One Mob Different Country dancers at the National Native Title Conference 2016
Goal 4

Provide leadership across the cultural sector, including in research, collections and publishing

Planned performance and measures

AIATSIS is working to influence and lead best practice more widely across the complete research and knowledge sharing cycle. This is measured by the development, reach and take-up of standards, guidance and advice on best practice in research, publication and collection management, access and use.

Our strategies

Lead the Before It’s Too Late process to identify and preserve Indigenous knowledge and cultural materials nationally

This ambitious national strategy was proposed by AIATSIS Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson AM in his address to the National Press Club on 12 November 2014, celebrating AIATSIS’s 50th anniversary.

During 2015–16 we undertook work to frame a practicable approach to the process. A plan has been developed and potential pilot projects have been identified. We are now investigating options to fund these pilot projects, including with the AIATSIS Foundation.

Develop and disseminate standards and guidelines on ethical and culturally proficient practice in research, collections management and publishing

Research standards and guidelines

The AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS) were created to ensure that research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people follows a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the researcher and the individuals and/or communities involved in the research. They are available on the AIATSIS website and are promoted through appropriate forums. The number of downloads grew dramatically, from 229 in 2014–15 to 9,349 in 2015–16.
Publishing guidelines
Promotion of the AIATSIS Guidelines for the Ethical Publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Authors and Research from those Communities (2015) continued in 2015–16. Aboriginal Studies Press made presentations to the ACT branch of the Children’s Book Council of Australia and the Independent Publishers Conference and produced a webinar for the Australian Publishers Association, prompting the feedback that it had attracted ‘one of our highest registration rates to date and many post-webinar compliments about how useful the discussion was’. Follow-up inquiries reinforced the value of AIATSIS’s advice.

Collections standards
AIATSIS is now the recognised authority for the naming conventions used by libraries and other collecting institutions for matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since 1977 the NLA has been seen as the authority for naming conventions for Australia. This changed in 2010 when the NLA consulted AIATSIS for appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander naming guidelines. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions has now processed the update, acknowledging AIATSIS’s leadership in this area.

Cultural capability
In June 2015 AIATSIS partnered with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Social Services to develop Core, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability e-learning program for use across the APS. The program was designed to be consistent with, and embedded in, an AIATSIS cultural proficiency framework.

Core is due to be launched early in 2016–17 and will be made available through the APS Shared Services Centre. AIATSIS is exploring further opportunities to enhance the impact and reach of this course, such as derivative courses for other audiences, including the higher education and private sectors.

Provide consultancy services on ethical and culturally proficient practice in research, collections management and access, and publishing
AIATSIS continued to offer ethics review through our Research Ethics Committee, based on the GERAIS. We assessed four proposals for external clients in 2015–16, one more than in 2014–15.

The Research Ethics Committee performs the critical role of ensuring that research by AIATSIS, and increasingly by external researchers, is ethically sound and in keeping with our commitment to communities and stakeholders.

In January 2016, following the development of the Defence Cultural Awareness (Indigenous) Learning Framework, the Department of Defence commissioned AIATSIS to develop an electronic resource library containing accessible and accurate materials mapped to illuminate each area of the framework. (For progress see page 56).
Core cultural learning foundation course

The Core e-learning program for APS employees builds on AIATSIS’s years of research on, and involvement in, cultural competence initiatives and is a natural extension of our role in that area. It is informed by AIATSIS’s research collaboration with the University of Sydney’s National Centre for Cultural Competence.

Core consists of 10 modules covering a broad range of topics and themes, focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultures, history and society. It provides a detailed exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues, which can help APS employees increase their cultural understanding, improve their self-awareness and critical reflection, and enhance their personal and professional capacity to engage respectfully and effectively in an intercultural environment.

Unlike off-the-shelf programs, Core reflects the profile of the APS and is designed to meet the foundational needs of all Commonwealth employees. It provides a framework for individual learning as well as a basis for collective (departmental) learning through:

- allowing for critical self-reflection
- encouraging participants to undertake further studies/programs
- encouraging participants to develop a cultural plan for further professional development
- promoting dialogue between participants and their supervisors
- promoting cultural safety in APS workplaces and ways of achieving this.

Core is strengths-based and encourages people to understand their own cultural perspectives as the basis for effective interactions with people of (other) diverse backgrounds.

