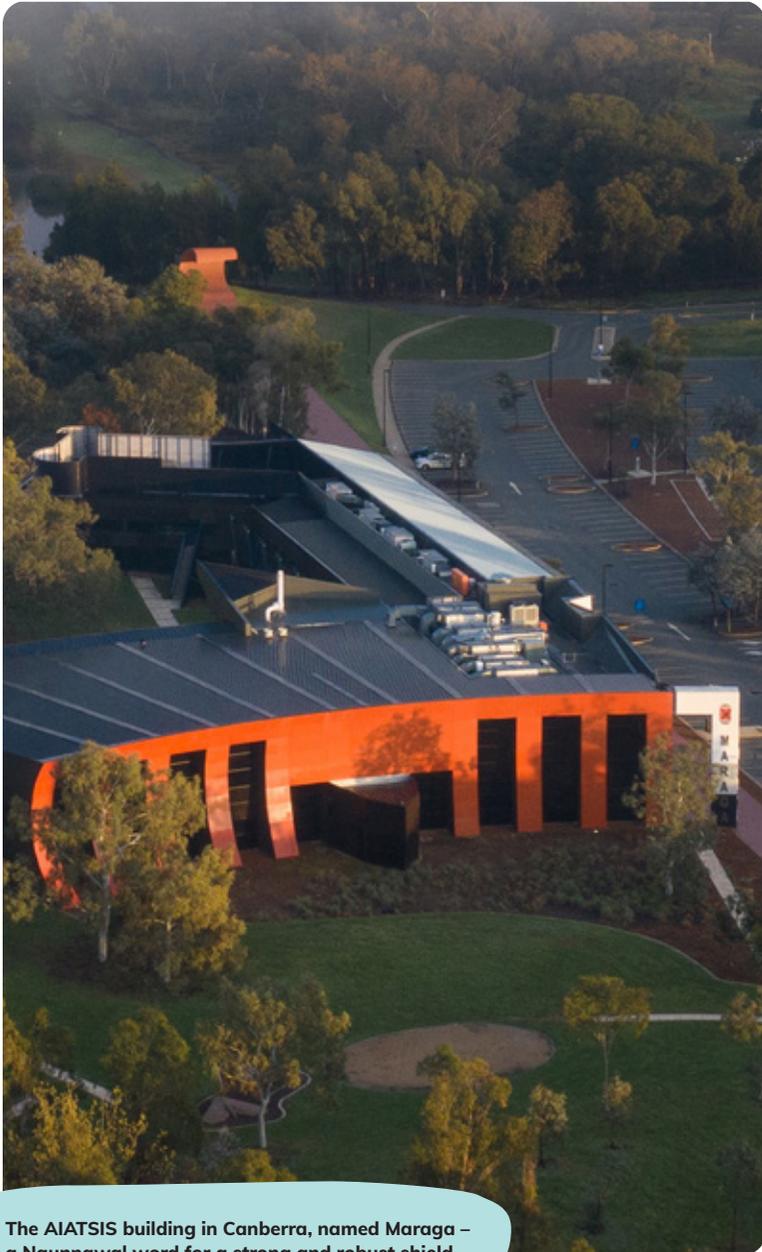




**AIATSIS**

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**Corporate Plan**  
**2021–2025**



The AIATSIS building in Canberra, named Maraga – a Ngunnawal word for a strong and robust shield.

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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present.



Arrente return of cultural heritage ceremony in Alice Springs.

# Introduction

## Chairperson's Statement

A world in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's knowledge and culture are recognised, respected, celebrated and valued is the continuing vision of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and remains central to the Council who have again reaffirmed our commitment to our Strategic Plan 2018–2023, our mission and the key areas of focus for AIATSIS identified through this Corporate Plan.

Through the delivery of our Corporate Plan we will turn our mission and strategies into actions by:

- Telling the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia;
- Creating opportunities for people to encounter, engage with and be transformed by that story;
- Supporting and facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural resurgence; and
- Shaping the national narrative.

Our strategic activities will focus on:

- Building and preserving a national collection and making it accessible;
- Promoting better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultures and heritage;
- Leading and influencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, ethics, protocols and collections;

- Partnering and collaborating with our communities, partners and governments; and
- Advising on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.

