



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Corporate Plan

2016-2020





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Introduction

I am pleased to present the AIATSIS Corporate Plan 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Our vision is a simple one, that the cultures and knowledge of Australia's Indigenous peoples are maintained, respected, celebrated, and valued throughout the nation and the world. We at AIATSIS are very proud of the work we do to enhance knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australia, past, present and future. We work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve this. AIATSIS is a unique institution. It has emerged from 50 years as a collection agency, as a product of its primary function as a research institute, a status that is currently reflected in its priority funding.

This plan provides clarity through strategic direction for the next four years at a time of significant transformation for the Institute. It acknowledges the urgent need to focus on collection preservation and improved access, and the staffing and technological capabilities required to achieve these goals. Alongside this emphasis we remain committed to our other functions: conducting research with impact; publishing texts that educate and inspire; and providing leadership through ethical practice across the research, cultural and policy domains.

The corporate plan is central to fostering a shared understanding of our purpose, priorities, and performance measures to ensure this small organisation continues to have a significant impact on the national and international stage. I thank everyone who contributed to its development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Dodson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Michael (Mick) Dodson AM



Vision

A world in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures are recognised, respected, celebrated and valued.

Purpose

AIATSIS' purpose is to:

- Develop, preserve and provide access to a national collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage;
- Use that collection to strengthen and promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage;
- Provide leadership in the fields of:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research;
 - Ethics and protocols for research and other activities relating to collections related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage; and
 - Use (including use for research) of the national collection and other collections containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage;
- Lead and promote collaborations and partnerships among the academic, research, non-government, business and government sectors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in support of other functions;
- Provide advice to the Commonwealth on the situation and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

Strategic Priorities

1. Ensuring our collection is safe, accessible, valued and growing.
2. Providing leadership in Indigenous research, and ethical engagement in research, collections and publishing.
3. Strengthening institutional and community understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.
4. Promoting and sharing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.
5. Building strong governance and organisational resilience.



Values

As a Commonwealth statutory agency we adhere to and are guided by the Australian Public Service values. This means we are:

- Impartial
- Committed to service
- Accountable
- Respectful
- Ethical

Operating Principles

In pursuing our purpose and strategic priorities, AIATSIS is guided by the following operating principles. These principles reflect the mindset we adopt and set out how we go about our work:

Perspective - we are driven by a deep understanding of who we are both as a statutory agency and a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander institution with a unique role and purpose

Process - we embody public sector professionalism and cultural responsiveness in the way we do things: we are focussed, strategic and responsive

Product - everything we do is marked by quality, reliability, depth and excellence

Presence - we are outward-looking, proactively engaged with our stakeholders and focussed on adding value

Operating Environment

New resources, renewed focus and new opportunity

The changes to the AIATSIS Act, particularly the revised functions and enhanced governance arrangements, along with significant additional ongoing resourcing, represent an unprecedented enhancement to our capacity to grow, preserve and make accessible our collections. In addition, the broader Indigenous affairs environment presents an opportunity for AIATSIS to position itself well as a source of authoritative knowledge and advice.



Innovation and a changing research environment

New initiatives for funding research through Research Block Grants, ARC Linkage Projects and the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure strategy (NCRIS) were launched by the Prime Minister on 7 December 2015.

Technological change

In a rapidly changing world of knowledge management, our information architecture and systems must enable us to harness opportunities presented by new technologies and digital transformation.

A growing and active Indigenous academy

AIATSIS works in an environment where the number of active Indigenous scholars and researchers is increasing.

Active Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research enterprise

The current Indigenous research environment is increasingly diverse and continues to grow. Indigenous communities, industry and government are actively engaged with research across a range of disciplines to resolve complex questions confronting Indigenous communities and share their knowledge to benefit society. The role of AIATSIS is changing from encouraging Indigenous research and developing Indigenous researchers to include identifying research priorities, achieving transformative research engagement and translating research into meaningful and impactful results.

Growing demand for information

There is an ever-growing audience demand in Australia, and internationally, for authoritative content on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, traditions, history and cultural heritage, to better understand the story of the first Australians - including consistent community calls for a national cultural centre.

Indigenous Affairs Arrangements

AIATSIS operates in an environment where leadership in Indigenous Affairs has largely been consolidated in the Prime Minister's portfolio, to ensure that the issues facing Indigenous Australia are shared and acted on across all portfolios. There is a particular focus on ensuring that children are provided with the best educational opportunities possible; improving opportunities for Indigenous employment and participation in the economy; and supporting communities to be safe.

