

AIATSIS
—
**STRATEGIC
PLAN**
—
2018-2023



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES



FOREWORD

It is a very exciting time at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and as Chairperson of the Council of AIATSIS I am extremely proud to present our 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

At AIATSIS we are the heirs to a long and significant history, and by the end of this strategic plan will be approaching our 60th birthday in 2024. This history is something of which we can, and must, be rightly proud. It is something worth celebrating! It is critically important, however, that we ensure that our long history serves as a platform on which to build into the future, rather than allowing it to become an anchor that holds us down and holds us back.

I believe that we are at an inflection point in our national story, and in the history of this institution. That is why in developing this strategic plan, the AIATSIS Council and Executive grappled with the question, "What kind of AIATSIS do we need to be today and in the future?"

AIATSIS occupies an incredibly important place in this nation. It is a unique institution that works at the intersection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the government, the academy, and the cultural sector, along with the broader Australian and international publics.

The first story of this nation is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander story and it is 65,000 years old. We are the only national institution with an exclusive focus on this story. We are uniquely positioned and we are uniquely equipped to tell that story, in all its richness and diversity, to the nation and to the world. The priorities set out in this plan: Discovery; Transformation; Resurgence; and Extending our Reach each centre on the opportunities and possibilities of this time in our history.

The Council and Executive of AIATSIS share a determination to be part of helping all Australians reimagine what it means to be Australian and to forge a national identity that embraces and celebrates the unique cultures of Australia's First Peoples. It is this determination that underpins this Strategic Plan and I commend it to you.

Professor Michael McDaniel
Chairperson

OUR VISION

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

OUR 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**.



OUR STRATEGIES

To deliver on our mission and objectives.

STRATEGY

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

GOALS

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



STRATEGY

Promote better understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultures and heritage.

GOALS

- Positioning AIATSIS as the national forum for dialogue on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Delivering transformative experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and heritage.
- Delivering high quality exhibitions, products and publications.



STRATEGY

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

GOALS

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



Ninielia Mills delivers the youth keynote address at the 2018 National Native Title Conference in Broome, WA. Photo: AIATSIS

STRATEGY

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

GOALS

- Actively building diverse and enduring relationships domestically and internationally.
- Being responsive and professional, with culturally competent work practices.
- Building an active network of corporate partners.
- Engaging our network of members, friends, volunteers, visitors and affiliates.
- Helping to develop community capability in relevant areas.

Aerial shot of Maraga. Photo: AIATSIS



STRATEGY

Advise on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

GOALS

- Positioning AIATSIS as a trusted advisor.
- Building our policy capacity and capability to deliver world class expertise.
- Reporting regularly on the situation and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retired) and Lady Cosgrove view rare items during a visit to AIATSIS.
Photo: AIATSIS

OUR PRIORITIES

To realise our mission.

DISCOVERY INITIATIVE

A suite of measures designed to help Australians discover the richness of the histories, cultures, and heritage of our First Nations people.

This initiative includes a new, state-of-the-art home for AIATSIS that is a national forum for transformational cross-cultural engagement and shared learning and could include a national resting place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains that cannot immediately be returned to country.

RESURGENCE INITIATIVE

Measures under this initiative are designed to contribute to ongoing cultural resurgence across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

Projects include the publication of Indigenous language dictionaries and the Songlines project working with communities to secure song traditions.

TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

The transformation of peoples' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

Measures under this initiative include work to develop resources for the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in schools and support of professional development through cultural competency training.

EXTENDING OUR REACH

Exploring options to extend the reach of AIATSIS, both in terms of presence and influence, through physical and digital means.

Initiatives include a leading-edge, engaging web presence and potential physical presence beyond Canberra.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- 2019 UNESCO International year of Indigenous languages.
- 2020 Return of Cultural Heritage Project.

UNDERPINNING COMMITMENTS

- AIATSIS technical expertise and capability is sustained for national and regional impact.
- AIATSIS is characterised by an Indigenous voice in all that it does.
- AIATSIS is a financially sustainable organisation.
- AIATSIS operates cohesively as a single entity embodying the concept of Yindyamarra.*
- AIATSIS is positioned to influence across a range of sectors.
- AIATSIS is an innovative and flexible institution.
- AIATSIS is a proactively engaged and outwardly looking institution.

*Yindyamarra is a Wiradjuri word meaning honour and respect. More broadly it implies thoughtfulness, graciousness, and kindness.



Mr Craig Ritchie, CEO



A sea of 15,000 hands to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the National Apology to Australia's First Peoples was created outside AIATSIS in 2014.
Photo: AIATSIS

All photos used with consent.

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Cover image: The Lorrkkon Ceremony honouring Big Bill Neidjie launched 50th anniversary celebrations for AIATSIS in Canberra in 2014. Photo: AIATSIS