In presenting our Corporate Plan, I would like to acknowledge the unique position AIATSIS holds and the priceless collection we maintain for all Australians. Through working closely with our Minister and Portfolio, Government agencies, the Academy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, we commit to utilising this collection to achieve our strategic priorities.

## Statement of Preparation

As Chair of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, I present the AIATSIS Corporate Plan, which covers the periods of 2021–25 as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.

This plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.



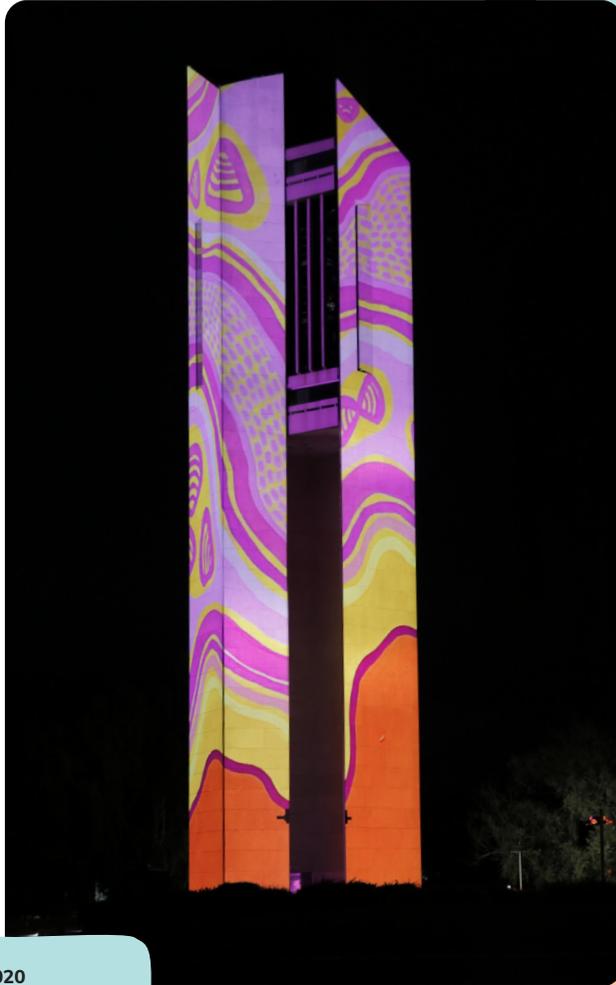
Jodie Sizer  
Chairperson  
21/7/2021



# Period of Coverage

This Corporate Plan is prepared for the reporting period 2021–22 and covers the four reporting periods 2021–25.

It considers future trends and potential changes to our operating environment.



NAIDOC Week 2020  
National Carillon projections.

# Our Purpose

The purpose of AIATSIS is set out in the mission statement and the functions described in the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act (1989) Cth*.

## Functions

1. To develop, preserve and provide access to a national collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.
2. To use that national collection to strengthen and promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.
3. To provide leadership in the fields of:
  - a. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research
  - b. Ethics and protocols for research, and other activities relating to collections, related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - c. Use (including use for research) of that national collection and other collections containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.
4. To 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 the other functions of the Institute.
5. To provide advice to the Commonwealth on the situation and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.

## Mission

**Tell** the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

**Create** opportunities for people to encounter, engage with and be transformed by that story.

**Support** and facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural resurgence.

**Shape** our national narrative.



# Key Activities

To achieve this purpose over the next four years the Institute will focus our effort on the following five (5) Strategies:

1. Build and preserve a national collection, and make it accessible

2. Promote better understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultures and heritage

3. Lead and influence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, ethics, protocols, and collections

4. Partner and collaborate with our communities, partners and governments

5. Advise on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage



Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p><b>1. Build and preserve a national collection and make it accessible</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that our collection is representative, relevant and diverse.</li> <li>• Optimise appropriate accessibility.</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities provided by digital innovation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence implementation of the Collections Transformation Strategy.</li> <li>• Implementation of the Digital Strategy 2030 and its priority projects.</li> <li>• Clarify legal frameworks that affect the administration of the collection with a view to increasing accessibility.</li> <li>• Implement a focused and appropriate acquisitions program.</li> <li>• Maintain an active digitisation program.</li> <li>• Arrange, describe, manage and preserve collection materials in accordance with accepted industry standards.</li> <li>• Review the AIATSIS Collection Development Strategy.</li> <li>• Develop and seek endorsement of an Interpretation Plan and Cultural Safety Policy/Strategy.</li> <li>• Identify appropriate physical and digital storage solutions for our expanding collection.</li> <li>• Conduct collections based research.</li> <li>• Return and repatriation of cultural heritage material.</li> <li>• Custodianship of cultural heritage material returned from overseas.</li> </ul>



Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p><b>2. Promote better understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultures and heritage.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a national forum for dialogue on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.</li> <li>• Deliver transformative experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and heritage.</li> <li>• Deliver high quality exhibitions, products and publications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of culturally safe and accessible online content.</li> <li>• Develop and implement an appropriate public program.</li> <li>• Implement a schools program to support school based learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>• Deliver a robust publishing program with strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.</li> <li>• Develop education, training and resources to foster cultural competency and learning of our shared histories.</li> <li>• Deliver high quality online and physical exhibitions in consultation with Indigenous creators whose works are being exhibited and communities whose cultural heritage is featured.</li> <li>• Promote the importance and impact of the return and repatriation of cultural heritage material.</li> </ul>



Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p><b>3. Lead and influence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, ethics, protocols, and collections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak authoritatively through evidence based research and culturally based representative networks.</li> <li>• Articulate national priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.</li> <li>• Position AIATSIS as the arbiter of standards in relation to research ethics, Indigenous research, and management of Indigenous Collections.</li> <li>• Foster innovation in ethical, impactful research and collection practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research in partnership with native title and Traditional Owner groups.</li> <li>• Convene fora and foster dialogue among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>• Assist University, Government and Industry sectors to implement the AIATSIS Code of Ethics and provide other ethics services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.</li> <li>• Provide guidance on culturally safe Indigenous collection development, management, preservation and access principles and practices.</li> <li>• Share and promote the results of AIATSIS research and innovations in practice.</li> <li>• Support community based policy research through the Indigenous Research Exchange.</li> </ul>



Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p><b>4. Partner and collaborate with our communities, partners, and governments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively build diverse and enduring relationships domestically and internationally.</li> <li>• Be responsive and professional, with culturally competent working practices.</li> <li>• Build an active network of corporate partners.</li> <li>• Engage with our network of members, friends, volunteers, visitors and affiliates.</li> <li>• Learn from and contribute to the priorities and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and develop connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to support our work.</li> <li>• Increase engagement and collaboration with peer Indigenous, research and collections organisations.</li> <li>• Establish and maintain critical international linkages.</li> <li>• Increase revenue from corporate, private and philanthropic sources.</li> <li>• Improve member engagement.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to return and repatriate cultural heritage material.</li> </ul>



Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p><b>5. Advise on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position AIATSIS as a trusted adviser.</li> <li>• Build our policy capacity and capability to deliver world class expertise.</li> <li>• Report regularly on the situation and status of Indigenous cultures and heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively participate in national and international policy debate, expert mechanism and forums relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.</li> <li>• Conduct policy research and research translation to build evidence base for indigenous and government decision making.</li> <li>• Develop a framework to report and advise on the situation and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.</li> </ul>



# Performance Criteria

During the course of the 2021–22 financial year, AIATSIS will undertake a review of its performance information to identify a more suitable set of performance measures and targets.

The outcome of this review will be reflected through the 2022–23 Portfolio Budget Statements and the 2022–26 AIATSIS Corporate Plan.

As taken from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21.

## 1. Build and preserve a National collection, and make it accessible.

### Goals

- Ensure that our collection is representative, relevant and diverse.
- Optimise appropriate accessibility.
- Maximise opportunities provided by digital innovation.

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
Collection Growth	An increase in the AIATSIS Collection.	Increase in AIATSIS Collection growth.	+2% from 2019–20.	+2% from 2020–21.	+2% from 2021–22.	+2% from 2022–23.
Collection Accessibility	Increase in clients accessing the AIATSIS Collection	Number of requests met and items provided by source and location.	+1.5% from 2019–20.	+1.5% from 2020–21.	+1.5% from 2021–22.	+1.5% from 2022–23.
	All Access requests are actioned within 60 days.	100% of requests across the following categories are actioned within 60 days; (service standard) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection Access requests.</li> <li>• Native Title requests.</li> <li>• COEDL requests.</li> </ul>	100%	100%	100%	100%
Collection Digitisation	Improved access and security through increased digitisation of AIATSIS Collection.	Provide an overall increase in the proportion of collection digitised by format.	+5% from 2019–20.	+5% from 2020–21.	+5% from 2021–22.	+5% from 2022–23.