Some of the advisors who were interviewed for the Core program: (clockwise from left) Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis, Ngaatjatjarra educator, interpreter; Professor Juanita Sherwood, Wiradjuri woman, Academic Director of the National Centre for Cultural Competence; Greg Roche, Executive Director of Township Leasing; and Scott Gorringe, Mithaka man, Director of Murrimatters Consulting.
Share knowledge and ideas through seminars, symposia, conferences and Indigenous research networks, including flagship conferences in native title and Indigenous studies

AIATSIS researchers and employees from the Collections area attended and presented at a range of conferences, workshops and symposia during the year. Presentations by AIATSIS researchers are listed in Appendix B. Our Collections staff had a presence at forums including the Australian Archaeological Association conference, and published articles on best practice and new initiatives relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index in The Indexer and Online Currents.

National Native Title Conference 2016

The National Native Title Conference in June 2016 was co-convened by AIATSIS and the Northern Land Council and hosted by the Larrakia people in Darwin. The conference theme was ‘Strong country, strong culture, strong future’.

The conference attracted 800 delegates, including traditional owners; representatives from NTRBs and service providers; officers from the Federal Court, the National Native Title Tribunal and government agencies; academics; native title practitioners and consultants; industry representatives; and international participants. The program comprised one day of closed workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their NTRBs or service providers, followed by a two-day public program. The public program was open to all delegates and included keynote speeches, forums and workshops, Indigenous talking circles and presentations from experts.

The three-day program involved more than 150 speakers and included the following themes:
- development enterprises and opportunities on country
- protection of cultural heritage and knowledge
- legal turning points
- community leadership and development
- meaningful constitutional reform
- Indigenous agricultural systems
- water and sea rights.

Sponsorship of the 2016 conference reached $310,000—a new record. With these funds AIATSIS was able to sponsor the cultural program, the youth forum and over 60 Indigenous people to attend the conference as speakers, facilitators and delegates.
Gail Mabo introducing the Mabo Lecture at the National Native Title Conference 2016

Hamid Binsaad, Henry Park, Ruth Gilbert and Joseph Edgar at the National Native Title Conference 2016 welcome reception
AIATSIS and National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples to lead Indigenous consultation on constitutional recognition

In May 2016 the Referendum Council on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples announced that it would lead public consultation on recognition including Indigenous, community-wide and digital consultations in the second half of 2016. These consultations will include a series of regional dialogues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to discuss options for a referendum proposal that could be supported by Indigenous peoples.

The Referendum Council is commencing its consultation process with three high-level meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, including traditional owners and representatives of peak bodies.

The Referendum Council invited AIATSIS to be involved in the Indigenous consultations, and it was agreed that AIATSIS and the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, in partnership, will manage and coordinate the leader meetings and the regional dialogues. Arrangements for the leader meetings were under way before the end of June 2016.

Results

Table 8: Goal 4 performance measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>2014–15 RESULTS</th>
<th>2015–16 RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at National Native Title Conference</td>
<td>700 attendees</td>
<td>800 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-up of AIATSIS standards, guidelines, protocols and advice</td>
<td>Ethics approvals—3</td>
<td>Ethics approvals—4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GERAIS, ethics clearances, access policy, publishing guidelines)</td>
<td>GERAIS downloads—229</td>
<td>GERAIS downloads—9,349</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New measures:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collections access and use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>policy: 2,241 downloads</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical publishing guidelines: 1,331 downloads</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analysis

AIATSIS has long taken a role in actively leading ethical research practice relating to Indigenous peoples—the GERAIS have existed since 2000 and were reviewed in 2012. We are now building on this and extending our leadership into all parts of the cycle of research and knowledge sharing, including in publishing, collections management and cultural competency.

Knowledge and use of the GERAIS has grown rapidly, and the numbers of downloads of the publishing guidelines has grown steadily. The value of these guidelines is reinforced through direct feedback from users.

The AIATSIS Collection Access and Use Policy, created as an internal document, was reviewed in 2015–16. It represents the leading edge of culturally sensitive and ethical practice that also promotes access to and use of Indigenous collection materials. It is being regularly viewed by external users on the AIATSIS website.

That AIATSIS was asked to help lead Indigenous consultations on constitutional recognition demonstrates the trust of both Indigenous communities and the government in our ability to bring people together in informed, ethical and constructive dialogue.