RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN 2014–2016
Travelling Through My Country ...
Artist: Amy Ngurnta Nuggett 
Walmajarri Language Group, Nangala Skin, Nguluk Clan
Bayulu Community, Fitzroy Crossing, Kimberley,
Western Australia
Acrylic on Canvas [120cm x 180cm]

This painting is about myself and my family leaving Mangala Country, Karnanganyjawurtu, and my birthplace, in the Great Sandy Desert. We are travelling north towards the Kimberley’s river country to Fitzroy Crossing. I have painted all the jila we passed through: Japirnka, Wili, Kurnajarti, Jurunjarti, Purluwarla, Pirririni, Pirrippurn, Lumplumpu, Yapulu. This place is another place where there is a living waterhole; we went there after taking part in the initiation ceremony. We lived there for a few weeks; until my grandfather and father started to light fires not knowing it was pastoral cattle country. This is where our families were captured and taken into Cherrabun Station and then on to the old Police Station in Fitzroy Crossing. Also in my painting are bush foods like Ngarlka, Mulany, Lukarrara, Tartaku, Jurnta, Kumpupaja, and some other foods from the river country.

Exhibited in the Ngurntakura Wangki Exhibition | Gallery Central | Perth | Western Australia | Feb 2014

OUR LOGO

Our logo is of the Gu:na:ni [Kunjen] people and is a stylistic version of an actual shield. The shield was one of four fighting shields made by Malcolm, Claude and George Wilson. It was purchased in the 1930s, by Miss Ursula McConnel, anthropologist, at Yarrabah, near Cairns.

The shield was adopted as our symbol by the Council of the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in 1963. In 2000 approval was sought and extensive efforts made to find descendants of the artist. Both the Yarrabah and Kowanyama Communities were consulted. Such efforts are demonstrative of AIATSIS mode of operation that over time has led to the development of leading ethical standards and protocols for engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and heritage. These standards guide the actions of researchers and governments both here and internationally.

In 2001 the stylised version of the original design was created to give the logo we use today. In January 2004 the custodianship of the shield was transferred from the collection of the National Museum of Australia to the collection of AIATSIS.

Why is the logo so important to the Institute? It not only has longevity of association but it also reflects what we do; our core business. It is a shield used to defend a people and its culture as we today are conserving heritage for future generations. It was brought to Canberra to be part of Australia’s collection of First People’s art and heritage; technology and practices.

The shield is representative of what we are; we are the caretakers, the guardians who reverently preserve heritage and extend knowledge of Country to our fellow Australians and to the world.

Advise:
Aboriginal and Torres Islander people are advised this document / video may contain images and references of people who have passed away.
MINISTER’S SUPPORTING STATEMENT

There is no single strand to reconciliation, and it is not an easy or straightforward process.

Reconciliation is about building better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the wider Australian community for the benefit of all Australians.

Reconciliation is all about understanding. Achieving it involves raising awareness of, and learning about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. It is also about changing attitudes that are often based on myths and misunderstandings, and encouraging action - where everyone plays their part in building a better relationship between all Australians. By presenting the facts and giving people an opportunity to broaden their knowledge we can work towards better understanding.

If we are to improve relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians, we need more people talking about the challenges and coming up with innovative ways to create positive change.

SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION MEANS WORKING TO OVERCOME DISADVANTAGE AND INEQUALITY BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are an intrinsic part of Australia’s national heritage. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, through its research, its publications and its collections, plays a pivotal role in the preservation and custodianship of these cultures, and in sharing them with the nation and with the world. AIATSIS was the first statutory authority in Australia to be governed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the focus of business.

I recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians hold a great deal of traditional knowledge and wisdom that is of immense value to the nation. It is in our national interest that we achieve meaningful and collaborative reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through the Reconciliation Action Plan, AIATSIS will use its unique knowledge and experience to take a lead role in the Australian Public Service to demonstrate and build its proficiency in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

I welcome the Reconciliation Action Plan as a best practice model and as a means to help the national reconciliation effort with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and I look forward to seeing these initiatives take shape over the coming years.

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education

I recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians hold a great deal of traditional knowledge and wisdom that is of immense value to the nation.
A nation’s maturity can be judged by its willingness to ensure that all voices and perspectives are heard.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) was the first national government agency whose functions were solely focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

AIATSIS is renowned as the world’s premier research, collecting and publishing organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages. It is an internationally recognised leader in setting ethical standards and practices for research, publishing, language revival, cultural collection management and access protocols, and engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Since its establishment in the 1960s there has been a shift in the use of AIATSIS’ collections from solely academic research to also include use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples outside the academic sphere, which for many is of a deeply personal nature given the focus on family history, native title, languages and other forms of cultural expression.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander along with non-Indigenous scholars, continue to make an overwhelming contribution to the Institute’s collections and knowledge; to the social and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through policy advice, research; and by celebrating and making accessible cultural materials, languages and history.

AIATSIS preserves a vast repository of recorded knowledge and cultural artefacts of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are privileged to be the custodian of priceless cultural treasures, and as custodian it is our duty to give the living owners of that treasure easy access to their heritage.

Looking back at the Institute’s achievements of the past 50 years, we have much to be proud of. I believe that we have more than kept faith with the vision of the Institute’s founders and those who have followed. And we’ve risen to the challenge implicit in the trust that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have placed in us. Our success to date is a direct reflection of the great work and dedication of our staff and stakeholders. We share a common goal to raise the skills and workforce participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I am very pleased to introduce AIATSIS’ Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2014–2016. As the world’s leading research, collecting and publishing institution in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies it is fitting that we are also the first Australian Government Body to be recognised by Reconciliation Australia as

**LEADING THE WAY BY ENSURING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE’S KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE IS RECOGNISED AND VALUED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.**

This RAP also reflects the importance of broadening the cultural capacity among our staff and the broader public service through moving from ‘cultural awareness’ towards ‘cultural proficiency’. Reconciliation is an important part of the Australian agenda, and we will continue to strive to lead the way. I am very proud to present our 2014–2016 Elevate RAP to you.

**Professor Mick Dodson, AM**
Chairperson
Congratulations to AIATSIS on becoming the first government organisation in Australia, and just the fourth in total, to develop an Elevate RAP. AIATSIS joins a select group of organisations with a track record of excellence and ongoing commitment to leadership in all areas of the RAP program.

Through this RAP, AIATSIS will play an important part in progressing towards our vision of a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. In particular, it will play a critical role in educating all Australians about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, rights and culture and break down the stereotypes and discrimination that remain prevalent throughout our society.

Through this Elevate RAP AIATSIS have put their hand up to be the leading RAP agency in the Australian Public Sector. As part of this commitment, AIATSIS has developed a best practice whole of organisation approach to achieving cultural capability and proficiency in the workplace. I look forward to seeing this approach being adopted in many of the agencies in the Australian Public Sector that are also part of the RAP program.

The energy and commitment demonstrated by AIATSIS in this new Elevate RAP is very exciting and I know that AIATSIS will achieve great success as it builds on the considerable successes of the past.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia I thank all of those who have helped create this RAP and congratulate them for the leadership they have shown. I wish you well during its implementation over the next three years and look forward to seeing the results of your efforts.

Leah Armstrong
CEO Reconciliation Australia
AIATSIS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2014–2016

INTRODUCTION: RAP CHAMPION

AIATSIS is a unique agency in the Australian Public Service. It is a small agency with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Collectively our activities affirm and raise awareness among all Australians, and people of other nations, of the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

We are committed to understanding the challenges faced by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and assisting them to overcome these challenges, in doing so preparing them for a successful career within the Institute. We are also focused on promoting cultural awareness, acceptance and respect amongst all of our employees.