## 2. Promote better understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultures and heritage.

### Goals

- Provide a national forum for dialogue on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Deliver transformative experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and heritage.
- Deliver high quality exhibitions, products and publications.

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
Communications	Through Communication channels, promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.	Number and quality of public communication, education and engagement assessed through surveys/feedback channels etc.	70% of respondents indicate high level impact.			
Education & Cultural Learning	Engagement with Education contributing to Australian curriculum and cultural learning.	Increase in number and type of activities with an education focus measured by; 1. Core Cultural Learning uptake within and outside of the APS. 2. Utilisation of Education products and services.	1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services.	1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services.	1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services.	1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services.
Public Events	AIATSIS public events promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge of culture and heritage.	Number of and satisfaction of attendees at AIATSIS Public events measured through surveys and feedback channels.	5 Annual events and 70% of respondents indicate high level impact.	5 Annual events and 70% of respondents indicate high level impact.	5 Annual events and 70% of respondents indicate high level impact.	5 Annual events and 70% of respondents indicate high level impact.
Publishing (Aboriginal Studies Press)	Deliver a publications program which promotes Indigenous Authorship and better understanding of Indigenous Peoples cultures and heritage.	Increase Indigenous Authorship through ASP Publications. Maintaining a robust publishing program.	Majority Indigenous Authors. Publish 8 or more publications annually.	Majority Indigenous Authors. Publish 8 or more publications annually.	Majority Indigenous Authors. Publish 8 or more publications annually.	Majority Indigenous Authors. Publish 8 or more publications annually.

### 3. Lead and influence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, ethics, protocols and collections.

#### Goals

- Speak authoritatively through evidence based research and culturally based representative networks.
- Articulate national priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.
- Position AIATSIS as the arbiter of standards in relation to research ethics, Indigenous research and management of Indigenous Collections.
- Foster innovation in ethical, impactful research and collection practice

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
Use and influence of the AIATSIS Code of Ethics (formally Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS))	AIATSIS becomes the arbiter of standards in relation to Research Ethics and Indigenous Research.	Number of times GERAIS (AIATSIS Code of Ethics) utilised.	5000 downloads/ references.	5000 downloads/ references.	5000 downloads/ references.	5000 downloads/ references.
External use of Ethics clearances through the Research Ethics Committee	Improved standing of the AIATSIS Research Ethics Committee through an increase of Ethics clearances.	Number of Ethics clearances by the AIATSIS Research Ethics Committee annually.	20 Ethics clearances annually.	20 Ethics clearances annually.	20 Ethics clearances annually.	20 Ethics clearances annually.
Take up of AIATSIS collections protocols and standards	AIATSIS become leaders in Collection protocols and standards.	An increase in the utilisation of AIATSIS Collections' Access and Use Policy, Austlang and Thesauri.	600 application and usage events.			
AIATSIS Influence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research	AIATSIS is seen as a leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.	Number and type of requests for advice and input on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.	+15 requests.	+15 requests.	+15 requests.	+15 requests.
	Leadership by AIATSIS through research partnerships.	Number and value of partnerships measured through formal research relationships.	+5% increase in number.			
	Share and promote the results and impacts of AIATSIS research and collections programs through staff publications and presentations.	Number of publications and presentations by AIATSIS Staff by type.	100 publications annually.	100 publications annually.	100 publications annually.	100 publications annually.