Demand for efficiency

Resource constraints across government require agencies to adopt more efficient practices aimed at ensuring that available resources generate optimal outcomes.



Key Challenges 2016-17 to 2019-2020

AIATSIS' key challenges across the life of this plan include:

Preserving, managing and growing the AIATSIS' collection

Independently assessed as the most significant collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials in the world, the AIATSIS collection is invaluable not only to Indigenous peoples and communities but also to the nation. The challenge for AIATSIS is to continue its transformation from a repository in order to better deliver a strategic approach to collection growth, management, access and understanding. This includes identifying and documenting gaps in our collections of at-risk knowledge.

Building a sustainable resource base

AIATSIS is almost exclusively funded by government. Over the four years of this plan the challenge is to diversify our revenue base through more effective harnessing of philanthropic and corporate sector resources, in particular through the AIATSIS Foundation.

Understand and articulate our leadership role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research

The AIATSIS Act mandates an active leadership role for AIATSIS in Indigenous research. Over the life of this plan the challenge is to redefine our role in response to the changing and growing research environment, articulate a strategy to provide leadership and support across the sector, to work with Indigenous communities and researchers in identifying gaps and research needs and influencing research and policy to best address strategic challenges.

Increased public engagement that is strategic while managing demand and expectations

To strengthen our strategic communications and public engagement and connect with a larger and more diverse audience, especially increasing our relevance to Indigenous communities. Our engagement will be flexible and adaptive to meet priority needs.

Building and maintaining strategic partnerships

More effective collaboration with research and cultural agencies' networks, including international partners, and across government to inform and shape policy and practice and to promote coordination and information flows. The challenge is to build the right kind of relationships with the right partners to leverage expertise, maximise support and deliver on objectives.

Effective Change leadership

The changes in legislated functions, the significant increase in government funding and AIATSIS' own planning processes will initiate substantial change within the organisation. This will require effective leadership, including a clear strategy and processes that support reforms that better meet the expectations of institutional and community stakeholders.



Strategic Priorities

1

Ensuring our collection is safe, accessible, valued and growing.

Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to build a national collection and ensure preservation, discoverability and access to the collection.

Key Outcomes

- A refocused collection strategy and program aligned with policies and objectives that support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including a regional focus.
- Improved online discoverability, access and understanding of our collection.
- Increased scope and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the collection and increasing the national and international significance and value of the collection.
- Improved physical infrastructure for the storage, management and exhibition of the collection.

Key Actions

No.		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Develop and implement a strategy to grow the collection and conduct research to promote the value, significance and understanding of the collection.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Upgrade and maintain capable digital infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Develop, implement and maintain a single platform for the discovery of and research into Australian Indigenous languages	✓	✓	✓	✓

4	Develop and implement a digital technology program for the preservation of Indigenous community and organisational archives and knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Plan and implement appropriate physical storage for the expanding collection	✓	✓	✓	✓

2

Providing leadership in Indigenous research, and ethical engagement in research, collections and publishing.

AIATSIS has a crucial leadership role in Indigenous research, and in leading ethical practice in research, publishing and in creating, interpreting, maintaining and using collections of Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. AIATSIS will lead ethical practice with a focus on training and resources to support the take-up of key AIATSIS Guidelines for research, publishing and cultural learning. We will further develop our international role in linking institutions, nations, researchers and Indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on sharing practice and understanding, exchange and mobility, collaborative development and use of collections of Indigenous knowledge and engagement with Indigenous peoples.

Key Outcomes

- AIATSIS is recognised as a centre of excellence in Indigenous research and collection practices across a broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary spectrum.
- AIATSIS' advice and training in ethical research, collections and publishing practice is sought out and recognised.
- Analysis of the gaps in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evidence and knowledge base and of the state of Indigenous research.
- Revised Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS), and toolkit(s) adopted by Australian Universities.
- A fully developed suite of resources in cultural learning and competency.



