

NATIONAL  
ART  
SCHOOL J



**Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan**  
November 2024 – November 2026







Campus-wide smoking ceremony with  
Koomurri Group, National Art School, 2022,  
photograph: Peter Morgan





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

**The National Art School (NAS) sits on Gadigal land – Always Was, Always Will Be.**

NAS recognises the Traditional Owners and Custodians of knowledge of the Lands on which we work, learn and make art.

NAS' core tenets include art, creativity, education and place. With respect and understanding from NAS, we acknowledge First Peoples sovereignty has never been ceded. Learning directly from First Peoples perspectives and coming together in this important place of knowledge and ancestral significance.

We remain committed to acknowledging the truth of our shared history and the impact this continues to have on our reconciliation journey.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



**Reconciliation Australia commends the National Art School on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).**

**Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation’s reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful outcomes into the future.**

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for the National Art School to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, the National Art School will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program’s framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program’s potential for impact is greater than ever. The National Art School is part of a strong network of more than 2,500 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals the National Art School’s readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia’s reconciliation journey.

Congratulations to the National Art School on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO OF THE NATIONAL ART SCHOOL



**I am pleased to present the inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) of the National Art School. The NAS RAP articulates our commitment to strengthening relationships between Australia’s First Peoples and non-Indigenous peoples through the cultivation of a deeper understanding of histories and our shared commitment to a positive future. It represents a significant milestone for the continuing evolution of the National Art School’s vision to grow positive, strong and respectful relationships across our sector and with our communities, to advance First Peoples self-determination, and to foster the value of art and cultural expression.**

As a community of learning and teaching, we recognise the power of art and education to reveal deeper insights, to empower individuals, and to deliver transformational social change. We are acutely aware of the unique responsibility we have to acknowledge the truth of our shared history, the deep impact of colonisation upon Australia’s First Peoples, the opportunity to provide leadership through our educational and exhibition programs, and the advocacy of artists. In acknowledging and engaging with the significant histories of Australia’s First Peoples, we engage with living cultural traditions and knowledges established and preserved over millennia. In doing so, we reimagine a new and exciting future that builds upon the core educational mission of the school.

A significant step in securing that future has been the recent establishment of the NAS First Peoples Centre Darani Ngalawada. In Gadigal language Darani Ngalawada means Under the White Gum Trees We Remain, and this title encapsulates both deep historical connection of Gadigal people to this site and the continuing history of Australia’s First Peoples engagement and success at NAS. The centre plays a crucial role in enabling that engagement and success at NAS by providing mentorship and learning support to students to establish pathways to their professional futures. Darani Ngalawada also plays an equally crucial role in the development of culturally inclusive policy and procedure at NAS. This includes a focus on the inclusion of Australia’s First Peoples knowledge, perspectives and practices throughout the school’s curriculum and academic operations for the benefit of all NAS staff and students.



Darani Ngalawada also provides NAS with an important connection to Australia's First Peoples artists, academics, cultural agencies and communities all of whom contribute to the development of our First Peoples programs and to NAS' vision as the leading art school in the region. At our most recent graduation ceremony, it was a great honour to confer a prestigious NAS Fellowship upon Wiradjuri woman, acclaimed artist and NAS graduate Karla Dickens. Karla now joins the ranks of our most celebrated alumni that also includes well known NAS graduates such as the late Dr Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO, Fiona Foley, and Euphemia Bostock.

I would like to acknowledge the many individuals within the NAS community that have contributed to the NAS RAP. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the significant guidance of the Head of our First Peoples Centre, Mr John Waight who has been supported by members of the First Peoples team at NAS including Akala Newman, Georgia Mokak and Isabella Kennedy.

I would also like to offer special thanks to Stephanie Parkin of Parallax Legal who has provided stewardship of the RAP process at NAS. Simon Cooper, Deputy Director and Head of Studies at NAS, has played a vital leadership role in enabling the realisation of this RAP and I thank him for his care and commitment. I would also like to acknowledge the important contribution of our staff and students – particularly our Australian First Peoples students and artist community whose insights and encouragement have ensured the development of a RAP that the entire NAS community is deeply invested in. Finally, I would like to thank the NAS Board of Directors chaired by Susan Rothwell, who has provided steadfast support for the development of the RAP and for the vision of the inclusive future that everyone at NAS is excited to be a part of.

