



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Corporate Plan

2020–24

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	3
Introduction	4
Period of Coverage	5
Our Purpose	6
Key Activities	7
Performance Criteria	13
Our Environment	19
Cooperation	20
Capability	21
Risk Oversight and Management	22



Front cover image: Family fishing using a cast net on Mer (Murray Island) in the Torres Strait.

Josie from Waibene (Thursday Island) in the Torres Strait, one of the young authors of *Our Land, Our Stories*.

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.



The Gangalidda Dancers perform a ceremony at a return of cultural heritage handover event in Mougibi (Burketown).

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 culture 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 culture 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 periods of 2020–24 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodie Sizer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jodie Sizer
Chairperson
31 July 2020

Period of Coverage

This corporate plan is prepared for the reporting period 2020–21 and covers the four reporting periods 2020–21 to 2023–24.

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



Left: Wakka Wakka man Fred Cobbo, one of the participants in the *Paper and Talk* workshop at AIATSIS in 2019. Top right: AIATSIS CEO Craig Ritchie at the launch of the Aboriginal Studies Press publication *Our Mob Served*. Bottom right: Gangalidda Garawa traditional owner Mangubadijarri Yanner and Manchester Museum Director Esme Ward at a handover ceremony of cultural heritage materials at Australia House, London.

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)*.

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.

Functions

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

As per Section 5 of the AIATSIS Act 1989.

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' culture 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 cultures and heritage

Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p>1. Build and preserve a national collection and make it accessible</p>	<p>Ensure that our collection is representative, relevant and diverse.</p> <p>Optimise appropriate accessibility.</p> <p>Maximise opportunities provided by digital innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a digital transformation strategy. • Implement a focused and appropriate acquisitions program. • Maintain an active digitisation program. • Review the AIATSIS collection development policy. • Identity appropriate storage solutions for our expanding collection. • Conduct collections based research. • Return and repatriation of cultural heritage material.

Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p>2. Promote better understanding of Indigenous peoples, cultures and heritage</p>	<p>Provide a national forum for dialogue on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.</p> <p>Deliver transformative experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories and heritage.</p> <p>Deliver high quality exhibitions, products and publications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce culturally safe and accessible online content. • Develop and implement an appropriate public program. • Implement a schools program to support school based learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. • Deliver a robust publishing program with strong Indigenous representation. • Develop education, training and resources to foster cultural competency and learning of our shared history. • Deliver high quality online and physical exhibitions.

Strategy	Goals	Actions
<p>3. Lead and influence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, ethics and protocols and collections</p>	<p>Speak authoritatively through evidence based research and culturally based representative networks.</p> <p>Articulate national priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.</p> <p>Position AIATSIS as the arbiter of standards in relation to research ethics, Indigenous research, management of Indigenous collections.</p> <p>Foster innovation in ethical, impactful research and collection practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research in partnership with native title and traditional owner groups. • Convene forums to foster dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Government, and Industry. • Develop and publish National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders research priorities. • Assist Government and Industry sectors to implement the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research. • Provide guidance on culturally appropriate Indigenous collection management, preservation and access principles and practices. • Increase training, resources, external clearances, best practice advice and forums to support the ethical research. • Share and promote the results of AIATSIS research and innovations in practice. • Support community based policy research through the Indigenous Research Exchange.

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

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

Performance Criteria (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%	+2%	+2%	+2%
Collection Accessibility	Increase AIATSIS online collection discoverability and accessibility by delivering an increase in finding aids, descriptions, catalogue records aiding discoverability.	Number of requests met and items provided by source and location.	+1.5%	+1.5%	+1.5%	+1.5%
	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"> • Collection Access requests. • Native Title requests. • COEDL requests. 	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%	+5%	+5%	+5%

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.	70% of respondents indicate high level impact.	70% of respondents indicate high level impact.	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; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core Cultural Learning uptake within and outside of the APS. 2. Utilisation of Education products and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage increase in uptake of Core (sales or users). 2. Percentage increase in use of Education products and services.

Performance criteria	Intended result	Performance measure	2020–21 target	2021–22 target	2022–23 target	2023–24 target
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, 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 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.	600 application and usage events.	600 application and usage events.	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 and value.	+5% increase in number and value.	+5% increase in number and value.	+5% increase in number and value.
	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. AIATSIS has 100 publications or presentations by staff annually.	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 by 10 or more. 3 Members events annually.	+10 new members. 3 Events Annually.	+10 new members. 3 Events Annually.	+10 new members. 3 Events Annually.	+10 new members. 3 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 collaboration.	3 research collaboration.	3 research collaboration.	3 research collaboration.
		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 engagements.	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 MoU.	5 strategic partnerships. 20 partnership projects.	5 strategic partnerships. 20 partnership projects.	5 strategic partnerships. 20 partnership projects.	5 strategic partnerships. 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 annually.	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 annually.	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.