Key Actions

No.		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Develop best practice and tools for assessing research impact and engagement	✓			
2	Provide advice to government on Indigenous research priorities	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Increase take up, training, resources, external clearances, best practice advice and forums to support the Guidelines for Ethical Research and the ethical publishing guidelines	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Review GERAIS to support a broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary research base		✓		
5	Develop a curriculum for cultural competency in Indigenous public policy (in partnership with Sydney University)		✓	✓	
6	Develop training materials and curriculum for ethical publishing	✓	✓	✓	
7	Providing advice and guidance on culturally sensitive and appropriate Indigenous collection management and access		✓	✓	✓
8	Increase international engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Stage the Indigenous Research Conference	✓		✓	

3

Strengthening institutional and community understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

AIATSIS will provide insights, leadership and advice to enhance understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultures and heritage, including policy development and program delivery. We will strengthen understanding of native title economies, Indigenous languages and knowledge systems, managing knowledge and information, family history and cultural determinants of wellbeing. Through our work we will contribute to building strong Indigenous organisations and communities and Indigenous livelihoods.

Key Outcomes

- National research priorities aligned to key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities policy areas with a focus on translating research into practice.
- AIATSIS is recognised by Indigenous peoples and governments as a centre of excellence in Indigenous policy, bringing together policy-making and academic expertise in areas of importance to Indigenous peoples' culture and heritage.
- Regular publication of unique and thought-provoking content that articulates and applies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, histories and cultures.
- Program of appropriate repatriation of existing collections and new collections focussed on broader areas of Indigenous knowledge.

Key Actions

No.		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Develop and implement Research and Reporting Framework to determine the current state of Indigenous cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), including relationships and indicators of change over time	✓			
2	Report and provide advice on the state of Indigenous culture and heritage		✓	✓	✓
3	Report on the state of Indigenous research as represented in Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Data 2006-13	✓	✓		
4	Conduct external and internal evaluations of AIATSIS research impact and engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Develop collaborative community driven projects for the Strengthen Preserve Renew initiative (BITL3)	✓	✓		
6	Conduct the third National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS3)		✓	✓	

7	Explore options for making the NILS3 findings public	✓	✓
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8	Further develop the Indigenous family history research service including training to the sector	✓	✓
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4

Promoting and Sharing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Heritage.

AIATSIS will adopt an integrated public education strategy, including public programs, to promote and share authoritative content on Indigenous histories, peoples and cultural heritage. Improved stakeholder management and engagement will inform fresh, relevant and thought-provoking content and experiences.

Key Outcomes

- Improved knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures and heritage.
- A more nuanced and sophisticated public engagement with our diverse communities.
- Greater awareness of our work with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- Timely publication of relevant, high-quality works, informed by research, and which contribute to the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Key Actions

No.		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Optimise digital platforms for improved online discoverability, access and use of the collection	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Produce relevant and engaging online content and collateral, communicating and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Maintain an innovative public program, and services to strengthen community participation, and attract partners and sponsors	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Share and promote the results and impact of AIATSIS Research	✓	✓	✓	✓



5	Implement a new publishing model for the AAS journal and develop strategies to increase the profile and reach of our research publishing activities	✓		
6	Identify opportunities that draw on the collection to produce publications that strengthen and share knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures		✓	✓
7	Initiate partnerships with other publishers to produce materials for the educational sector		✓	
8	Explore options for an AIATSIS public space	✓	✓	

5 Building Strong Governance and Organisational Resilience.

Our priority is to shift our focus to long-term capability-building in order to place AIATSIS on a secure and sustainable footing for the future. This includes inculcating forward-thinking behaviors, increasing Indigenous employment, enhancing professional competence and diversifying our resource base, enabled by changes to the AIATSIS Act, along with modernised governance and additional ongoing funding to support delivery and growth of our program of work.

Key Outcomes

- Governance in AIATSIS reflects best practice, and is achievement-oriented, transparent, and in accord with the expectations of our stakeholders.
- AIATSIS has a strong profile with government.
- AIATSIS has the resources that provide long term viability and sustainability.
- AIATSIS is a place where people want to work — a high performing culture that balances work, life and wellbeing.
- AIATSIS' staff is culturally competent.
- More than 35% of AIATSIS' staff is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.
- A knowledge management strategy that supports the opening of digital materials to the public and does so in ways that are meaningful and sustainable.
- Corporate services in AIATSIS meet the needs of AIATSIS and its staff.

