ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ending 31 December 2021
**Vision**

NIRAKN’s vision is to develop a critical mass of skilled, informed, and qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers who can address the urgent needs of our communities through the delivery of culturally appropriate research. NIRAKN will endeavour to facilitate a national Indigenous research agenda for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the nation.

NIRAKN’s premise is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems inform and frame our research. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems are understood as continuing and living, embodied, and culturally situated within our respective Indigenous nations, communities, and the broader Australian society, and include Indigenous ethics and protocols. As such, NIRAKN’s multicultural research program seeks to facilitate and encompass a wide range of research topics and projects, reflecting that the production and application of our respective knowledge systems requires a comprehensive agenda as well as a robust engagement with disciplinary knowledges.

**Aims**

1. Establish a quality program of capacity-building initiatives to form a skilled and qualified research community by supporting aspiring, postgraduate, and early- to mid-career Indigenous researchers.
2. Establish a regenerative undergraduate-to-postgraduate pipeline of new researchers across institutions, the nation, and fields of critical research importance.
3. Connect Indigenous researchers across disciplines, nationally and internationally, to develop a culturally supportive and inclusive research environment that enables the cross-fertilisation of ideas and a platform for new Indigenous multidisciplinary research.
4. Develop an ongoing integrated research program of collaborations with the Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council, government, industry, community and philanthropic grant funding.
5. Achieve national and international recognition as a leading network of Australian Indigenous research expertise, knowledge, and innovation.
6. Initiate the Indigenous research agenda by applying Indigenous knowledges and expertise to multidisciplinary collaborative projects of pressing research. These are needed to inform community and government policy and program delivery.

**Activities**

NIRAKN mentors, supports and engages Indigenous researchers across disciplines and institutions through an extensive research capacity building program that is designed to develop foundational and high-level skills, as well as inform and transfer knowledge. The research capacity building program involves introductory-level research workshops delivered locally at participating institutions, an annual series of more advanced research workshops, Indigenous research methodologies masterclasses, critical reading groups, research residencies, and access to networking, mentoring, and other professional resources.

NIRAKN’s Collaborative Research Program provides a platform for cross-institutional and multidisciplinary Indigenous research. The research efforts of NIRAKN’s National and State Hubs are geared towards producing measurable high-quality research. In addition to high-quality original research and publications, NIRAKN also fosters engagement with Indigenous research and knowledges across the sector through international collaborations, symposiums, and seminars.
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1 Director’s Introduction

We are pleased to present the ninth Annual Report of the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN) for 2021. NIRAKN was established in 2012 under the Special Research Initiative (SRI) for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers’ Network (ATSIRN) and was awarded $3.2 million over four years. In 2018, NIRAKN’s continuing success was recognised by the ARC through the granting of additional funds of $899,333. The Australia Research Council (ARC) has extended this initiative with an extension until 31 December 2022.

NIRAKN is now in a legacy phase in which State Hubs are completing work on their research projects and holding their capacity building programs (where applicable and/or possible). The NIRAKN website is being revamped to share online offerings of the capacity building programs for all. We extend our sincere thanks to all involved over the past years for contributing to NIRAKN’s outstanding success, including the previous Director, node leaders, State Hub Leaders and partner organisation representatives, as well as members of the Advisory committee.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Professor Peter Anderson
NIRAKN National Director (2017–present)
Carumba Institute
Queensland University of Technology
2 Governance

In 2021, NIRAKN’s governance continued according to the restructured model created in 2017.

2.1 Changes to the Network

Professor Peter Anderson continues to lead the NIRAKN National Hub (in Queensland and is hereafter referred to as the National Hub). He has overall responsibility for the administration and coordination of NIRAKN in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia. The National Hub continues to be based within the Carumba Institute (previously known as Indigenous Research and Engagement Unit) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

Each state has State Hub leaders and they are:

- Professor Peter Anderson, National Hub leader Queensland (QLD), Victoria (VIC), Tasmania (TAS), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and Western Australia (WA)
- Pro Vice Chancellor Dr Leanne Holt, New South Wales (NSW)
- Associate Professor Linda Ford, Northern Territory (NT) and South Australia (SA)

The National Hub leader and the State Hub Leaders are the Management Committee (refer to Appendix 1 for more information).

For a list of current NIRAKN Chief Investigators and Co-Investigators who are located across institutions and disciplinary fields refer to Appendix 2.

2.2 Changes to Governance

There were no changes to NIRAKN’s governance in 2021.

