Aboriginal flag on 25 January 2022, the world-wide exclusive license to reproduce the flag on clothing was owned by a non-Indigenous company. The company issued cease and desist notices to companies including Clothing the Gap, Aboriginal Health Services, the AFL (which uses the flag on club jerseys for its Indigenous round) and Spark Health, an Indigenous social enterprise. The national campaign sparked wide support to stop the non-Indigenous company having the exclusive license, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were joined by non-Indigenous people to 'free the flag'.

Was the Commonwealth Government securing the copyright an appropriate solution? Some agree, some are unsure, while others disagree. Read this article – [Don't say the Aboriginal flag was 'freed' – it belongs to us, not the Commonwealth](#) – by Professor Bronwyn Carlson (2022) to understand a range of views on 'freeing' the flag.

13.

WELCOME TO AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY: IN PRACTICE

What is a Welcome to Country?

Have you experienced or seen a Welcome to Country in-person, online or on TV?

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony given by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners or Elders who have been given permission to welcome visitors onto their Traditional land.

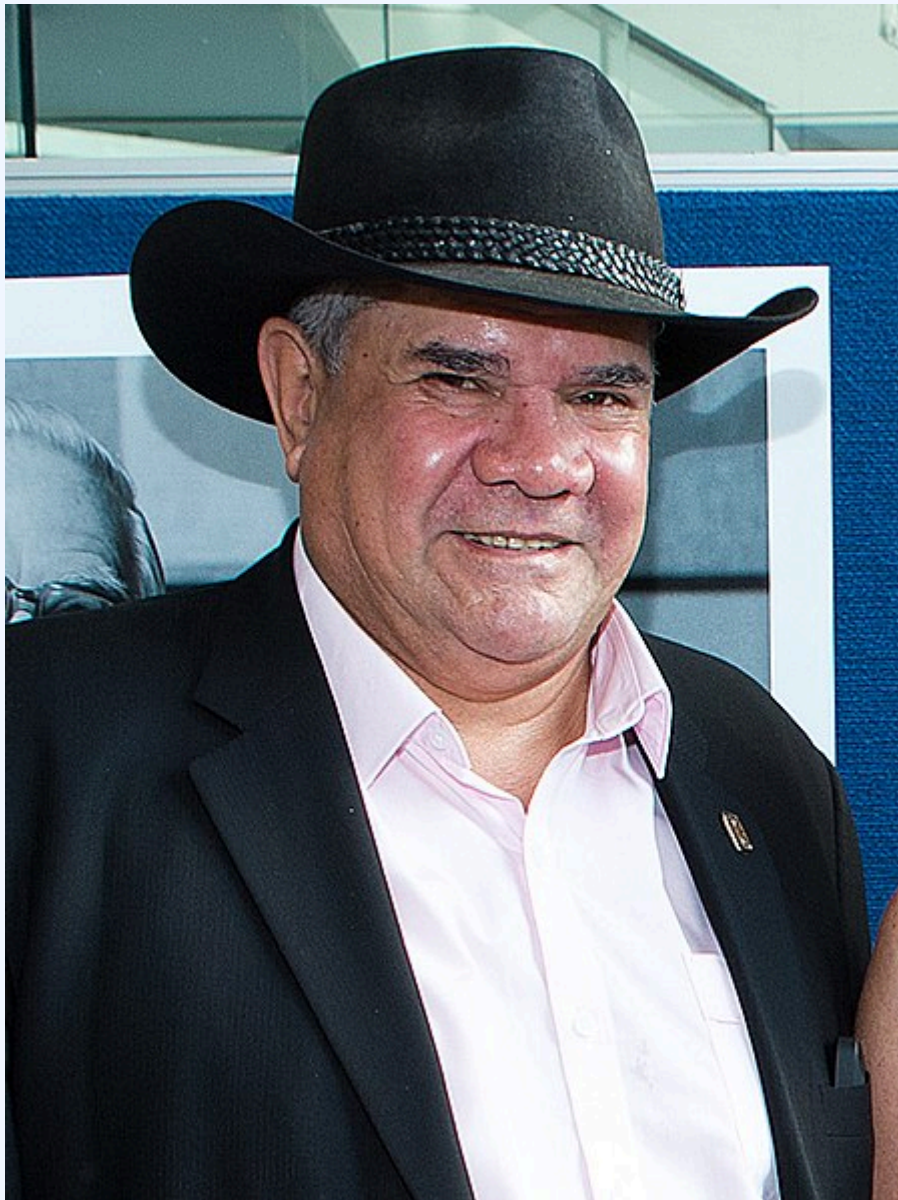
Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Traditionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups had clear boundaries separating their Country from that of other groups.