These challenges and opportunities include:

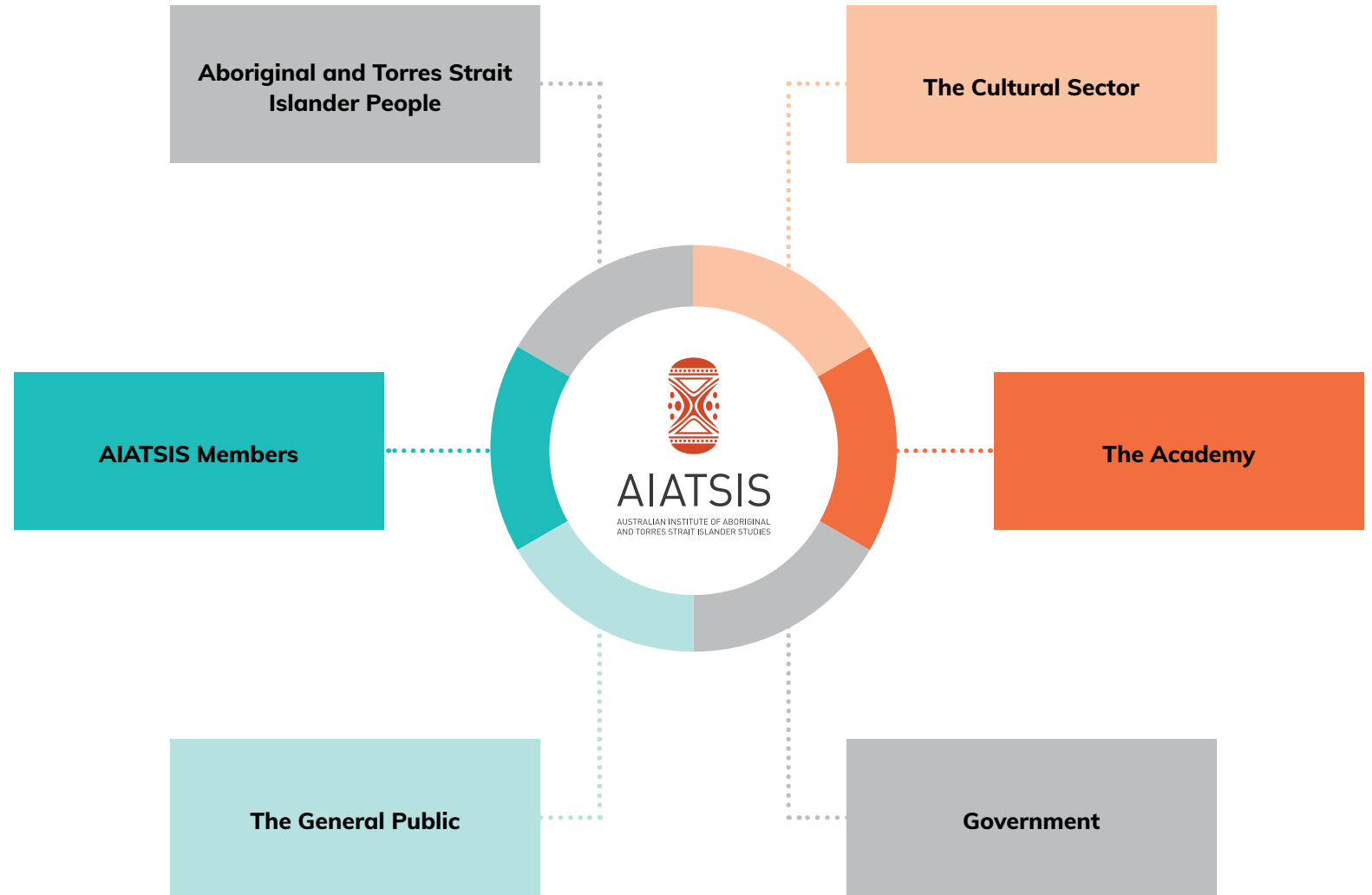
- Increased recognition, demand and expectation for AIATSIS expertise;
- Increasing knowledge and relevance of AIATSIS;
- Growing need and recognition for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge centre;
- Ongoing catastrophic risk to the AIATSIS Collection;
- Impacts of audio-visual obsolescence as detailed under the UNESCO deadline 2025 statement;
- Managing the impacts and responding to the COVID19 pandemic;
- A unique cultural institution managing multiple areas of professional expertise and practice in a dynamic environment;
- A fiscally challenging environment.



AIATSIS exhibition *Ngulla Wellamunagaa: Trees that Have Survived and Revived* opened at the National Museum of Australia in December 2019.

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.



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 to support their aspirations in Indigenous Affairs.
- Continue to partner with key organisations both domestically and internationally.
- Collaboration and best practice in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) and research sectors.

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 and development.
- 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.



Gangalidda Garawa cultural heritage items being returned at a handover ceremony in Mougibi (Burketown, QLD).

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.



Guests at the opening of AIATSIS International Year of Indigenous Languages exhibition *Our Language: Keeping Us Strong*.

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 not valued or recognised as leaders in the maintenance and preservation of Indigenous collections	<p>AIATSIS provides leadership and guidance on culturally appropriate Indigenous collection management, preservation and access principles and practices through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other collecting institutions and associations. • Ongoing promotion of AIATSIS Access and Use Policy, Collection Development Policy. • Utilisation of Industry best practice.
AIATSIS is not valued or recognised as a leader and centre of excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research	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.
Risk to the AIATSIS Collection from environment, technology and resources	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.
COVID19 Pandemic	AIATSIS has establishment of an Internal COVID Taskforce to monitor and implement government advice and direction and developing an internal COVIDSafe plan.
Lack of adherence to the AIATSIS Strategic Plan 2018–23	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.
Key capability degradation	AIATSIS manages our workforce requirements through appropriate workforce planning, capability mapping, recruitment and retention strategies and meaningful learning and development activities.



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The AIATSIS Possum Skin Cloak created by Yorta Yorta,
Mutti Mutti and Boon Wurrung artist Lee Daroch.