#### 4. Partner and collaborate with our communities, partners and governments.

##### Goals

- Actively build diverse and enduring relationships domestically and internationally.
- Be responsive and professional, with culturally competent working practices.
- Build an active network of corporate partners.
- Engage with our network of members, friends, volunteers, visitors and affiliates.
- Learn from and contribute to the priorities and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
AIATSIS membership	Increase to AIATSIS Membership and engagement.	Annual increase to the AIATSIS membership.	+10 new members.	+10 new members.	+10 new members.	+10 new members.
		Number of members events held.	3 members events annually.			
Research collaborations and networks	Build diverse and enduring research relationships across our partners and stakeholders.	Type, number and level of interactions in research collaborations.	3 research collaborations.	3 research collaborations.	3 research collaborations.	3 research collaborations.
		Number and type of research networks.	3 networks.	3 networks.	3 networks.	3 networks.
Interaction with Indigenous Communities	Maintain and develop partnerships for working with Indigenous Communities.	Number of engagements with Indigenous Communities by type.	50 engagements.	50 engagements.	50 engagement.	50 engagements.
Partnerships in place	Network and collaborate with relevant partners and stakeholders in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.	Number of partnerships, partnership projects and those formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding.	5 strategic partnerships.	5 strategic partnerships.	5 strategic partnerships.	5 strategic partnerships.
			20 partnership projects.	20 partnership projects.	20 partnership projects.	20 partnership projects.

## 5. Advise on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

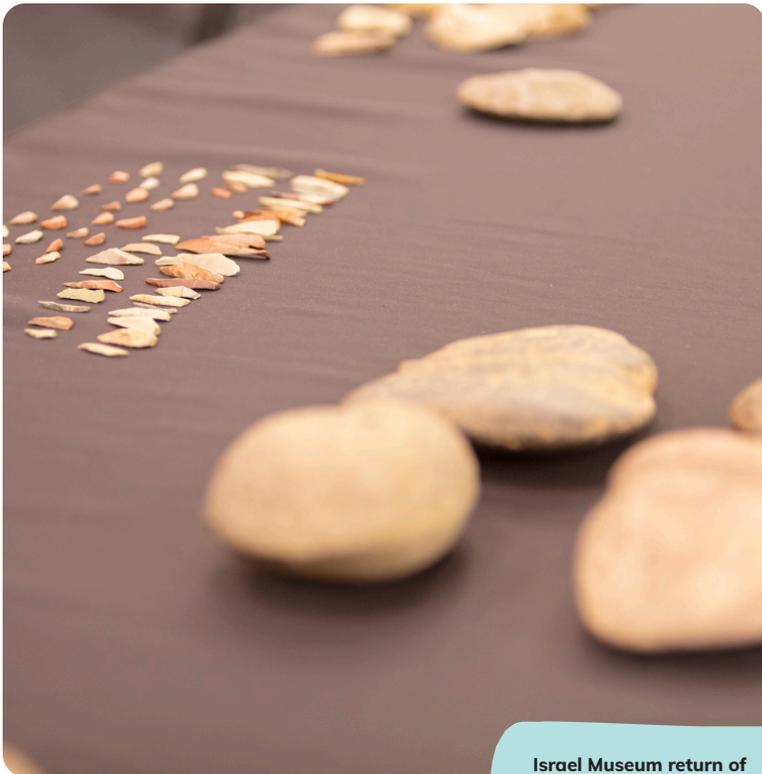
### Goals

- Position AIATSIS as a trusted adviser.
- Build our policy capacity and capability to deliver world class expertise.
- Report regularly on the situation and status of Indigenous cultures and heritage.

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
AIATSIS reports and policy briefs produced	Positively influence appropriate policy and service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.	Number of reports, policy briefs and requests for advice.	5 annually.	5 annually.	5 annually.	5 annually.
Engagement with Ministers, decision makers and policy leaders, advisors and senior public servants	Reporting regularly on the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.	Number and type of engagements.	10 engagements annually.	10 engagements annually.	10 engagements annually.	10 engagements annually.

# Our Environment

AIATSIS are the custodians of a long and significant history, this history serves as a platform on which to build into the future. We occupy an important place in this nation, as we work at the intersection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Government, the Academy, the Cultural Sector and the broader Australian and International public. AIATSIS operates in a changing environmental context in which the Council interprets the AIATSIS Act to provide strategy and priority setting.