Crossing into another group's Country required a request for permission to enter. When permission was granted, the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage and protection of their spiritual being during the journey. While visitors were provided with a safe passage, they also had to respect the protocols and rules of the landowner group while on their Country.

Today, these protocols have been adapted to fit with contemporary life. However, the essential elements of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place. A Welcome to Country by the Traditional Owners of Country gives all of us the opportunity to think deeply about what it means to gain our livelihoods, to nurture our families, and to be on other people's lands.

[Reconciliation Australia](#) advises that in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the meaning of Country is more than just ownership or connection to land, as Professor Mick Dodson explains:

“When we talk about traditional ‘Country’...we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. For Aboriginal Australians...we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area, and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area... It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the title-holders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land.”



Mick Dodson at the launch of the ANU's National Centre for Indigenous Genomics in 2014 by [Ncig.Ncig](#), [CC BY-SA 2.0](#) via Wikimedia Commons.

When do I include a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country usually happens at the beginning of a formal event such as a conference, seminar or festival where people are coming from outside the local area. A Welcome can take many forms, including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, or a speech in Traditional language and/or English.

Sometimes there are cultural sensitivities for identifying the Traditional Owners of an area or region, for example, in the Greater Brisbane area. When this occurs, the Queensland Government Department

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) advises us to consult with each of the Traditional Owner Groups independently and limit the Welcome to Country to only one of the suggested groups. Where there are cultural sensitivities, it is recommended to give an Acknowledgement of Country and engage a local Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander group to provide a cultural expression of acknowledging Country. The expression could be as a poem, song, dance or one of the many varied forms of expression.

You can find a list of the known [Traditional Owners for UQ campuses and sites](#) in Part 2: People, Chapter 5.

Welcome to Country Example

Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers [Welcome to Country at UQ NAIDOC Festival 2020 Opening Ceremony \(YouTube, 16m24s\)](#), Great Court UQ St Lucia Campus.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=105#oembed-1>

Have you ever given an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of a meeting, event or presentation? Perhaps you felt nervous, a little anxious about stumbling on words or getting it wrong... it's ok, this section will give you some information and examples, and with some practice you might feel more experienced and confident.

What is an Acknowledgement of Country?

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Australia's Traditional Owners, and for the continuing connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to the land, sea, sky and waterways. An Acknowledgement of Country can be given by an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous person, and is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion.

The most appropriate person is the person opening an event, chair of a committee or meeting. Best practice is to not presume that the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the room will provide the Acknowledgement of Country. The presence of a non-Indigenous person in the room providing an

Acknowledgement of Country shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that non-Indigenous people have given thought to what an Acknowledgement of Country means for them and for the occasion.

An Acknowledgement can be given in person, on teleconferences or through online platforms such as Zoom. When given through an online platform, the speaker acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country on which they are located, and extends the acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners of the land on which participants are joining into the conference, meeting or seminar from. The speaker does not need to name each Traditional Owner Group but rather is acknowledging that there are unique and diverse Traditional Owners for areas across the continent and surrounding islands, today known as Australia.

Acknowledgement of Country Examples

Watch this [Acknowledgement of Country \(YouTube, 2m20s\)](#) video to see UQ staff and students acknowledging Country.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=105#oembed-2>

To include a spoken Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of an event, meeting or gathering

The University of Queensland recommends a short and longer version for Acknowledging Country.

When to speak a short face-to-face version for Acknowledging Country

You may use the shorter version if you are not the first person to Acknowledge Country or in a more informal setting or thanking a Traditional Owner for welcoming people to Country

I (too,) acknowledge the (* people as) Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet today and pay my respect to their Ancestors and their descendants.

