



# Journey of Indigenous studies in Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and the Engagement and Impact (EI) Assessment

ERA 2010-2018



EI 2018



ANZSRC Review  
2019-2020



ERA EI Review  
2020-2021



ERA 2023 & EI 2024



## Steps along the journey

- Indigenous studies assessed within other disciplines, e.g. health, environment, law, languages, and more
- Indigenous content flagged for assessors. e.g., cultural warnings

- Optional impact study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research
- Definition co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers

- Codes reviewed and updated for all disciplines
- Indigenous studies classified at Division and Group levels with definition and codes co-designed across Australia and New Zealand

- 2 recommendations for Indigenous studies
- Include in the same way as other disciplines with a review to follow
  - ARC to work with universities on leadership in implementing

- Develop guidance and outreach
- Recruit and build capacity of a new cohort of assessors
- Conduct post implementation review



## Outcomes from each step

- Difficult to separate Indigenous studies from other disciplines for analysis or reporting
- Flagging used inconsistently

- Results showed there was enough research for a viable assessment. 20 universities submitted impact studies.
- Assessment supported by universities and Indigenous researchers

- Classification is world leading
- Users such as the ARC and other government and non-government organisations can collect data and report on Indigenous studies separately

- Indigenous studies to be fully included in ERA 2023 and EI 2024
- Indigenous Studies Excellence and Engagement (ISEE) Group convened to develop and promote leadership strategies for the sector

- Baseline dataset for Indigenous studies
- Report Indigenous studies contribution to research quality, engagement and impact
- Grow leadership and knowledge across the sector



## Engagement

The ARC seeks ongoing ethical engagement (as outlined in the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics](#) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) with Indigenous research leaders, researchers and research communities to incorporate their values, views and feedback on the ERA and EI programs. Some forms of engagement include: Indigenous representation on advisory and assessment committees, working groups, consultation workshops, with First Nations peoples feedback on papers and open public consultation processes. The ARC appreciates the generosity of those who have provided their time and expertise to continually develop and improve ERA and EI programs.



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Impact Studies from EI 2018

Summaries of some highly rated impacts studies are below. To view these and other impact studies in full, visit the [ARC data portal](#).

## Cross-cultural biodiversity surveys in eastern Arnhem Land



Macquarie, in collaboration with the remote community of Ngukurr in South East Arnhem Land, has integrated regional biodiversity data through a two-way relationship with the Atlas of Living Australia. Indigenous knowledge of regional biodiversity has realised cross-cultural impacts on the ways of knowing and managing biodiversity through the Atlas of Living Australia. Macquarie employed over 50 people from Ngukurr who were previously unemployed and in 2016 established a young peoples (Yangbala) empowerment project which continues today. 50 young people aged 18-35 were paid to work on the project while mentoring senior school children. Three young people have gone on to study at Macquarie University and they are the first people from Ngukurr community to attend University in over 30 years.

## Collaboratively Sharing and Promoting Australia's Indigenous Histories



Tasmania is an island with an Indigenous history, present, and future. The University of Tasmania has an important role to play in understanding the impact the past plays today. From 2011 to 2016, its historians have worked in partnership with Australian Indigenous and heritage groups and archival sources to deepen this understanding by:

- providing expert advice to Indigenous and Australian government cultural heritage organisations negotiating the return for burial of Aboriginal ancestral remains from overseas museums;
- contributing discipline-specific knowledge to an Indigenous-led design process for the exhibition, 'The First Tasmanians'; and
- strengthening cultural vitality through sustained, high-level contributions to public debates about Tasmania and Australia's history.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities: health, wellbeing and suicide



Indigenous suicide is a significant population health challenge for Australia. Suicide is a major cause of Indigenous premature mortality and is a contributor to Indigenous health and life expectancy gaps. Two national projects undertaken by UWA researchers - the National Empowerment Project (NEP) and The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP) - have contributed significantly to the knowledge base on how to address this health challenge and have influenced Government policy. These projects have increased awareness in community based and Indigenous led solutions, as well as informing policy changes at the Federal level.