To strengthen our commitment to reconciliation we have developed an AIATSIS Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building cultural capability 2013–2015 Strategy (the Strategy). This is an innovative, whole-of-organisation approach, to achieving cultural proficiency. Far broader than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness, the Strategy applies a three year phased approach to building capability of AIATSIS staff through three tiers of change: behavioural, structural and technical.

Underscoring these three tiers of change is an emphasis on the specific elements of individuals, organisation, and systems. Together, these comprise a solid analytical structure for examining where and how cultural competence can lead to cultural proficiency.

The benefits of this approach will be a suite of innovative and inclusive culturally competent practices that can be applied across the Australian Public Sector and beyond.

I believe our journey towards cultural proficiency within AIATSIS is a practical and tangible outcome that all organisations should aspire to.

As a research institution we are informed by evidence, good practice and vast experience in working with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and individuals across Australia. To test ourselves, we surveyed our employees to seek their views. The findings suggested good levels of satisfaction where cultural needs are being met and an understanding of cultural competence which goes beyond a checklist approach and is all-embracing.

But the journey is not complete. As part of the long term commitment we are making to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities we will continue to listen, respect and take action. We have set some ambitious benchmarks in this RAP, aiming to translate our learning from the last three years into increased success over the next three years.

Equally important is the implementation of a robust accountability and monitoring framework to ensure that strategies are being implemented which bring about real change and I look forward to the independent assurance that will be conducted by the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

We are proud of our achievements, humbled by the learnings, excited about our future opportunities. As we enter into an exciting new phase with our RAP we reaffirm our commitment to continue evolving as a culturally proficient organisation that is a welcoming and supportive employer of choice for all Australians.

Russell Taylor
Principal
Collections Manager Dr Barry Cundy highlights a sample of AIATSIS’ rare books and other materials to representatives from the Danish Parliament during their visit in 2013. (Photo: John Roe)

The Collection’s Australian Trustee Professor Sandy Toussaint with Library Digitisation Officer Colette Robinson browse through the Phyllis Kaberry papers as part of an extensive digitisation project. (Photo: Daryl Ciubal)

From (L-R) Heath Garrett and Ash Pollock-Harris from AIATSIS’ Audiovisual Access Unit prepare for a Community Access visit to the Torres Strait. (Photo: John Paul Janke)
Senior Digitisation Officer, Daniel Walding carefully scanning highly combustable nitrate negatives.

Editorial and Production Officer Lisa Fuller, centre, with writers Lionel Fogarty and Alf Taylor.
Doris Stuart Kngawarreye is here looking at botanical specimens collected by Olive Pink around Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in 1933-34 with Reference Librarian Rita Metzenrath.
ABOUT AIATSIS

The Institute does the following:

• promotes scholarly, ethical, community-based research
• promotes knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present
• houses a world class collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource materials including the world’s largest collections of printed resource materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
• holds a priceless collection of unique sound recordings, pictures, films and videos numbering over one million items; and
• publishes quality research and writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures via papers, a journal, and books through the Aboriginal Studies Press.

AIATSIS is governed by a Council of nine members, four of whom are elected by the Institute membership. The remaining five members, who must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, are appointed by the Minister.

A staff of approximately 136 people, 30% of whom identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, including the Principal, work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, scholars and the Australian and international public to acknowledge, affirm and raise awareness of Australian Indigenous cultures and histories, in all their richness and diversity.

To understand the importance of AIATSIS it is necessary to understand its history. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) was set up by the Australian Government in 1964 to record Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures before they ‘disappeared forever’. It was the leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies at a time when there were less than a handful of universities undertaking research in these areas. Its establishment marked the beginning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as a multidisciplinary field in Australia. It has funded and established a number of Chairs in universities.

AIATSIS research grants were the main source of funding available and produced a rich source of research and recordings of culture, ceremony, language, music and dance and forms the basis of the AIATSIS collection. As a result, AIATSIS today holds the most comprehensive collection of unpublished research and audio-visual materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It contains information on every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group and language in Australia in one place. It is highly valued by researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. AIATSIS is custodian of this wealth of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

THE AIATSIS COLLECTION HAS TOUCHED THE LIVES OF EVERY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSON IN THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT THEIR EVEN KNOWING IT.

JACKIE HUGGINS, EX-COUNCIL MEMBER
HOW DOES AIATSIS CONTRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY?

AIATSIS makes highly valuable contributions to Australia - across all of its legislative functions1, these include economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and understanding and appreciation of cultures past and present. For example, AIATSIS makes important contributions to:

- the safekeeping of Australia’s heritage
- national research by Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, past and present
- Australian languages
- production and dissemination of information in a vast variety of formats for different audiences including books, journals, discussion papers, online collections, library services and increasingly through social media and applications
- the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through, among others, providing unique services to research family history, to reconnect stolen generations; supporting native title research and agreement making to foster autonomy and economic development
- hosting national and international delegations and organisations that seek out AIATSIS’ collection, research and its expertise each year, its visiting researchers and its publications
- supporting government policy development and implementation in areas such as native title, economic activity, health and wellbeing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and expertise in managing collections relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- supporting government agencies to understand the needs of Communities through research design and policy and facilitates processes for agencies and links to community people; and
- there is a large and growing evidence base recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being is based on a strong sense of identity, a strong grounding in their own culture and to many, an understanding of their own language (Biddle; Dockery; Lowitja Institute, among others).

WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES THROUGH PLACES LIKE AIATSIS. THROUGH PLACES LIKE AIATSIS, WE CAN WAKE UP THE PEOPLE WITH KNOWLEDGE. I AM RESEARCHING TO HELP PEOPLE ‘WAKE UP’. THERE MIGHT BE PRECIOUS MYSTERIES TO HELP US UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AGAIN. WE CAN LOOK TO THE PAST TO FIND OUR WAY.

WANTA JAMPIJINPA PAWU - KURPURURNU (STEVEN JAMPIJINPA PATRICK) LAJAMANU, NT

AIATSIS STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC INTENT 2013–16

AIATSIS’ most recent strategic planning document indicates a clear change of direction. AIATSIS has changed its purpose statement from not only promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultures to actively creating pathways for the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be shared and valued.

Our priorities in achieving this purpose are to promote Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage and culture; focus outwardly and engage collaboratively with its stakeholders and clients, wherever they are; provide the foundation for research excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; ensure the AIATSIS collection is safe, accessible and growing; and celebrate its achievements over almost 50 years of providing leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

1 Established under its own Act of Parliament - the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989 (Commonwealth) (the Act) - AIATSIS is an independent statutory authority. It is governed by a Council, which has a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members. AIATSIS is one of Australia’s publicly funded research agencies and is a national collecting agency, focusing on Australian Indigenous studies.
**OUR VISION**

A world in which all Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and cultures are recognised, respected and valued.

**OUR PURPOSE**

Building pathways for the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to grow and be shared.

Our Guiding Principles define the key characteristics of AIATSIS. They are enduring values that guide our decisions about how we organise ourselves and the way we work. We hold ourselves and each other accountable, to strengthen both our own success and that of AIATSIS.

Our agreed Shared Behaviours of respect, co-operation, effective leadership, good communication, responsibility and fairness, support our Guiding Principles and the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

Everyone working at AIATSIS is required to demonstrate the Shared Behaviours, and leaders and supervisors demonstrate their commitment to these principles through leading by example.

**THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY AIATSIS IS INTEGRAL TO THE PROTECTION, MAINTENANCE AND REVIVAL OF CULTURE IN COMMUNITIES.**

**NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AUSTRALIA’S FIRST PEOPLES**

**OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURAL PROFICIENCY**

AIATSIS is committed to:

- ensuring all staff increase their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures
- developing the skills necessary to become culturally competent at a professional and personal level; and
- promoting stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through community engagement.

Staff are committed to:

- increasing their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures
- creating a safe environment for all members; and
- respecting the integrity and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples culture and identity.

Kylie Robinson from Human Resources (left) and Sarah Down from Collections (right) learn techniques from Jenny Dries, a traditional coil basket weaver from South Australia.

Alana Harris, Jenny Jones, and Kylie Simpson at the Native Title Conference in Townsville 2012.
AIATSIS has played the leading role in documenting and developing understanding of Australian Languages. Early work was largely descriptive and technical which has acted to preserve records of Language speakers that may have otherwise been lost. Over the last decade, work has focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Language maintenance and revitalisation and AIATSIS has made a critical contribution. The Austlang database for the discovery of language materials is an essential research tool and the two national surveys of Australian languages have been critical to policy development. Consequently AIATSIS has built the world’s largest and most comprehensive body of material; holding over 40,000 hours of unique audio recordings and over 3,800 written works documenting more than 200 languages. The collection was accepted into the Australian Memory of the World register in 2009, which is a register of significant documentary heritage maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

As the authors of the National Curriculum on Australian Languages, AIATSIS researchers are making important contributions to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools. For the first time in Australia’s history, learning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language will be recognised and respected, nationally from 2014. As many as 30,000 students have been learning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language through state and territory educational jurisdictions. Both the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Languages Framework will potentially provide a unified option for children in school education from Foundation to Year 10 across Australia.

AIATSIS has also contributed to the design of the National Framework for Translation and Interpreting in Indigenous Languages, working with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The AIATSIS Family History Service is essential support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seeking information about their family and cultural history and has been running for several decades in one form or other.

The Family History Unit currently has a funding agreement with the Department of Health and Ageing, through the Link-Up Research Resource Unit to:

- assist with family tracing for the Stolen Generation
- deliver Statement of Assessment in Family Tracing - training new caseworkers and research officers from Link-Up staff
- case file review, support visits and training to support the caseworkers
- respond to 1800 help desk enquires from Link-Up staff
- research difficult family tracing requests by utilising the AIATSIS Collections
- negotiate new Individual Partnership Agreements to suit the needs of Link-Up; and
- develop a Certificate IV in Family Tracing with the Canberra Institute of Technology.

While acknowledging the importance of this partnership, this represents a significant narrowing of AIATSIS family history services.
as the ethics committee, we ensure cultural safety, we are the voice of those communities and advocate that the ethical side of the research is really adhered to, that our mob is respected and valued and co-researchers promote best practice. we have some control over what is discovered and shared and that’s cultural safety.

chrisy grant, chair of aiatsis’ research ethics committee

a delegation of ‘golden oldies’ from western sydney during a visit to aiatsis organised by the mt duritt aboriginal medical service.

(photo: john paul janke)

quakers hill resident james gibson, the three-hour visit to aiatsis unearthed a previously unseen photograph of his mother and grandmother taken two years before he was born.

(photo: john paul janke)
LEADING THE WAY ON ETHICAL RESEARCH

The Guideline for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS) is a best practice guide published by AIATSIS.

It is essential that Indigenous people are full participants in research projects that concern them, share an understanding of the aims and methods of the research, and share the results of this work. At every stage, research with and about Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the researcher and Indigenous people. It should also be recognised that there is no sharp distinction between researchers and Indigenous people. Indigenous people are also researchers, and all participants must be regarded as equal participants in a research engagement.

GERAIS recognises Indigenous peoples have inherent rights, including the right to self-determination. The principles in GERAIS are founded on respect for these rights. These include rights to full and fair participation in any processes, projects and activities that impact on them, and the right to control and maintain their culture and heritage. AIATSIS considers that these principles are not only a matter of ethical research practice but of human rights.

GERAIS is used extensively within the research sector in Australia, and are referenced in national documents, such as the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research.

“This booklet not only commits AIATSIS researchers to a set of guidelines and research conduct, but we also recognise that we have a requirement – moreover a responsibility – as a leading institution in Australian Indigenous studies to inform all research in this area.”

Prof Mick Dodson, Launch of GERAIS in March 2013

Dean Mathews, of Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd, shows AIATSIS researcher Nick Duff the monsoonal vine thicket at Minyirr Park, outside Broome, that are threatened by weeds. AIATSIS has been working in partnership with Indigenous organisations on research looking at the management of weeds on native title lands.
AIATSIS’ reputation for high quality independent advice has established the Native Title Research Unit (NTRU) as a leader in facilitating policy debate within the native title system. Our success in moving debates forward and informing critical policy and legislative reform was exemplified in our work on taxation of native title and climate change adaptation.

For 20 years, the NTRU has played a pivotal role in coordinating information and developing capacity within the sector. The Unit functions as:

- a national clearing house, providing tools and resources for education and development informed by national practice
- a provider of opportunities for Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs) and Native Title Service Providers (NTSPs) and native title claimants and holders to coordinate and discuss issues
- an eminent conductor of research and analysis on priority issues; and
- promoter of understanding of Indigenous perspectives on desired and effective native title outcomes.

It is essential that Indigenous people are full participants in research projects that concern them.
AIATSIS runs a public seminar series that is free and open to the public. The semester 2, 2013 series, convened by AIATSIS research fellows Dave Johnston and Pam McGrath, for example focused on contemporary Indigenous cultural heritage to explore questions of- who’s got it, who wants it and who controls it?

Culture in crisis? The protection and trade of Indigenous heritage in the 21st century.

The first decade of the new century has seen an increase in cultural heritage assessments across the country, the development of more robust international standards for the protection of heritage and a marked increase in the perceived value of Indigenous cultural heritage among Australians generally. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are finding innovative ways to mesh new technologies with traditional knowledge to support the protection and renewal of cultural heritage.

Contributors to this series explored different aspects of Australia’s cultural heritage information economy and how they interplay with other social and economic agendas. Speakers profiled successful Indigenous-led strategies for managing heritage, as well as drawing attention to where legal and policy regimes are failing. We hope you can join us as we reinvigorate a national conversation about the significance of Indigenous cultural heritage in the 21st century.

Since 2008, AIATSIS has supported the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into research careers through its Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowships (IVRF) program. The IVRF program has proved to be an effective mechanism to assist postgraduate students to complete their higher degree by attaining a research qualification, developing research skills and gaining research experience.

This contribution was highlighted in the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

The IVRF program gives support to undertake a period of residency in Canberra; conduct research full time; access national collections of research materials; engage with policy-making organisations. Program participants are mentored by senior AIATSIS staff and are given opportunities to collaborate on Institute research projects and publish their work.

The IVRF was not fully funded through direct appropriation. It was largely funded via contributions from Australian government departments and through one off grants sought by AIATSIS.

Part of the attraction of the IVRF program is the opportunity to undertake research in a culturally proficient environment, with a cohort of Indigenous researchers who are currently completing or have completed a higher degree. The majority of recipients disseminated their results in research papers, seminars, and conference and government reports. These skills and outputs are fundamental to a successful career in academia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars who have participated in the program have gone on to be some of Australia’s most well-known and respected academics. IVRF program participants have included Professor Kerry Arabena, Professor Megan Davis, Dr Jeanine Leanne and Dr Valerie Cooms.