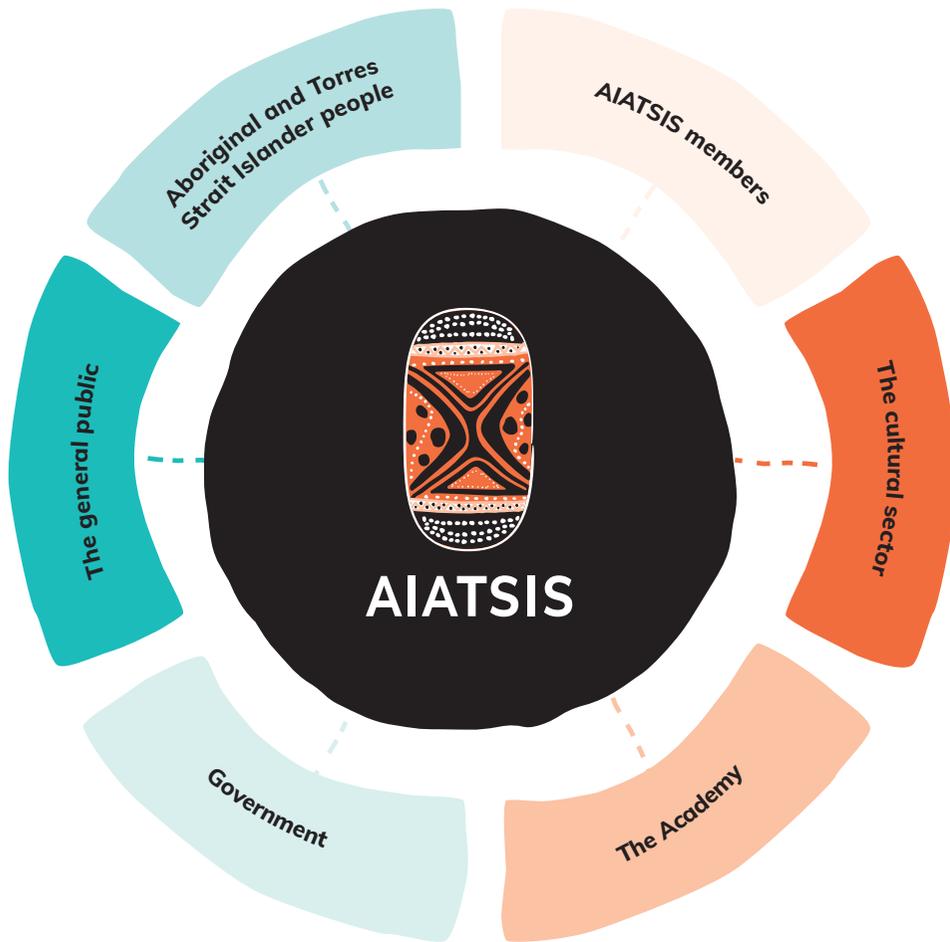
Israel Museum return of cultural heritage material.

These challenges and opportunities include:

- Increased recognition, demand and expectation for AIATSIS expertise
- Increasing knowledge and relevance of AIATSIS
- Growing need and recognition for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge centre
- Increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities seeking the return of their cultural heritage material from overseas and the number of overseas collecting institutions, private collectors and foreign governments willing the return of cultural heritage material to Australia
- Ongoing catastrophic risk to the AIATSIS Collection
- Impacts of audio-visual obsolescence as detailed under the UNESCO deadline 2025 statement
- Managing the impacts of and addressing the operating challenges associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
- A unique cultural institution managing multiple areas of professional expertise and practice in a dynamic environment
- A fiscally challenging environment
- A competitive human resources environment.

# Cooperation

AIATSIS acknowledges our relationships with key stakeholders, we draw on their expertise and insight and leverage these relationships to support us in achieving our purpose.



AIATSIS and NTSCORP signing an MOU.



Dhanggati Dictionary launch – Aunty Galdys Quinlan, Liz Campbell (Mayor KSC), Amanda L, Aunty Caroline Bradshaw, Gary Williams (CEO Muurrbay).

# Capability

Over the duration of this Corporate Plan, AIATSIS will continue to strengthen and enhance our capability to achieve our purpose. This will include a focus on:

## Relationships

- Respectful engagement that continues to build our reputation and standing within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Working closely with the Government of the day and their respective government agencies to support their aspirations in Indigenous Affairs.
- Continue to partner with key organisations both domestically and internationally.

## Governance

- Enhanced financial performance and resource management.
- Meeting legislative obligations and compliance requirements.

## Infrastructure Capability

- Ongoing realisation of infrastructure requirements.