Key Actions

No.		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1	Develop a capital plan to identify the assets and infrastructure that AIATSIS needs to undertake the activities in this corporate plan, and ensure that it is funded within the budget process	✓			
2	In conjunction with the AIATSIS Foundation, develop and implement a funding strategy by seeking input from corporate, private and philanthropic sources which allows AIATSIS to undertake work that is in accord with its strategic direction	✓			
3	Redevelop our human resource strategy focused on career advancement for succession planning; high levels of cultural competency; and effective HR support and services for AIATSIS staff and management	✓			
4	Increase recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff through an effective strategy to attract, train and retain Indigenous staff using tailored recruitment practices and traineeships to develop the skills AIATSIS needs in its new staff	✓	✓		
5	Maintain strategic engagement with government	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Engage membership in strategic thinking and innovation	✓	✓	✓	✓



Performance

Program 1.1

2016-17	Ability to accept new material that is offered to and accepted into the collection, the rate at which it is preserved and made discoverable and accessible.	<p>% change in the rate at which material is offered to the collection: +1%</p> <p>% increase in the rate at which material is accepted into the collection: +1.5%</p> <p>% increase in the rate at which the collection is made discoverable: +1%</p> <p>% increase in the rate at which the collection is accessed: +5%</p>
	Preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage to enable all Australians to appropriately access and experience knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present.	% increase in the rate of preservation of the collection: +5%
2017-18 and beyond	As per 2016-17	As per 2016-17

Program 1.2

2016-17	Delivery of contracted outputs and outcomes to actively strengthen, preserve, and renew Indigenous knowledge, promote understanding of Indigenous peoples and contribute positively to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<p>Monitor levels of quality, innovation and impact through:</p> <p>28 staff publications (6 per researcher)</p> <p>100% contracts completed</p> <p>Number of presentations;</p> <p>24 staff presentations (5 per researcher)</p> <p>Size of grants and research contracts:</p> <p>\$2,063,654 revenue from research activities (4.13 ratio income to investment)</p> <p>Monitor levels of quality, engagement and impact through:</p> <p>Number and value of research publications, grants and other outputs: 10% increase in numbers, maintain ratio</p> <p>Number and value of research partnerships and applied research: 2% increase</p> <p>Number and value of research impact assessments:</p> <p>Evaluations</p> <p>Reach and take-up of standards and guidance on best practice in research, engagement, publication and collections: 100% increase</p> <p>50% increase in external take-up</p>
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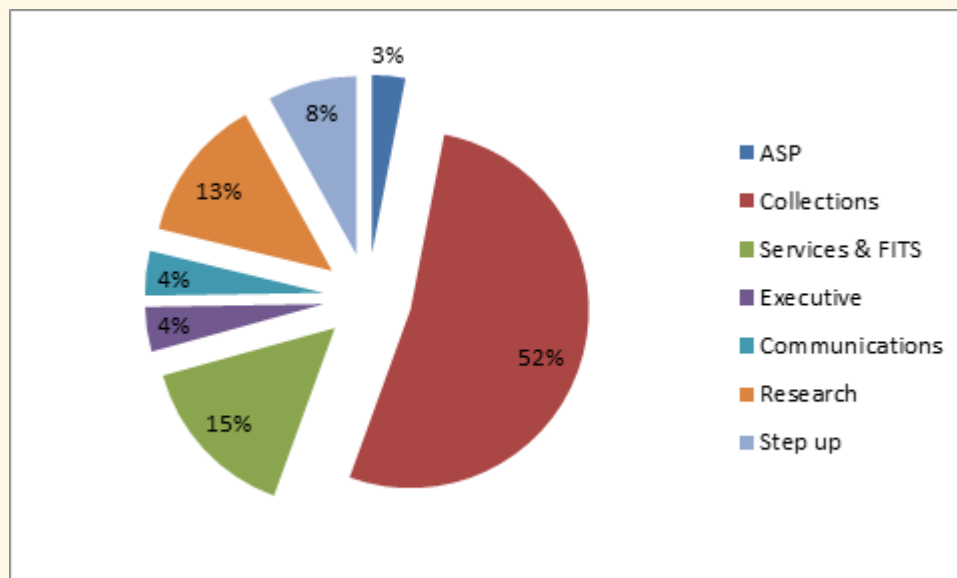
2017-18 and beyond	As per 2016-17	<p>100% contracts completed</p> <p>Monitor levels of quality, and efficiency:</p> <p>Number and value of research publications, grants and other outputs: 10% increase in numbers, maintain ratio</p> <p>Number of staff publications (& per researcher)</p> <p>Number of staff presentations (5 per researcher)</p> <p>Size of grants and research contracts</p> <p>Revenue from research activities (ratio income to investment)</p> <p>Monitor levels of engagement and impact through:</p> <p>Number and value of research partnerships and applied research: 2% increase</p> <p>Number and value of research impact assessments: Evaluations</p> <p>Reach and take-up of standards and guidance on best practice in research, engagement, publication and collections: 100% increase</p> <p>50% increase in external take-up</p>
Program 1.3		
2016-17	<p>Target groups include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities; non-Indigenous Australians; academic researchers; students; governments, industry; practitioners; people world-wide who are interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.</p> <p>This program enables all Australians to learn about and experience knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present.</p> <p>Following the 2015-16 review of Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS will undertake a refresh of its existing publishing model to ensure innovation and maximum value in its publication of material related to Indigenous Australia in a variety of formats.</p>	<p>Number and value of publications</p> <p>6 books published (\$243,000 revenue)</p> <p>journal editions (\$20,000 revenue)</p> <p>5 other publications</p> <p>Monitor the reach and impact of communication and community engagement activity through:</p> <p>Media coverage</p> <p>Website and social media reach and activity</p> <p>Reach:- estimated actuals</p> <p>35 media releases, alerts and web news stories</p> <p>10 AIATSIS e-newsletters</p> <p>10 Members e-newsletters</p> <p>35 interviews by media outlets with AIATSIS staff or affiliates</p> <p>26 requests for content/information by media completed</p> <p>% increase in website traffic +10%</p> <p>% increase in Indigenous author contributions +5%</p> <p>Train and develop web publishers and editors 10</p> <p>% increase in Indigenous members +8%</p> <p>% increase in members +5%</p> <p>%increase in partnerships +5%</p> <p>% increase in value of partnerships +5%</p> <p>% increase in value of a public program +5%</p>
2017-18 and beyond	As per 2016-17	As per 2016-17