When to speak the longer face-to-face version for Acknowledging Country

If you are the main speaker at the event/gathering or the first person to present, it is appropriate to use the longer version for Acknowledging Country.

I acknowledge the (* people as) Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet today. On behalf of ** I pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Suggested wording for acknowledging Country on an online platform e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams

I acknowledge the (* people as) Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the land from which I join you today. I acknowledge too the Traditional Owners of the lands from which you are joining into this ***. On behalf of (**organisation) I pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Suggested wording for a written Acknowledgement of Country

The authors/ organisation acknowledge/s the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which the authors/ organisation are located. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Tips

Remember to pause briefly after Acknowledging Country as a sign of respect. If you are more familiar with Acknowledging Country, you may add a statement about the event, meeting or forum's connection with Country. For example, at a higher education event, you might acknowledge that the campus has always been a space for teaching, learning, research and collaboration tens of thousands of years before it was established as a UQ campus, and education on Country continues today.

A growing number of publications, websites and email signatures include a written Acknowledgement of Country. Positioning of the Acknowledgement depends on the format of the document or site. For example, in a publication, it might appear on the page following copyright advice.

If known, add the Traditional Owners' language group/ nation/clan. You can refer to the Traditional Owner Groups of UQ Campuses and Sites guide to identify the Traditional Owners of UQ campuses and sites. You may need to contact the local regional office of DATSIP to understand who the Traditional Custodians are in Queensland.

Why are Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country important?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem, and for many years, Australian democracy. This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians today. Including a formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in events, meetings, and national symbols is one way of ending the exclusion that has been so damaging.

Incorporating Welcoming and Acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land. It shows an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ongoing connection to place, and shows respect for Traditional Custodians.

Reflection Opportunity

Through deeply reflecting and thinking about the profound connection and belonging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with Country and about your own connection, you can deepen your understanding of acknowledging Country and what it means to you.

- You might begin your research with questions including “If known, who are the Traditional Owners of Country you are acknowledging and what are those communities’ stories? What were the communities’ experiences of colonisation – historically and currently? Are there local Community-controlled organisations in the area?”
- You might start to reflect on your own experience with Country with questions including “What is my connection to Country and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a belonging to this Country? As I’m deepening my understanding, how am I positioned in terms of my heritage and family lines?”
- You might then start to think about “How do I translate these ideas and knowledges into acknowledging Country?”

14.

PAYMENT FOR CULTURAL SERVICES AND PERFORMANCES

When engaging an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner, Elder, community member or organisation for a cultural service, it is appropriate and respectful to pay for the service provided. Services and cultural activities may include a Welcome to Country, cultural expression of Acknowledgement to Country, smoking ceremony, dance, musical performance, poetry reading or workshop. It is important to remember that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations hold the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property for the service, activity and cultural knowledge.

In this chapter, you can learn some considerations and tips for respectfully and appropriately engaging an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner, Elder, community member or organisation for a cultural service.

When working with an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander artist, it is important for the UQ representative to provide appropriate remuneration and to discuss and negotiate matters of copyright and intellectual property. It is important to offer the true value for use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, images, cultural works, designs, songs and videos. Read more about [Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property](#).

Top Tips

Always work to ensure the general comfort and cultural safety of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner, Elder, community member or organisation.

- Identify and contact people and organisations in the initial planning of the activity, event, conference, workshop or meeting. Contacting people a couple of weeks before (or even less) to organise a service or activity makes it appear that the inclusion is an afterthought or not valued in the planning process.
- Remember to allocate a budget to the activity or service and negotiate method of payment ahead of the service and activity. For example, some Elders may not have an

ABN and you will need to work with Finance to navigate UQ systems. This is an internal issue, not a supplier issue.