## Workforce Capability

- Strengthening our leadership cohort.
- Development of a workforce plan that addresses workforce capabilities, requirements and gaps.
- Indigenisation of our workforce.
- Improved cultural competency.

## ICT Capability

- Ongoing modernisation and integration of ICT environment to support improved knowledge management and discoverability of our collection.
- Enhancing our technical expertise and capability through our digital transformation strategy.

## Capability Development

Further work is underway within the Institute and will be considered going forward to refine and map core capabilities including capability gaps. We have identified the following capability development areas:

- Public Programs.
- Facilities to support optional delivery of Institutes purpose.



# Risk Oversight and Management

AIATSIS manages opportunity and risk in accordance with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and our Enterprise Risk Management Framework. In addition to the broader challenges affecting our operating environment, AIATSIS identifies and manages risks at strategic and operational levels. Risk engagement is promoted across all levels of the agency, recognising positive engagement with risk as a key contributor to improved productivity and performance.

Focused improvements in our capability managed through Council, the Audit and Risk Committee and Internal Audit

functions will strengthen our risk management practices where we are vulnerable and provide opportunities to focus attention with dedicated resources implementing review findings.

AIATSIS is continuing to embed positive risk engagement in our business, focusing on enhanced capability, communication and culture. Risk is actively being considered in the prioritisation, allocation and delivery of resources to ensure effective management of adverse events or opportunities that impact on our purpose and objectives.

## Managing Enterprise Risks

Enterprise risks	Management strategies
AIATSIS is not seen as an ethical and professional body, impacting stakeholder support and funding	Under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act), AIATSIS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) ensures compliance to legislated responsibilities and reports to the Council on compliance.
AIATSIS is not valued or recognised as leaders in the maintenance and preservation of Indigenous collections	AIATSIS provides leadership and guidance on culturally appropriate Indigenous collection management, preservation and access principles and practices through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaboration with other collecting institutions and associations.</li><li>• Ongoing promotion of the Collection Development Strategy and the AIATSIS Access and Use Policy.</li><li>• Utilisation of Industry best practice.</li></ul>



Enterprise risks	Management strategies
<p>AIATSIS is not valued or recognised as a leader and centre of excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research</p>	<p>AIATSIS provides leadership in the field of ethics and protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research by hosting the biennial National Native Title Conference and regular research conferences, symposiums, and forums.</p> <p>The Research Ethics Committee and the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (The AIATSIS Code) ensures that research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples follows a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity.</p>
<p>Risk to the AIATSIS Collection from environment, technology and resources</p>	<p>AIATSIS manages stringent environmental controls across the collection and provides best quality preservation processes and practices through an adequately resourced and skilled workforce. The collection is stored In-house and through modern leased government archives.</p>
<p>COVID19 Pandemic</p>	<p>AIATSIS has established a COVIDSafe plan and Roadmap. The COVID Taskforce has reconvened to monitor and implement government advice and direction if required. COVID updates are provided to staff regularly.</p>
<p>Lack of adherence to the AIATSIS Strategic Plan 2018–23</p>	<p>Our strategies and actions are cascaded through business planning, Individual performance agreements and budget processes enabling Executive and Council oversight of activities and utilising control mechanisms such as internal audit to monitor, review and report to AIATSIS Executive.</p>
<p>Key capability degradation</p>	<p>AIATSIS manages our workforce requirements through appropriate workforce planning, capability mapping, recruitment and retention strategies and meaningful learning and development activities.</p>
<p>AIATSIS not valued or recognised as a leader in the return and repatriation of cultural heritage material</p>	<p>AIATSIS provides leadership and guidance on the return and repatriation of cultural heritage material.</p> <p>AIATSIS engagement with communities is informed by our commitment to best practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and engagement. This includes the principles of Ask First, Free Prior &amp; Informed Consent, and the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are engaged at the earliest possible stage in the return process. Our aim is to empower communities and establish genuine partnerships – one where communities are at the centre of key decision making processes.</p>





# AIATSIS

**Australian Institute of Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander Studies**

51 Lawson Crescent, ACTON ACT 2601  
GPO Box 553, CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

**P** +61 2 6246 1111

**E** [executive@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:executive@aiatsis.gov.au)

**[aiatsis.gov.au](http://aiatsis.gov.au)**