Dave Johnston, Chair of the Australian Indigenous Archaeologists’ Association (AIAA), speaking at seminar series at AIATSIS says that there is a failure to maintain minimum national standards for Indigenous site protection and management policy. [Photo: John Paul Janke]
RAP REFLECTIONS

Our first RAP was aspirational - it included a total of 24 actions - we have achieved and exceeded many of these and learnt valuable lessons along the way. AIATSIS has made an enormous contribution to the development of research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, including the development of community based research partnerships and the articulation of Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous knowledge led research.

Through the development of the AIATSIS Reconciliation Action Plan 2014–16; the Institute committed to building on its reconciliation objectives, which will see AIATSIS:

- invest in a suite of innovative and inclusive culturally competent practices that strengthen AIATSIS’ position as a world leader in raising awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories
- become a role model for government agencies and research institutions both in Australia and around the world through our AIATSIS Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013–2015 Strategy and GERAIS Guidelines
- provide advice and support to other entities on becoming culturally proficient
- support the building of capability to become culturally proficient in every aspect of our business; and
- continue to work collaboratively and in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a spirit of cooperation and reconciliation.

The RAP is a living document, that enables AIATSIS to:

- improve workplace collaboration and consultation through encouraging greater cultural diversity and inclusiveness
- deeper engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures
- greater respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander systems of knowledge, and the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- maximise the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Institute’s activities and services and participation and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in decision-making at all levels within the Institute
- recognise the unique skills and knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring to our workplace
- increase demand for AIATSIS to conduct ethical research to support policy development, program design and delivery and evaluation
- develop new tools and resources for access, repatriation and discovery of collections and information; and
- promote educational material for schools and general public on Indigenous issues.

MY TIME IN ABORIGINAL STUDIES PRESS (APS) HAS BEEN THE MOST CULTURALLY SAFE I’VE EVER FELT AT WORK. I KNOW MY TEAM VALUE MY OPINIONS AND MY CULTURAL BACKGROUND; OPEN AND HONEST TEAM DISCUSSIONS ARE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED BY BOTH THE DIRECTOR AND MANAGER. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I KNOW THEY WILL LISTEN TO WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY. WITHIN AIATSIS, THE CAUCUS HAS BEEN AN IMMENSE SOURCE OF SUPPORT. IN NEARLY 10 YEARS IN THE APS IT IS THE BEST INDIGENOUS GROUP THAT I’VE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE TO BE A PART. I’M TRULY HONOURED AND PROUD TO WORK AT AIATSIS, AND I CAN AND DO RECOMMEND IT TO MY MOB (AS WELL AS ANYONE WHO ASKS), BOTH AS AN EMPLOYER AND A PRICELESS NATIONAL RESOURCE.

LISA FULLER, A WUILLI WUILLI WOMAN, EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION OFFICER
KEY LEARNINGS

We don’t always get it right; unfortunately we fell short not in delivering the majority of actions stated in our RAP, but in tracking our progress and reporting on the implementation of our RAP - this is not a reflection on the Institute’s inability to commit to reconciliation; other strategic pressures and corporate priorities impacted on and contributed to AIATSIS not submitting a timely report to Reconciliation Australia or developing a new RAP for the period 2010–2012.

The Institute focused on improving its effectiveness in terms of governance, policy and structure and implemented a number of corporate strategies that surpassed the actions outlined in the RAP.

In August 2011 an initial Towards One AIATSIS² workshop encouraged more thinking and discussion about cultural competency across AIATSIS, outcomes included:

- key areas for AIATSIS to address to improve cultural competency were required
- Caucus³ would require a Charter and that this could be facilitated through a workshop
- cultural competency would remain a Guiding Principle
- AIATSIS to develop an AIATSIS Cultural Competency Framework to help implement the cultural competency Guiding Principle; and
- cultural competency stream of activities in the Towards One AIATSIS action plan which will capture commitments, responsibilities and time frames.

AIATSIS’ most recent strategic planning document indicates a clear change of direction. AIATSIS has changed its purpose statement from promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultures to actively creating pathways for the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be shared and valued.

OUR RAP: LEADING THE WAY

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Many other organisations have their RAPs as their major driver for cultural competence through reconciliation, whereas for the Institute everything we do is directly or indirectly geared to supporting reconciliation through the nature of work we do.

This RAP is an important commitment, and call to action for AIATSIS, it is part of a broader approach to building our capability as a culturally proficient organisation. This is why it is important we have our RAP established as a key corporate driver of the AIATSIS Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013–2015 Strategy (The Strategy), and not isolated in any individual initiative or action. The Strategy’s vision to guide our effort towards becoming culturally proficient is...

A WORKPLACE WHERE ALL CULTURES PARTICULARLY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES ARE EQUALLY RESPECTED AND ENGAGED.

The following diagram illustrates the interrelatedness of key AIATSIS corporate policies (including the RAP) toward becoming a culturally proficiency organisation.

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² The Towards One AIATSIS initiative was an organisation wide consultation project for the purpose of informing the Executive and the Council’s thinking about the resources needed to support AIATSIS, and our preferred organisational structure and activities.

³ The Indigenous Caucus is an internal working group supported by management providing Indigenous staff with a forum to discuss workplace issues.
INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY MANAGER

Craig Leon, a Worimi man joined the Institute in August 2012 as the Indigenous Cultural Proficiency Manager to lead the development and implementation of an AIATSIS cultural competency framework. Identified as a priority action from an internal review, the cultural competency framework requires a comprehensive organisational analysis of all existing business and people processes. As a Special Measures position, the Indigenous Cultural Proficiency Manager led the Institute through a collaborative process of consultation and change to position AIATSIS as a lead practitioner of cultural proficiency. In March 2013, the AIATSIS Council endorsed the Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013–2015 Strategy.

BEING CULTURALLY COMPETENT IS ABOUT APPRECIATING CULTURES ARE DIVERSE AND NO CULTURE IS SUPERIOR. ONE EMBRACES CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS THE RICHNESS OF HUMANITY. THE TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY – A PHASED APPROACH TO BUILDING CULTURAL CAPABILITY 2013–2015 STRATEGY WILL ALLOW PEOPLE TO LEARN TO APPRECIATE AND RESPECT CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND ALSO TO FEEL PROUD ABOUT THEIR OWN CULTURE. IN THE CASE OF AUSTRALIA, BEING CULTURALLY COMPETENT ALSO MEANS THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE PAST COLONISATION IS STILL AFFECTING THE WAY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR ANCESTORS.

KAZUKO OBATA, RESEARCH

TO BE CULTURALLY COMPETENT IS ABOUT HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURES AND ADVERSITY. HOPEFULLY THE TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY – A PHASED APPROACH TO BUILDING CULTURAL CAPABILITY 2013–2015 STRATEGY CAN BRING THE BEST OUT OF ALL OF US AS WE IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CULTURE IS AND HOW THIS PASSED KNOWLEDGE TO ELDERS IS VERY IMPORTANT. CULTURALLY COMPETENT IS ALSO ABOUT BEING PROUD OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS AND THEIR CULTURES, AND I HOPE TO SHARE AND PASS MY KNOWLEDGE ON TO MY CO–WORKERS AS WE LOOK TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS.