- Avoid being only 'transactional' in the engagement as discussed in [Part 2: Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#).
- **Additional tips for creating reciprocity**
 - If the cultural service is an event or being provided by an Elder or high-profile Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander person, please email pvcie@uq.edu.au to engage with and inform the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement).
 - Offer to arrange transport to and from and /or parking near the venue.
 - Organise for a staff member to receive the Elder and/ or community representatives to ensure general comfort and way-finding.
 - Consider whether family or support people might attend with an Elder or community representative and ensure that there is appropriate seating and catering.
 - Follow up after the service and/ or activity, as appropriate, to reflect on what worked well and learnings.
- Understand that Traditional Owners, Elders and community members and organisations have cultural and community responsibilities and obligations that continue outside of the service or activity being provided. These obligations and responsibilities take precedence over the provision of a service or activity and respecting this situation will strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

PART V

SIGNIFICANT DATES AND EVENTS



Joe McGinness, Charles Perkins and others campaigning at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, c1967. [© Union of Australian Women](#)

Many of us did not learn at school about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant dates, and in fact, many of the dates that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (and some non-Indigenous communities) are still not recognised nationally. You may not hear about them like you do for significant British or Commonwealth dates such as royal dates, or dates of invasion. It takes some commitment from all of us to establish dates significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as important days on everyone's calendar, and to show our support and celebrate as we stand with, where appropriate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on these days of significance.

Below we have listed dates of significance at the UQ, as the lands where you study, live, work and play, as well as national dates of significance.

Significant Dates at UQ St Lucia – 1960s/1970s

The St Lucia campus became a political hotbed during the reign of Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson from 1968 to 1987. For many people, Queensland became a very unsafe space during his time

in power. Stories of people being detained without reason, and of intimidation, harassment and police brutality were rife in this period, especially if you were an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

Although Joh Bjelke-Peterson's Country/National Party government tried to limit marches and protests by imposing strict rules for permits, student groups and associations such as the Vietnam Action Committee and the leaders of the Civil Liberties March at UQ successfully managed to hold large gatherings at the UQ Student Union Complex and its Forum area. ([Marnane and Bower](#) 2021)



Student Protest outside the UQ Student Union Complex in 1969. Source: University of Queensland Archives, UQA S177 p1390b © The University of Queensland.

Aboriginal activists were central to this protest movement. After these activities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous student activists united in a large gathering at the UQ Student Union Complex, where the late Wangerriburra/ Birri Gubba activist Sam Watson (1952 – 2019) gave his first public speech in 1971. Watson later stood as a Socialist Alliance candidate, worked in Aboriginal legal rights, and became a deputy director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at UQ in 2009.

These large gatherings marched from the St Lucia campus along Coronation Drive to Roma Street Forum in the city on many occasions. Along with the anti-war demonstrations, such as the Vietnam War Moratorium march in 1970, racial justice activities and resistance to racism became an inseparable part of the history of the UQ Student Union Complex. Several key events highlight the significance of the UQ Student Union Complex in this regard.

In 1971, the site was used to organise a large protest against the apartheid regime in South Africa. The protest was ignited by the arrival in Brisbane of the Springboks, the South African rugby union team, on the first leg of their tour of Australia. Prior to the Springboks' arrival, a state of emergency had been

declared by the Queensland State government in anticipation of protests. Within a couple of days, the protest resulted in a university-wide strike and more widespread national action against apartheid in South Africa ([Queensland Police](#) 2017; [Garnham](#) 2021)



‘White Australia has a Black History’ mural by Michelle Barney, June Breen and Joe Hurst (1988) at UQ Student Union Complex, St Lucia campus. Photograph by Ali Rad Yousefnia, 2021. © The University of Queensland

A critical visual reference signalling the presence of Aboriginal staff and students at the university, and a reflection of their history of place and resistance at UQ, is a mural created by Aboriginal students at the site (above). The mural depicts imagery of traditional Aboriginal culture, select national events and other themes of survival, resilience and protest. The mural was painted by Aboriginal artists June Breen, Michelle Barney and Joe Hurst in the lead-up to the official celebrations accompanying the 1988 Australian Bicentenary, a milestone that triggered a national debate about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and national identity.

Launched by Garumgah / Dungibara artist Vanessa Fisher, the mural was defaced by racist graffiti in the form of a white-painted ‘KKK’ symbol across the Aboriginal flag on the mural’s right side ([Go-Sam, Greenop, Marnane and Bower](#) 2021). The artists cleverly captured the confrontational vandalism for posterity, cover up the offending symbol, but they left a barely discernible trace of the KKK reference and added an AK47 complete with ammunition belt in the bottom right corner (Go-Sam, Greenop, Marnane and Bower 2021).