Table 1: Conditions of Extension for NIRAKN
(Please note, these Conditions of Extension were fulfilled and NIRAKN is now in the legacy phase.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NIRAKN Conditions of Extension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. NIRAKN is expected to actively promote better practices within the participating organisations via its highly successful capacity building workshop model: the ARC requires NIRAKN to focus more on “train the trainer” in delivering the workshops. This legacy requirement is now centre stage for the program for the final year of funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. While NIRAKN is planning to provide new seed funding for larger scale research projects among its participants, the ARC requires that funds be used to strongly enable cross-institutional and interdisciplinary work. NIRAKN is to develop performance measures of excellence for these projects, including the development of project-specific milestones and KPIs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. NIRAKN will prepare and present to stakeholders and the wider community more tangible evidence of the Network’s connection with the “regenerative undergraduate to postgraduate pipeline of new researchers”, such as enrolment and</td>
</tr>
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...
5. **ARC requires more consideration of succession planning to develop future research leaders:** *Senior researchers participating in the Network should be more active across Network nodes as supervisors and mentors to Indigenous students and postgraduates. This will provide a valuable platform for researchers to become leaders in their research field.*

6. **NIRAKN and QUT to ensure future funding options are explored when expenditure of ARC funding concludes.**

The NIRAKN Management Committee comprises the State Hub Leaders and National Hub Leader. State Hub leaders continue to connect, complement, and enhance existing Indigenous mentoring, advisory, and support structures within the higher education sector. During the legacy phase, the National State Hub leader met individually with the State Hub Leaders via teleconference in 2021.

Professor Peter Anderson and Dr Levon Blue met with Liz Visher and Luisa Powell from the ARC on 10 May 2021 to request an extension to NIRAKN until 31 December 2022, to distribute additional funds to the State Hub leaders for work related to the legacy phase and/or research, and to add an additional component to the Queensland research project, which included an evaluation of NIRAKN and understanding the social determinants of education. The ARC approved these requests and notified QUT’s Office of Research. A variation to the collaborative agreement for NIRAKN was completed that reflected the extension and the additional funds allocated to the State Hub Leaders.

The Office of Research Services at QUT continues to provide administrative support, including legal, reporting, and financial reporting. These services are required by the Office of Research Services to: (a) ensure that the Network is managed in accordance with the ARC Funding Agreement and the NIRAKN Collaborative Research Agreement; (b) provide advice on the Funding Agreement and a new collaborative research agreement; and (c) draft variations to the Collaborative Research Agreement as necessary. In 2019, the Office of Research Services provided support for the negotiation and execution of the Collaborative Research Agreement. In 2021 NIRAKN did not offer internal research grants.

### 3 Year in Review

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no capacity building workshops or attendance at conferences in 2021. Below is a summary of activities that have further contributed to the key performance indicators in this legacy phase.
3.1 International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies (IJCIS)

During 2021, one issue was published containing four papers. Three of the four papers for the second issue were published via early release online in 2021. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, IJCIS has encountered delays.

3.2 Research Projects

QLD State Hub
Research project
The ARC approved an additional component for the QLD State Hub’s research project. This included an evaluation of NIRAKN and a project focusing on the social determinants of education. This project is led by Professor Peter Anderson and includes Dr Levon Blue and Dr Thu Pham. The NIRAKN evaluation has been completed. The team, also including Melanie Saward, have submitted a 50,000-word manuscript to Springer that is currently under consideration for publication and that includes this findings and data from the evaluation and project.

NSW State Hub
Research projects
The research project, “Success Factors for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander PhD Graduates”, seeks to identify the success factors that contribute to the successful journey of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander PhD graduates, which will in turn contribute to “closing the gap” in Indigenous Higher Education at all levels. The project is in progress. The research team have conducted interviews and invited both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to complete surveys relating to their personal PhD experiences. The project is currently in the stage of evaluating interviews and surveys, analysing the data for themes, and seeking to identify the social, cultural and academic enablers.
Simultaneously, the team are still interviewing further participants, transcribing these interviews and analysing the data for themes. To date, 11 interviews – 10 with Indigenous participants and 1 with a non-Indigenous participant – have been taken, and 25 survey responses were collected, 21 from Indigenous participants and 4 from non-Indigenous participants.
With surveys completed and interviews undertaken, findings to date indicate that strong drivers for Indigenous success in Higher Education include:
- The feeling of responsibility to community to complete
- Desire to record our stories and cultural information to preserve Aboriginal culture and identity
- To qualify for employment roles already undertaken
- Although the trend is changing, historically, Indigenous PhD students have been older compared to non-Indigenous candidates. The study has found that in many cases their journey into higher education has been “accidental” and not a planned trajectory.

Journal articles are being drafted and the research results will be published in Higher Education Research & Development (HERD), Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AERE) and/or Journal of Global Indigeneity. The research team are also working towards the final report.
**Capacity building workshops**

NSW completed their capacity building workshops in 2019–2020. We have, however, continued to invite NSW HDR students and NIRAKN members to online forums (due to COVID) throughout 2021, including “Shut Up and Write”, led by Professor Bronwyn Carlson at Macquarie University, an online writing retreat in collaboration with Northern Arizona University. The workshop attracted 60 participants and received positive feedback.

A lecture series was also opened up to NIRAKN members, which included the following speakers: Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Dr Shawn Wilson

**Grants**


**NT/SA State Hub**

**Research projects**

The NT/SA State Hub’s research project is called “A study into the experiences of Australian Indigenous people during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic” and is led by Associate Professor Linda Ford, with Dr Tracy Woodroffe, Dr Kathy Guthadjaka, Emily Ford, Dr Adriana Ticoalu, Dr David Karacsonyi, Pawinee Yuhun and Colin Baker.