PJ WILLIAMS, A WARRADGERIE MAN, FAMILY HISTORY UNIT

RAP REFERENCE GROUP

A document does not bring about reconciliation, people do. Our processes and RAP actions aim to involve as many staff as possible; to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people together to raise awareness and encourage people to contribute to reconciliation.

To refresh our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a RAP Reference Working Group was established, comprising a cross section of staff. The Reference Working Group meets regularly to discuss the Institute’s ongoing initiatives to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to progress the RAP outcomes.

The RAP Reference Working Group is committed to ensuring that reconciliation is maintained and is part of our workplace culture.

During the development of the RAP, staff assisted in shaping the RAP to truly reflect the values and aspirations of our staff. A series of RAP focus groups and online discussion forums were held to raise staff awareness, seek input and commitment to our RAP Actions and to maintain momentum.

We also worked with Reconciliation Australia throughout all stages of the development of our RAP. This RAP has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and will be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis. This plan is our public commitment to reconciliation and we will report annually on our progress.
RECONCILIATION TO ME IS ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE, THEIR CULTURE AND VALUES THEREBY ESTABLISHING A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS AND OTHER DIVERSE GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY.
ARUNKUMAR KRISHNAMOORTHY, RAP REFERENCE WORKING GROUP MEMBER

AIATSIS hosts a number of visits by overseas Indigenous delegations.
Photos 1-3 Peru delegation
Photo 4 Laos delegation

OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

AIATSIS’ activities of collecting, preserving, creating and publishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through policy advice, research, and by celebrating and making accessible cultural materials, languages and history. This also contributes to the Australian Government’s commitment to Closing the Gap and to reconciliation and the social cohesion of Australian society.

Our sphere of influence spans the government sector, academia, collecting institutions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the general public. From the classroom to the boardroom, from grassroots community groups to international cultural institutions our sphere of influence contributes to reconciliation in Australia and overseas.

Our vision is a world in which all Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and cultures are recognised, respected and valued. Our purpose is to build pathways for the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples to grow and be shared by focusing outwardly and engaging collaboratively.

THE WORLD HAS COME TO SEE THE DEPTH OF AND APPRECIATE THE INCREDIBLE WEALTH OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE. AIATSIS IS THE WORLD LEADER IN THE PRESERVATION AND ILLUMINATION OF OUR CULTURE. WE WANT OUR STORIES TOLD; OUR HERITAGE TREASURED AND OUR FUTURE ASSURED. AIATSIS PROVIDES AN ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF THE WORLD’S OLDEST CONTINUOUS CULTURE.
JULIE MORGAN, A BIRipi WOMAN, CORPORATE SERVICES
OUR FOCUS AREAS FOR 2014–2016

The implementation of the AIATSIS Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013–2015 Strategy – a framework for cultural competence to guide our effort towards developing cultural proficiency – is not only good business but essential business.

Business outcomes we anticipate to benefit from through the Strategy include:

• Better research outcomes - greater understanding and appreciation of how Indigenous Communities will result in better outcomes for Communities and governments

• Increased staff participation - narrowing the 'cultural perception gap' will lead to improved participation rates

• Enhanced corporate knowledge - identify greater opportunities to increase usability of corporate knowledge

• Enhanced corporate capacity - identify and prioritise corporate training and development to areas of need

• Increased employment outcomes - positioning AIATSIS as an employer of choice will enhance agency performance and capability through greater cultural diversity and inclusiveness; and

• Improved communication between staff - increased cultural understanding between all staff will lead to improved workplace collaboration and consultation.

Underpinning the AIATSIS Toward Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013–2015 Strategy are the following four policy themes and supporting principles:

• Skills, Jobs, Professional Development - We value and support diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our workplace.

• Information and Communication - We are a world authority for managing, creating, and disseminating information related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present.

• Governance - AIATSIS systems and policies reflect the highest standards for cultural competence.

• Community Relationships - Our activities build strong relationships that contribute positively to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Institute is determined to ensure reconciliation is embedded into our business practices and informs the decisions we make. There is a strong governance structure that supports our RAP which assists with engagement and collaboration across the Institute. The structure informs AIATSIS decision making bodies, shares ideas and supports participation in reconciliation initiatives. Strong governance and dedicated resources (for e.g. Indigenous Cultural Proficiency Manager) also ensure our RAP remains a priority.

It is our ambition to commit to thought and reconciliation leadership as we continue to support the wider reconciliation movement by focusing outward and engaging collaboratively.

I THINK AIATSIS HAS, IN ITS HANDS, ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES IN THE NATION FOR ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF INCREASING INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT AND ATTAINMENT IN POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH - AND FOR HOSTING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN AUSTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES.

GREG LEHMAN, A PALAWA MAN, INDIGENOUS VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

CAUCUS IS A GREAT SOURCE AT AIATSIS FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYEES; IT HELPED ME FEEL WELCOMED TO THE ORGANISATION AND CONTINUOUSLY GIVES ME SUPPORT THROUGHOUT MY EMPLOYMENT HERE.

ROCHELLE JONES, A GUNGGARI WOMAN, PUBLISHING ASSISTANT, ABORIGINAL STUDIES PRESS

4 Dispelling cultural myths to form a more inclusive and collegiate workplace
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) National Event in Vancouver ran from the 18-21 September 2013. It was a significant reconciliation event for Canada, its First Nations peoples and the Survivors of the Residential School system, which ran from the mid-to-late 1800s right up until 1996, when the last school was closed. The importance of the annual TRC National Events cannot be underestimated as they give all Canadians the opportunity to come together, in a public space, to witness stories of survival from ‘Residential Schools Survivors’ and their families. Local, state and national organisations also get the opportunity to provide statements of reconciliation at these public forums.

AIATSIS Research Fellow, Stewart Sutherland, was invited by Reconciliation Canada and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Society (IRSSS) to attend the TRC National Event. Forming a partnership with the National Stolen Generations Alliance (NSGA), two representatives from AIATSIS were invited to accompany the delegation: Dr Mick Adams, an Indigenous Health Research Fellow (Men’s Health); and Research Assistant Lachlan Russell (Stolen Generations).

This first photo (right) was taken on the day prior to the National Event. This was the All Nations Canoe Gathering Event where our delegation from Australia joined a number of other international delegations which included Indigenous people hailing from the USA, Guatemala and Papua New Guinea. We had just paddled some 3-4 kilometres upstream for the traditional welcoming ceremony held in the waters outside Science World in Central Vancouver. It was here that our hosts, the Coast Salish peoples, met the flotillas. Each leader of the canoe exercised protocol by formally addressing the host nations and Residential School Survivors as a gesture of requesting permission to come ashore to take up our position in the event. As the appointed leader, Stewart Sutherland exercised protocol on behalf of the Australian delegation in front of thousands of witnesses who lined the shoreline, all the while managing to balance himself precariously at the front of our canoe.

The second photo was taken on the second day of the National Event and includes Dr Mick Adams, Ernie Philip (Dancing Bear) and Rosie Baird from the NSGA. ‘Dancing Bear’ is a Residential School Survivor and Elder of the First Nations Shuswap people and a celebrated professional dancer who knows the Tribal Dances of his grandfather as well as the Plains Dances of the North American Sioux people. We had just witnessed an inspiring documentary (Dancing Bear) about his life, including his experiences as a child in one of the Residential Schools. After the screening he performed one of the dances he had been taught in his youth to the audience which was well-received.