In 2003, the mural was endorsed by the late Aboriginal Elder Sam Watson (below), who reinforced the significant historical values of mutual respect and equality symbolised in the artwork. The mural has been visually obscured by a masonry stairwell and garden bed in subsequent upgrades to the UQ Student Union Complex.



Sam Watson's words recorded on the Mural dedication plaque. Photograph by Ali Rad Yousefnia, 2021. © The University of Queensland

Other significant dates at UQ

Year	Significance of the year
1944	Joe Croft, first Aboriginal student to enrol at UQ
1950	Willie McKenzie and Janey Sunflower (nee Morton) are the first Aboriginal advisors to work at UQ
1966	Dr Margaret Valadian (MBE, AO) becomes the first Aboriginal person to graduate with a full Bachelors degree at UQ
1973	<i>Australian Journal of Indigenous Education</i> is first published
1979	Dr Lilla Watson is appointed as UQ's first Aboriginal tutor, and then as a lecturer in the Department of Social Work in 1984
1984	UQ establishes the Aboriginal and Islander Studies Unit (now Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit) and <i>Murri Hour</i> , Queensland's first Indigenous radio show, begins on 4ZZZ, broadcasting from UQ's St Lucia campus, featuring singer/ songwriter Kev Carmody
1985	UQ appoints Jeanie Bell as the first coordinator of the Aboriginal and Islander Studies Unit (now Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit)
2002	Dr Lilla Watson is appointed as the first Aboriginal UQ Senate member
2010	Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop is UQ's first Torres Strait Islander PhD to graduate
2011	Professor Cindy Shannon is appointed as UQ's first Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)
2015	UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health is established
2018	UQ's first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is launched and UQ holds the inaugural UQ NAIDOC Festival (Week 2, Semester 2 annually)
2022	UQ opens Kev Carmody House , student residential accommodation, and offers Kev Carmody Scholarships to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students experiencing financial hardship with the cost of residential fees at the Kev Carmody House

National Days of Significance

Date	Significance
26 January	<p>Survival Day / Invasion Day</p> <p>For some Australians, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, January 26 is not a day of celebration, but is seen as a day which commemorates the invasion by British settlers of lands already owned.</p> <p>For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Australia Day is also an opportunity to recognise the survival of our people and our culture. Despite colonisation, discrimination, and comprehensive inequalities, we continue to practise our traditions, look after the land, and make our voices heard in the public sphere. We survive.</p> <p>Things to do: Hold a BBQ, join a street march, post on social media, learn about the significance by watching films and documentaries, reading books and listening to podcasts. Let's Talk... January 26 from Reconciliation Australia has more information.</p>
13 February	<p>Anniversary of National Apology Day</p> <p>On 13 February 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the National Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the injustices of past government policies, particularly with regard to the Stolen Generations. The day is important to recognise.</p> <p>Things to do: Read about the history, celebrate distinguished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, speak up against discriminatory laws, watch the Apology and go to or hold a group discussion. The Healing Foundation has more information.</p>
Third Thursday of March	<p>National Close the Gap Day</p> <p>National Close the Gap Day is an annual event that raises awareness and seeks to close the gap with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, educational and employment outcomes between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>Things to do: Start your own activity in your workplace (host a talk or screening with staff), sign the pledge and or host an event to encourage colleagues and find out more about National Close the Gap Day.</p>
21 March	<p>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</p> <p>The United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960.</p> <p>In 1979, the General Assembly adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organised annually internationally.</p> <p>Things to do: Show your support for anti-racism campaigns such as Racism. It Stops with Me or #fight racism.</p>