Capability

AIATSIS has a mature understanding of its own capabilities, given several significant strategic reviews of the Institute over the last five years. We have examined our functions, systems and processes to recast our purpose to best meet the needs of the government and Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples. We have secured resources, enhanced our systems and recruited and developed a highly skilled and culturally competent workforce to deliver on an ambitious program of work over the next four years.

Staff Profile



Resources

Funding Table - PBS¹

Expense measures - AIATSIS	2015-16 \$'000	2016-17 \$'000	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000
Total	25,777	25,827	25,940	26,063

¹ An increase in the efficiency dividend announced in the budget has not been applied to these figures yet.

Building our Capability

Over the period of this plan AIATSIS will further build our organisational capability to meet our purpose by focusing on:

- Embedding our new governance and leadership arrangements.
- Investing in technology to integrate systems and provide greater access to our research and collections.
- Developing our workforce to be more culturally competent, proactive and willing to engage with risk.
- We will automate our key processes and links to our knowledge management system to improve information sharing and discoverability.
- We will improve the security of our IT systems and their resilience.
- We will better integrate our ICT environment to support improved knowledge management and discoverability of our collection.
- Working with our shared services partner, the Education and Employment shared services centre, we will enable the set of services that AIATSIS needs at an efficient price.



Governance

Strategic Responsibility

The AIATSIS Council is the accountable authority under the PGPA Act and sets our strategic direction and is responsible for the overall performance of AIATSIS' functions. Four councillors are elected by AIATSIS' members; and five councillors appointed by the Minister. The Act requires an Indigenous majority on the AIATSIS Council.

This corporate plan has been prepared as required by subsection 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act), for the 2016-17 financial year. It covers the four-year period from 2016-17 to 2019-20. This Corporate Plan was endorsed by the AIATSIS Council.

Operational Responsibility

Operational responsibility falls to the Chief Executive Officer who is assisted in this role by the Executive Board of Management (EBM). EBM has operational oversight of the Corporate Plan and ensures that this plan is operationalised through Unit business plans, and individual performance agreements.

Risk oversight and management

The Internal Audit function is outsourced to an independent provider and works across AIATSIS' functions to evaluate and monitor the internal control and risk management processes. Our Audit and Assurance Committee meets quarterly and reports directly to the Council. The Committee is chaired by a non-executive and consists of independent members. It receives regular reports from the Internal Auditor on internal control effectiveness.