The third photo was taken on the final day of the event’s proceedings. Stewart Sutherland with support from members of the Australian delegation provided a joint public testimony to the Commissioners Sharing Panel. Stewart Sutherland spoke on behalf of the NSGA to acknowledge the suffering of First Nations peoples as well as the shared experiences of Stolen Generations Survivors, and NSGA support for Canadian First Nations and reconciliation. Ms Heather Shearer concluded by provided a moving personal testimony of her own experiences as a Stolen Generations survivor and her journey home. Both received a standing ovation from the crowd.

All in all the TRC was a fantastic event and a great experience. AIATSIS, in partnership with NSGA, is well-placed to help lead discussions towards establishing, similar practical reconciliation events in Australia for members of the Stolen Generations, as a practical commitment and demonstration of reconciliation.
AIATSIS, in partnership with NSGA, is well-placed to help lead discussions towards establishing, similar practical reconciliation events in Australia for members of the Stolen Generations.
## RELATIONSHIPS

### TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY STRATEGY

**Business Driver**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAP</th>
<th>Community Relationships</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Policy Theme**

| Community Relationships |

**Supporting Principle**

Our activities build strong relationships that contribute positively to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>RAP RWG</td>
<td>March 2014, reported annually</td>
<td>Our key success measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The importance of the RAP is embedded through our business planning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How we will measure our success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• At least four RAP Reference Working Group meetings held each year</td>
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<td>• RAP published on AIATSIS website and intranet</td>
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<td>• Information about the RAP included in induction and cultural awareness training</td>
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<td>• Host a trial discussion board [intranet] for staff to share information and provide feedback on RAP initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish at least three partnerships with external organisations to support their RAP journey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1.2 | Executive, Research, Collections, Communications | March 2014, reported annually | Our key success measures |
| | | | Improved confidence in our external engagement |
| | | | How we will measure our success |
| | | | • Convene biennial National Indigenous Studies – Conference 50 Years on: Breaking Barriers in Indigenous Research and Thinking |
| | | | • Convene Annual National Native Title Conference |
| | | | • Create at least one annual full-day AIATSIS Collections Symposium |
| | | | • Organise and convene a Collections Seminar at least once a year |
| | | | • Develop and hold an annual AIATSIS Open Day |
| | | | • On-line streaming of AIATSIS Research Seminar Series and analysis of usage |
| | | | • Analysis of Web site and social media usage |
| | | | • Information is shared with our portfolio agencies and wider RAP community as appropriate |
| | | | • Increased number of presentations and publications by staff at external forums |
| | | | • Significant increase in numbers of research publications, presentations and materials made available online |
## RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Executive, All Staff, Indigenous Caucus</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td><strong>Our key success measures</strong>&lt;br&gt;Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are consulted and broad cultural perspectives are presented&lt;br&gt;<strong>How we will measure our success</strong>&lt;br&gt;• AIATSIS Council⁵ meets four times per year&lt;br&gt;• All committees ensure broad cultural perspectives are presented for significant decisions and issues; particularly in relation to decisions impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples&lt;br&gt;• Indigenous Caucus⁶ meets monthly and provides advice and support to the Institute and its committees in accordance with its Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>ASP, Research, Collections, Library</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Our key success measures</strong>&lt;br&gt;Increased level of regard for AIATSIS across all stakeholder groups&lt;br&gt;<strong>How we will measure our success</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Increased access to our publications and information&lt;br&gt;• Our membership support base is increased&lt;br&gt;• Analysis of Web site usage&lt;br&gt;• Number and quality of engagements with education sectors&lt;br&gt;• At least three strategic partnerships are established that bring value to AIATSIS and reconciliation&lt;br&gt;• Number of presentations and publications by staff&lt;br&gt;• Evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people confidently know that they can go to AIATSIS to advance their own research about their cultural revival&lt;br&gt;• Number of national and international delegations and organisations that seek out AIATSIS’ collection and expertise&lt;br&gt;• Continue to play a leadership role in publishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and subject matter&lt;br&gt;• At least six articles published per year in stakeholder publications&lt;br&gt;• Up to eight publications produced by Aboriginal Studies Press</td>
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</table>

¹ Under section 43(1) of the AIATSIS Act, the Minister may ask the Council of the Institute to provide advice on aspects of the culture, history and society of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders

² The Indigenous Caucus is an internal working group supported by management providing Indigenous staff with a forum to discuss workplace issues
### RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1.5    | Communications and RAP RWG (Lead), All Staff | NAIDOC Week | **Our key success measures**  
Greater understanding and knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures  
**How we will measure our success**  
- Host at least three internal events to celebrate significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events  
- Encourage all staff to participate in at least one Community event during NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week and support them to participate  
- Contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders within the ACT Community to discuss mutually-beneficial opportunities  
- Hold at least one Elders afternoon tea to promote respect of our Elders  
- Hold at least one AIATSIS Family Day event and invite local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisation |
| 1.6    | Communications (Lead), ACT NAIDOC Committee, NMA | Commencement of NAIDOC Week | **Our key success measures**  
Increased engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations  
**How we will measure our success**  
- Attendance rate > 5,000 people p.a.  
- Increased requests by Commonwealth Government agencies and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups to participate in the event |
| 1.7    | Executive, Research, Communications | March 2014, reported annually | **Our key success measures**  
Significant positive contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, policy and practice  
**How we will measure our success**  
- Increased number of Community and academic researchers accessing our collections  
- Family History Unit (FHU) service metrics analysis  
- Number of invitations to work with and visit Indigenous Communities  
- Rate of external take up of ethical guidelines (GERAIS) and collection protocols |
## RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
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<th>Timeline</th>
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</table>
| 1.7 cont | • Take a leading role in strengthening Indigenous research networks  
• Provide independent and critical advice on policy and practice | | • Performance against measures of research quality and impact  
• Number of invitations to provide evidence to parliamentary committees and government inquiries  
• Rating of research by Closing the Gap clearing house |

1.8 We will set positive directions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage conservation and management  
• Ensure our clients feel welcome in our space  
• Ensure people see our collection and help them understand it  
• Provide leadership on appropriate management of collections  
• Ensure long-term survival of our collections  
• Enhance access to our collections  

Library, Research, Collections, ASP, AWA  
March 2014, reported annually  

Our key success measures  
AIATSIS is the repository of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials  

How we will measure our success  
• Client feedback on access and service  
• Number of new deposits  
• Digitisation priorities, quality & quantities of outputs  
• Number and quality of audition sheets, finding aids and catalogue entries  
• Number of items preserved  
• Number and value of items returned  

Client service rates
CASE STUDY 2
LEADING THE WAY WITH BEST PRACTICE

As an Indigenous publisher, all our processes are designed to support best-practice in culturally appropriate publishing. Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) aims for at least half of its manuscript assessors to be Indigenous and, while most clauses in the ASP author/publisher contract are similar to other publishers, our requirement to seek approval for the use of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property is significant. In addition, ASP also requires authors to obtain clearance for publishing from a family or community where the research for the book centres on those people; this is in addition to any ethics clearance a researcher might have obtained from their university.

In 2009 ASP ran its inaugural Cultural Awareness Training for Editors (CATE) workshop in Canberra. Funded by AIATSIS, the aim was to ensure that both authors and inhouse and freelance editors felt supported and secure in their cross-cultural exchanges. The universal feedback was very positive and a subsequent list of recommendations and initiatives was forwarded to a range of industry organisations. Three years later the publishing industry body, the Australian Publishers Association, ran two training days (Sydney and Melbourne), based on the ASP model.