26 May	<p>National Sorry Day</p> <p>National Sorry Day provides an opportunity for people to come together and share the journey towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families, and communities.</p> <p>Things to do: Post messages of support on social media, attend a Link Up or commemorative event, form the word “sorry” with colleagues, friends, family and community (see below) and find out more from The Healing Foundation.</p>
26 May	<p>Anniversary of the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> being given to the Australian People</p> <p>“The <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> is an invitation to the Australian people. We ask Australians to accept our invitation to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling about our history.” (First Nations Constitutional Convention 2017)</p> <p>The Convention first issued the Statement to the Australian people on 26 May 2017.</p> <p>Things to do: Read the <i>Uluru Statement</i> at a team or staff meeting, hold a panel discussion about what the calls to action mean in the context of your workplace, watch a webinar and write a letter to your Minister of Parliament. Find out more at From the Heart.</p>
27 May	<p>1967 Referendum</p> <p>The 1967 Referendum was a landmark achievement following decades of activism by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people, where more than 90 percent of Australians voted in favour of amending two sections of the Australian Constitution.</p> <p>Things to do: During your lunch break find out more about the 1967 Referendum and look on the Reconciliation Australia website for events in your area.</p>
27 May – 3 June	<p>National Reconciliation Week</p> <p>National Reconciliation Week celebrations commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey: the anniversaries of the successful 1967 Referendum and the High Court Mabo Decision.</p> <p>Things to do: Check out the theme, resources and actions to take at National Reconciliation Week. Download social tiles and banners from the NRW website and share amongst you friends and family.</p>

29 May	<p>Torres Strait Islander flag first flown</p> <p>The flag was officially presented to the people of the Torres Strait at the sixth Torres Strait Cultural Festival on 29 May, 1992. The following month, the flag was recognised by the former national body, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and given equal prominence with the Aboriginal flag. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)</p> <p>Things to do: Take some time out to learn about the Torres Strait Islander flag and culture and attend or organise a flag raising ceremony in your area. Find out more from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.</p>
3 June	<p>Mabo Day</p> <p>On June 3, 1992, the High Court of Australia overturned the principle of ‘terra nullius’ or ‘nobody’s land’ as claimed by the British when they first arrived in this country. The decision has paved the way for Native Title legislation.</p> <p>Things to do: Reflect upon Eddie Mabo’s legacy and steps to contribute to reconciliation in Australia. Attend or organise a panel discussion on Native title, treaty or sovereignty.</p>
1 July	<p>Coming of the Light</p> <p>The Coming of the Light is celebrated annually by Torres Strait Islander peoples. It marks the adoption of Christianity through island communities during the late nineteenth century.</p> <p>Things to do: Take some time in the day to listen, read or watch a Torres Strait Islander person or group talk about culture. Find out more from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.</p>
First Sunday to Sunday week of July	<p>NAIDOC Week</p> <p>Each year, NAIDOC Week celebrations highlight the rich and diverse cultures of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians. NAIDOC Week celebrations and community events are a great opportunity for everyone to come together and acknowledge the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>Things to do: Check out the theme, resources and activities at National NAIDOC Week. Download and print a poster to raise awareness and start conversations.</p>
9 July	<p>Aboriginal flag first flown</p> <p>The flag was first raised on 9 July in 1971 at a land rights rally in Victoria Square/ Tarntanyangga, Adelaide, on then-National Aborigines Day. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)</p> <p>Things to do: Take some time out to learn about the Aboriginal flag and cultures and attend or organise a flag raising ceremony in your area.</p>

14 July	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags recognised as Flags of Australia</p> <p>On 14 July 1995, the Governor General of Australia William Hayden proclaimed both the Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag to be 'Flags of Australia' under the <i>Flags Act</i> 1953. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)</p>
4 August	<p>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day</p> <p>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about the crucial impact that community, culture, and family play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.</p> <p>Things to do: Find out more and things you can do for Children's Day.</p>
9 August	<p>International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>The day was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1994 to promote the protection and rights of Indigenous peoples and to celebrate Indigenous peoples' cultures and achievements all around the world. Read the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (PDF, 150KB), for more information.</p> <p>Things to do: Check out the theme, resources and activities at United Nations.</p>
First Wednesday of September	<p>Indigenous Literacy Day</p> <p>Indigenous Literacy Day is a national celebration of Indigenous culture, stories, language, and literacy. Through activities on the day, we focus our attention on the disadvantages experienced in remote communities and encourage the rest of Australia to raise funds and advocate for more equal access to literacy resources for remote communities. More information at the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.</p> <p>Things to do: Attend or organise a Great Book Swap where people swap a book for a donation to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.</p>
13 September	<p>Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People</p> <p>The 13 of September marks the anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from 2007, which affirms the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, security, and well-being of Indigenous peoples worldwide and enshrines Indigenous peoples' right to be different. Australia signed up to the Declaration in 2009.</p> <p>Things to do: Take a break and read the Declaration. You can also post on social media about the Article that resonates most with you.</p>