An ARC Indigenous Discovery project has been accepted and will commence in the latter half of 2022, led by Dr Natalie Harkin with Dr Ali Baker, Associate Professor Simone Tur, Professor Katerina Teaiwa, Dr Lou Bennett and Dr Romaine Moreton. The team is working towards a special edition to the *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*.

**Grants**

Development of seeding funding proposals were submitted by Associate Professor Linda Ford, including:

- 2021: NHMRC – Hearing Project (proposal submitted 7 December 2021)
- 2021: ARC Discovery Project – Bicultural Knowledge (proposal submitted 2021)

**4 Challenges and Mitigation Strategies**

Since the Network’s commencement in 2013, it has been highly successful. However, the Management Committee continues to encounter challenges, which it addresses in a proactive manner, ensuring that network goals are fulfilled in NIRAKN’s legacy phase.
5  **Financial Statement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2021 INCOME</strong></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARC 2021 funding distributed as follows:</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income Received</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2021 EXPENDITURE</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6301.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>125,553.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>331.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>1,241.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>10,980.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Expenditure** | 144,408.03 |
| **Surplus (Deficit)** | (144,408.03) |
| **Balance bought forward from 2020** | 379,727.36 |
| **TOTAL CARRY FORWARD** | 235,319.33 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2021 IN-KIND SUPPORT</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

| **Total In-Kind Support** | 0 |
6 Appendices

Appendix 1: NIRAKN Management and Advisory Committees

Management Committee
The Management Committee is chaired by Professor Peter Anderson. Under the new governance model for NIRAKN, the Management Committee is comprised of the NIRAKN National Director and State Hub Leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Peter Anderson</td>
<td>National Hub Leader (QLD, VIC, ACT, TAS, WA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NIRAKN Director, Queensland University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC Dr Leanne Holt</td>
<td>NSW State Hub Leader, Macquarie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Linda Ford</td>
<td>NT and SA State Hub Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Commenced March 2020), Charles Darwin University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix 2: NIRAKN Chief Investigators and Investigators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1 QLD</th>
<th>6.2 NSW</th>
<th>6.3 TAS</th>
<th>6.4 ACT</th>
<th>6.5 NT</th>
<th>6.6 SA</th>
<th>6.7 WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Anderson</td>
<td>Leanne Holt</td>
<td>Clair Andersen</td>
<td>Asmi Wood</td>
<td>Linda Ford</td>
<td>Christopher Wilson</td>
<td>Stephen Kinnane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronwyn Fredericks</td>
<td>Gawaian Bodkin Andrews</td>
<td>Maggie Walter</td>
<td>Jillian Guthrie</td>
<td>Steve Larkin</td>
<td>Natalie Harkin</td>
<td>Julianne Coffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odette Best</td>
<td>Greg Blyton</td>
<td>Wendy Aitken</td>
<td>Peter Radoll</td>
<td>Sue Stanton</td>
<td>Simone Tur</td>
<td>Kim Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxanne Bainbridge</td>
<td>Jakelin Troy</td>
<td>Rowena Ball</td>
<td>Kathy Guthadjaka</td>
<td>Terry Dunbar</td>
<td>Leonard Collard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levon Blue</td>
<td>John Maynard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tracy Woodroffe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynette Henderson-Yates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanie Saward</td>
<td>Kathleen Butler</td>
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<td>Michael Adams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aileen Moreton-Robinson</td>
<td>Kathleen Clapham</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Patricia Dudgeon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anita Lee Hong</td>
<td>Larissa Behrendt</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Shino Konis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Martin</td>
<td>Loretta Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcelle Burns</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Susan Green</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Trudgett</td>
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</table>

1 Representatives from previous partner organisations Marlene Longbottom and Jeffrey Hudson are not included in the CI list for 2020.
Appendix 3: NIRAKN Member and/or NIRAKN Research Affiliate Publications

6.1 BOOKS


6.2 BOOK CHAPTERS


6.3 REPORTS TO GROUPS/ORGANISATIONS/INSTITUTES (INCLUDING COMMISSIONED REPORTS)

6.4 REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Auld, G., O’Mara, J., Andersen, C., Brown, N., Corcoran, T., Te Riele, K., Moss, J., Delphine, T., Hicks, D. J. E., Chandir, H., Crellin, T., & Rudling, E. (2021). Improving the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within Catholic Education Tasmania: Literature review. *Catholic Education Tasmania.*


Fraser, S., Mackean, T., Grant, J., Hunter, K., Ryder, C., Kelly, J., Clapham, K., & Ivers, R. Q. (2021). Patient journey mapping to investigate quality and cultural safety in burn care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families – Development, application and implications. Research Square. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-744605/v1


Walker, N., Mackean, T., Longbottom, M., Coombes, J., Bennett-Brook, K., Clapham, K., Ivers, R., Hackett, M., Redfern, J., & Cullen, P. (2021). Responses to the primary health care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing...


### 6.5 CONFERENCE PAPERS


**OTHER (INCLUDING REPORTS, CREATIVE WORKS, MEDIA AND/OR ONLINE NEWS)**