ASP has also employed an Aboriginal editor-in-training. The editorial and production officer, Lisa Fuller, is working closely with Director, Rhonda Black, to gain accreditation as an editor, hopefully in 2014–15. ASP staff also benefit from having researchers as colleagues whose knowledge can help in shaping the publishing list. For example, AIATSIS linguists provided valuable advice about how to publish the bilingual book, Kurlumarniny, a book which went on to win the WA Premier’s WA History prize.

ASP also accepts volunteer interns who undertake unpaid work, all with the aim of understanding ASP’s processes, the unique list and the needs of our range of clients.

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The BILINGUAL BOOK, KURLUMARNINY WENT ON TO WIN THE WA PREMIER’S WA HISTORY PRIZE

Author Monty Hale signing book
## TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY STRATEGY

### Business Driver

**RAP**

**RAP Outcome**  
Respect

### Policy Theme

Information and Communication

### Supporting Principle

We are a world authority for managing, creating, and disseminating information related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### Action | Responsibility | Timeline | Key Success Measures
--- | --- | --- | ---
2.1 | RAP RWG and Indigenous Caucus (Lead), Executive, Research, Library, Collections, ASP | March 2014 | **Our key success measures**

Contribution to the reconciliation process by promoting respectful relationships and appropriate cultural and ethical practices

**How we will measure our success**

- Protocols embedded that demonstrate our commitment to Acknowledging Traditional Owners/Welcome to Country at all AIATSIS official events
- Cultural protocols guide available on AIATSIS website and provided to Commonwealth Government agencies
- Senior leaders are able to personally reply to a Welcome to Country
- All staff are competent in observing protocols
- Cultural protocol guidelines relating to the management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections are

2.2 | Executive, Corporate | Commenced April 2013, reported annually | **Our key success measures**

A workplace where all cultures particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are respected and engaged

**How we will measure our success**

- Establish a baseline to gauge cultural proficiency at an organisational and individual level. This will also include comparing staff’s cultural competence prior to training intervention (pre-training) and again, following the training intervention (post-training)
- Increased number of requests to provide thought leadership and assistance to other organisations looking to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Lead a One APS Cultural Capability eLearning Induction Program
- Reach out to at least five RAP organisations annually
## RESPECT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.3    | Corporate (Lead) | March 2014, reported annually | Our key success measures  
Our RAP helps to foster relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people in the workplace  
How we will measure our success  
- 90% of commencing staff completing in-house cultural competency training within three months of employment, with effect program implementation  
- 75% of current staff completing in-house cultural competency training within six months of program implementation  
- Register kept of staff attendance at seminars  
- Staff completion rates to be provided to RAP RWG and Executive on an annual basis  
- Cultural competency training is reflected in Individual |
| 2.4    | Executive, Communications | Commencing February 2014 | Our key success measures  
Positive external perception of AIATSIS continued importance  
How we will measure our success  
- High participation of key stakeholders in all anniversary events  
- Number of new members and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members  
- Web hits on 50th anniversary site  
- Opportunities investigated to establish strategic partnerships with other organisations (including cultural institutions) that advance reconciliation |
### RESPECT

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Key Success Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
<td>In partnership with Reconciliation Australia, we will lead and host the Commonwealth Government Agencies RAP Forum to collaborate and share ideas to improve overall RAP effectiveness across the Commonwealth Government sector</td>
<td>RAP RWG, Reconciliation Australia</td>
<td>Commencing 2014 - Three forums per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.6</strong></td>
<td>We will provide a culturally safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for employees, stakeholders and visitors</td>
<td>Executive, Corporate, Indigenous Caucus</td>
<td>March 2014, reported annually</td>
</tr>
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</table>
CASE STUDY 3
NAIDOC ON THE PENINSULA

NAIDOC on the Peninsula is a free annual event organised by AIATSIS open to the Canberra community and surrounding regions.

Held in early July each year, the one-day event brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to share, celebrate and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, lifestyles and achievements.

Since its establishment in 2005, NAIDOC on the Peninsula, has flourished in both stature and popularity and now attracts some 4500 people – in particular families and youth.

It is the biggest Indigenous event in the ACT.

The event is staged in AIATSIS’ public areas and includes traditional and contemporary entertainment from local and national Indigenous performers.

Some 60 market stalls hosted by State and Federal Government departments, Non-Government and Community organisations, Indigenous arts and crafts outlets provide activities and information throughout the day.

Free children’s activities range from arts and crafts, cultural activities, face painting to amusement rides, jumping castles and pony rides.

As a sign of the success and significance of NAIDOC on the Peninsula, the Canberra and District NAIDOC Committee in 2010 merged their annual NAIDOC Family Day and Official opening ceremony with NAIDOC on the Peninsula.

The event is the first significant community event to kick start week long NAIDOC celebrations across Canberra.

NAIDOC on the Peninsula is organised by AIATSIS and is part of the Institute’s proud role in raising awareness among all Australians, and people of other nations, of the richness and diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures and histories.

The event while hosted and coordinated by AIATSIS aligns itself with the National Museum of Australia’s NAIDOC program of events.

For the first time in 2012, AIATSIS directly sought the involvement of local ACT Primary Schools at NAIDOC on the Peninsula. As well as direct marketing thought flyers and promotional emails to nominated ACT Primary Schools, AIATSIS funded one School – Holy Trinity Primary in Curtin – to provide a catering stall and also to provide sandwiches and tea and coffee for the Elders Tent.

This ensured a high level of engagement from the P&F Association from Holy Trinity Primary as well as a turnout of students and parents from the school.

Through strong non-Indigenous participation, NAIDOC on the Peninsula has importantly become the showcase event in the ACT that highlights the pride and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures.

“EACH YEAR NAIDOC ON THE PENINSULA CREATES SUCH A WONDERFUL FEELING AND SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION AND CELEBRATION FOR THOUSANDS OF INDIGENOUS AND NON INDIGENOUS CANBERRANS.”

Ms Joanne Chivers
Chairperson of the Local ACT and District NAIDOC Committee
AIATSIS NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS ARE THE BIGGEST INDIGENOUS EVENT IN THE ACT.
## OPPORTUNITIES

### TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Driver</th>
<th>Policy Theme</th>
<th>Supporting Principle</th>
<th>RAP</th>
<th>RAP Outcome</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We value and support diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our workplace.</td>
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</table>

### Action 3.1

We will continue to assist in training people, particularly Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, as research workers in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

- **Responsibility**: Research, Corporate
- **Timeline**: Commenced July 2013
- **Key Success Measures**
  - **Our key success measures**: Significant positive contribution to Indigenous research, policy and practice
  - **How we will measure our success**
    - Number of staff undertaking and completing further education in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and cultural collections; including up to 16 higher educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Step Up Program
    - Provide one research profile on the website per semester highlighting Indigenous research outcomes from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers at the Institute

### Action 3.2

We will continue to proactively support the increased use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through Supply Nation and look at opportunities to promote their services to the wider community.

- **Responsibility**: Corporate
- **Timeline**: February 2014, reported annually
- **Key Success Measures**
  - **Our key success measures**: Increased engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses
  - **How we will measure our success**
    - Continue to apply AIATSIS Indigenous Supplier Policy
    - Commit to a minimum of four partnerships per year with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses
    - Maintain statistics on services used
    - Conduct annual in-house Indigenous Opportunity Policy information sessions
    - Develop our relationship with and improve promotion of services through Supply Nation
    - Membership of Supply Nation – 2014
    - Invite CEO, Supply Nation to attend: Commonwealth Government Agencies RAP forums, Launch of AIATSIS RAP and AIATSIS 50th Anniversary events

### Action 3.3

Our workforce plan will build on initiatives and programs to ensure we attract, develop and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, including support for their further education and training.