Aboriginal flag colours projected on the Forgan Smith Building, UQ St Lucia campus.© The University of Queensland



Torres Strait Islander flag colours projected on the Forgan Smith Building, UQ St Lucia campus. © The University of Queensland

PART V

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS

What is a Reconciliation Action Plan?

Have you heard about a Reconciliation Action Plan or RAP, as they are often talked about? Maybe you know of organisations with a RAP? Did you know that UQ has an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019 – 2022?

Reconciliation Australia is the peak body of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people in Australia. The aim of Reconciliation Australia is to “promote and facilitate reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” ([Reconciliation Australia](#) 2022).

Reconciling relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians involves recognising Australia’s history and its consequences, and considering present and future opportunities to heal those relationships. This is a large undertaking that requires all people in Australia to play their part. To assist organisations to actively support reconciliation, Reconciliation Australia developed and launched the RAP program. The program started in 2006 with eight organisations, and today more than 1100 organisations have a RAP. Organisations with a RAP directly impact over 3 million Australians at work every day ([Reconciliation Australia](#) 2022).

A RAP provides organisations with a framework, a set of actions and key deliverables across a broad range of areas, including:

- observing cultural protocols
- celebrating and commemorating days of significance
- increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment
- increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision-making
- community engagement
- economic outcomes and
- providing cultural learning.



UQ staff, students and community spell out UQRAP on Forgan Smith Lawn, November 2018. Photograph by Condý Canuto. © University of Queensland

Why does UQ need a RAP?

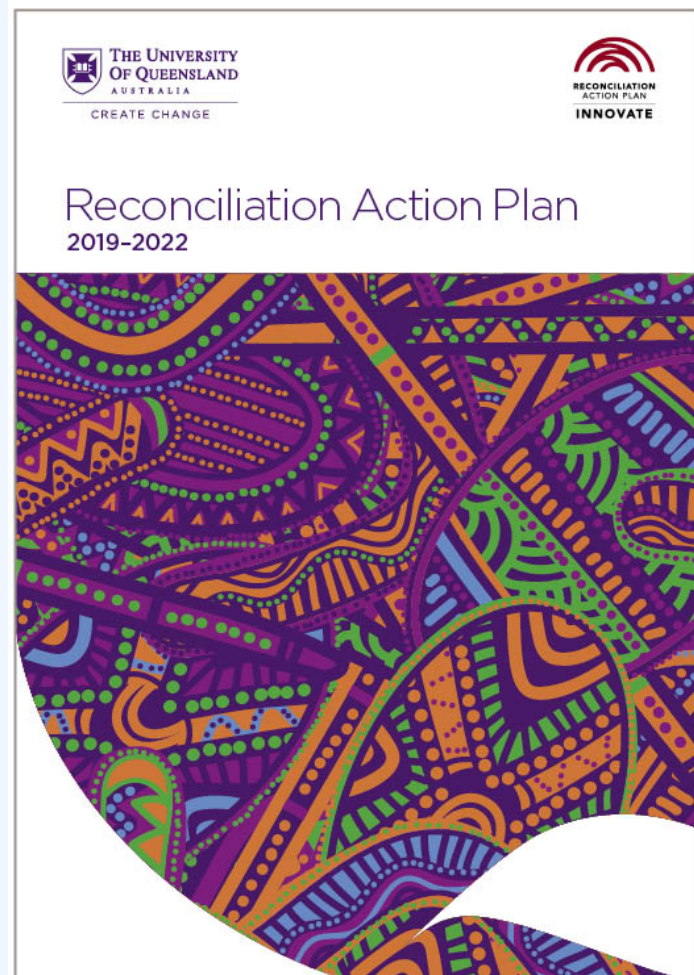
The University launched its inaugural Innovate RAP 2019 – 2022 in December 2018. Senior leadership committed UQ to developing a RAP in recognition that we need to do more to support reconciliation at UQ. Our RAP provides UQ with a framework to drive and strengthen respectful relationships and action opportunities across UQ's core business of teaching and learning, research, and enriching our communities. Read more at [Reconciliation at UQ](#).