- **Responsibility**: Executive, Corporate, Indigenous Caucus
- **Timeline**: March 2014, reported quarterly
- **Key Success Measures**
  - **Our key success measures**: Improved performance against measures of staff engagement
  - **How we will measure our success**
    - Progress of the implementation of initiatives and programs will be reported quarterly in the Institute’s workforce report
    - 30% of our staff are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

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7 The Indigenous Caucus is an internal working group supported by management providing Indigenous staff with a forum to discuss workplace issues.
### OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A culture that balances life and well-being</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Invest in our workforce through skills and career development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus on building capability and staff cultural proficiency skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Recognise and value the unique skills and knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring to our workplace</td>
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<td>• Flexible working conditions that allow staff to meet cultural responsibilities</td>
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<td>• New staff receive a welcoming and culturally-affirming transition into the workplace</td>
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<td>• Opportunities for educational advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Significant increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in the APS State of the Service Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Positive comparison to APS State of the Service Survey results</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff undertaking and completing further education</td>
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<td>• Stories promoting career successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be featured quarterly on the internet and other identified media</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A targeted resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will be developed outlining in-house and external training and professional development programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A protocol for linking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff commencing employment in AIATSIS with appropriate mentors and networks will be developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promote employment opportunities through targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples media and networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Corporate (Lead)</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>Increased participation in Indigenous cultural events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for non-Indigenous staff to increase their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How we will measure our success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote opportunities for employees to work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Participating staff produce an article, reporting on their experience, for an AIATSIS publication (internal or external) or for Reconciliation Australia’s Sharing Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Representatives from each Program Area participate in external learning and development opportunities with specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content per year</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A Staff Volunteering Policy - local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or not-for-profit organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and knowledge through information sessions, such as screening of documentaries, guest speakers and non-compulsory training sessions</td>
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<td>- is developed and piloted</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff encouraged and supported to attend local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community activities and events</td>
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<td>- Staff advised of local organisation(s) through which they can volunteer services</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>Corporate (Lead)</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>Building community capacity through outreach activities</td>
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<td>Staff will be encouraged to volunteer in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or not-for-profit organisations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How we will measure our success</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A Staff Volunteering Policy - local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation(s) - is developed and piloted</td>
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<td>• Volunteers share their experiences and learnings via Bayala and/or Principals Morning Tea (show and tell)</td>
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</tbody>
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## TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

### TOWARDS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Driver</th>
<th>Policy Theme</th>
<th>Supporting Principle</th>
<th>RAP Outcome</th>
<th>RAP</th>
<th>Reporting annually</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>AIATSIS systems and policies reflect the highest standards for cultural competence</td>
<td>Tracking Progress and Reporting</td>
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### Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Description</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Success Measures</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 4.1 Our systems, policies, documents and communications will continue to convey our commitment to acknowledging and understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and practices and Reconciliation Action | Executive      | Reporting annually | • Corporate documents reflect cultural intent, culturally appropriate language and reconciliation process  
• RAP actions are evident in advertisements and new employee information |
| 4.2 Measure the impact of cultural proficiency principles in AIATSIS               | RAP RWG        | Reported annually | • Develop an analytic tool and measures to assess cultural proficiency at the individual and organisational level |
| 4.3 Tracking the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees         | Human Resources | Quarterly     | • Establish and maintain workforce planning database |
| 4.4 Sharing and celebrating our achievements and successes                         | RAP RWG        | Quarterly     | • Showcase inspiring stories of success to the wider community  
• Share success stories through Reconciliation Australia’s success stories page |
| 4.5 Report achievement, challenges and learning to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the annual Impact Measurement Report | RAP RWG        | Reported annually | • RAP progress is reported each year in the Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Questionnaire  
• RAP progress report completed and available on the AIATSIS and Reconciliation Australia websites  
• Refreshed RAP available on AIATSIS and Reconciliation Australia websites |
| 4.6 Ensure the integrity of the RAP by obtaining independent assurance            | RAP RWG        | Annually      | • Increased accountability and transparency via an independent assurance (National Centre for Indigenous Excellence) |
CASE STUDY 4
OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC TREASURES PROVIDE ‘LANDMARKS’ FOR ISLAND CULTURE

For Napau Pedro Stephen, Mayor of the Torres Shire Council, the thousands of historical and contemporary photographs on the Torres Strait Islands that are held by AIATSIS are important ‘landmarks’ for his people.

Mayor Stephen was among the hundreds of Islanders and Aboriginal people who attended a community access visit on Thursday Island in 2013 which showcased a selection of images and audio recordings of the Torres Strait drawn from the Institute’s vast archive collection – some images dating back as early as the 1890s.

‘IN THE TORRES STRAIT WE ARE PEOPLE THAT ARE ALWAYS NAVIGATING. WE ARE SEAFARERS AND AS PART OF OUR NAVIGATION WE LOOK AT LANDMARKS THAT WE NAVIGATE THROUGH OUR PASSAGE THROUGH OUR REEF,’ HE SAID.

‘SEEING THIS MATERIAL PROVIDES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE FACES OF OUR FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED ON, AND THAT GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO NAVIGATE IN OUR OWN LIFE’S JOURNEY AS A FAMILY.’

Torres Strait mayor, Napau Pedro Stephen, looks through photographs from the AIATSIS After 200 Years collection. (Image by Daniel Walding)
The four-day visit was part of the Institute’s Return of Materials to Indigenous Communities program, and offered Torres Strait Islanders the rare chance to see thousands of photographs—in particular a collection of over 2,500 colour and black and white images taken across the Torres Strait Islands in 1986 as part of the Institute’s publication After 200 Years.

Many who attended were excited and surprised to find photos of themselves, family members, relatives and friends. For many, it was an emotional reconnection that spanned generations—seeing photos of sons and daughters, parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents for the first time. Some clients heard audio recording of fathers and grandfathers singing traditional songs or speaking in traditional languages.

In summing up the importance of the visit, Mayor Stephen reflected on how viewing the photos was an emotional reunion and reconnection with the history of the Torres Strait.

‘A picture tells a thousand words – it’s stirred my heart to see families that I worked with, all the uncles and aunts and it gives me a time of reflection. It’s part of our cultural revitalisation – sadly our children are influenced by so many different cultures that sometimes they forget the depth of their own culture,’ he said. ‘AIATSIS has helped our people to walk down the corridors of time and our culture says you really can’t go ahead without knowing where you’ve come from.’

Torres Strait Islanders Cess Nakata and Ina Titasey (nee Mills, from the Mills Sisters) at the community access visit organised by AIATSIS on Thursday Island. [Photographs by Daniel Walding]
The RAP reflects the efforts of many people. Special thanks go to all AIATSIS staff involved as well as:

- AIATSIS RAP Reference Group – Russell Taylor (Chair), Michelle Patterson, Ray Lovett, Dylan Daniel Marsh, Montserrat Alvarez Klee, Arun Krishnamoorthy, Lisa Fuller, Marni Pilgrim, Craig Leon, Julie Morgan and Julie Goode
- AIATSIS Council members
- AIATSIS Communications team and Reconciliation Australia for their guidance.

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A WORLD IN WHICH ALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURES ARE RECOGNISED, RESPECTED AND VALUED

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