Watch this video ([Vice Chancellor RAP Message \(Vimeo, 2m38s\)](#)), to hear from Professor Deborah Terry AO, UQ's Vice-Chancellor and President about the importance of a RAP for UQ.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=390#oembed-1>

Where is the RAP at and what kind of changes does it drive at UQ?



Front cover of UQ's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019 – 2022

UQ's Innovate RAP includes 17 actions for strengthening relationships, respect and opportunities:

- Increasing [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention](#)
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and improving student experience at UQ and beyond
- Engaging staff and students in the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning Plan \(PDF, 745KB\)](#) through
 - Online modules for staff ([Workday Learning app](#))
 - At least six educational events per year including National Reconciliation Week, UQ

- NAIDOC Festival and Research Week Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Forum
 - Social and community engagements
 - Workshops and cultural immersion experiences
 - [UQRAP Network](#)
- Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in decision-making and governance
- Ethical and culturally appropriate research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and intellectual property through the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy](#)
- Indigenising the curriculum and embedding culturally safe teaching and learning practices
- Applying the [Campuses on Countries: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Design Framework](#) in built and physical spaces
- Increasing knowledge and application of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols including [Acknowledgement of Country](#)
- Increasing UQ's spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the [Indigenous Procurement Strategy 2022-2025 \(PDF, 214KB\)](#)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander philanthropy through the sale of [RAP merchandise](#) for student scholarships and initiatives and fundraising efforts
- Strategic oversight by the RAP Oversight Committee, co-chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and President and an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander senior community member
- Annual reporting to Reconciliation Australia and UQ governing committees
- A [UQ Award for Excellence](#) in Reconciliation for staff from 2021.

What is UQ's Reconciliation Artwork?

Quandamooka artists Casey Coolwell and Kyra Mancktelow have produced an artwork that recognises the three major campuses, while also championing the creation of a strong sense of belonging and truth-telling about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, and ongoing connections with Country, knowledges, culture and kin. Although created as a single artwork, the piece can be read in three sections, starting with the blue/greys representing the Herston campus, the purple to denote St Lucia, and the orange/golds symbolising Gatton.

The graphic elements overlaying the coloured background symbolise UQ values:

- The Brisbane River and its patterns represent Excellence. Within the river pattern are tools used by Aboriginal people to teach, gather, hunt, and protect.
- Creativity and Truth are depicted through the Spirit Guardian, Jarjum ('child' in Yugambeh language), and the kangaroo.
- The jacaranda tree, bora ring, animal prints, footprints and stars collectively represent Integrity, Courage and Respect, and Inclusivity.



Quandamooka artists, Casey Coolwell (left) and Kyra Mancktelow (right) with the original acrylic on canvas triptych, *A Guidance Through Time*, 2019. © The University of Queensland

What can I do?

Watch this [Reconciliation Actions \(YouTube, 5m33s\)](#) video to learn about some of the things you can do to advance reconciliation at UQ.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/languageofrelationships/?p=390#oembed-2>

Reflection activity

After watching the video with helpful actions that you can take, reflect on what you can do and commit to at least one action over the coming year.

You could also consider taking one of the following additional actions:

- Joining the [UQRAP Network](#), local [reconciliation group](#) or a community group
- Purchasing [RAP merchandise](#) and [polos](#) as gifts for yourself, family, friends, colleagues, students, graduates, staff – so many opportunities!
- Watching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander films, listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander podcasts or music, or reading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander articles or literature
- Lending your support to key campaigns to advance reconciliation, e.g. [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#), [Racism. It Stops with Me](#) and [Indigenous Justice](#).
- Participating in a cultural experience in your local area to understand the history of where you live.
- Donating to the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#) which provides books and learning resources to children living in remote Communities across Australia
- Taking bystander action on racism: “Support the person, record and report the incident” (Watch the video again [Bystander action on racism, YouTube, 9m58s](#)).