**Dr Kristen Sharp**

Director and Chief Executive Officer  
National Art School





Isabella Kennedy, weight transfer (stasis), installation view, *The Postgrad Show*, National Art School Gallery, 2024, inkjet print on trace paper, image courtesy and © the artist, photograph: Peter Morgan



# ARTIST STATEMENT

## JESSICA TOBIN

**NAS is honored to engage Jessica Tobin, a Darug artist, for our RAP. Jessica, born in the Blue Mountains and maintaining a profound connection to her Traditional Country, descends from the Boorooberongal and Wumali clans of the Darug, the Traditional Custodians of the Greater Western Sydney region. Her artistic journey is deeply influenced by her rich heritage and the legacy of her father, Chris Tobin, and Auntie Leanne Tobin, both of whom are esteemed artists and regular guest artists at NAS.**



Jessica Tobin in her studio, 2025, photograph: Peter Morgan

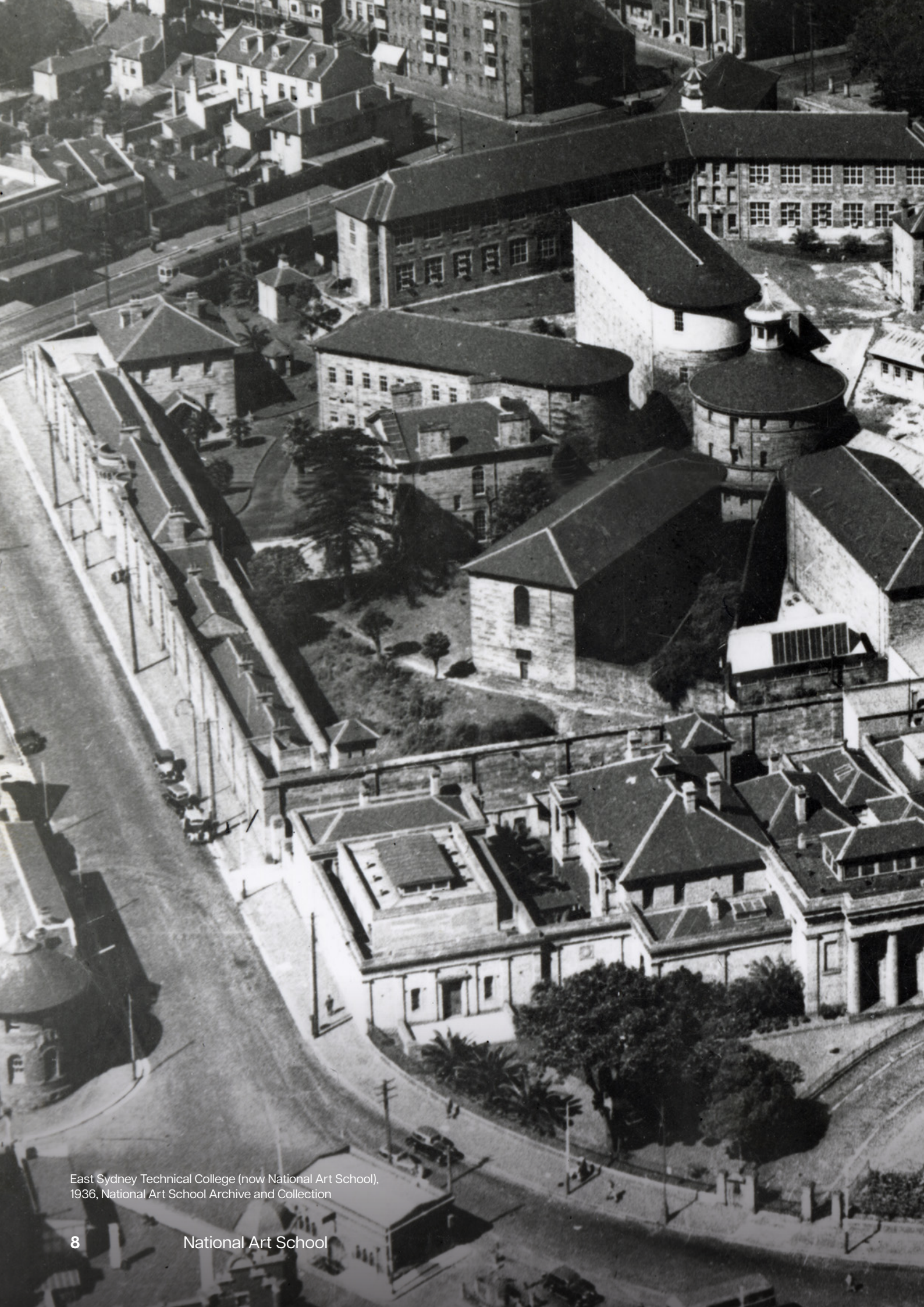
Jessica Tobin's work embodies the spirit and stories of her ancestors, making her an exceptional choice to create a painting that will serve as the face of our RAP. She is also an educator at the Museum of Contemporary Arts as well as a Gallery Administrator at the University of Newcastle. This commissioned work is a significant addition to the NAS archive, reflecting the intricate layers of history upon the site which NAS stands. Through her art, Jessica explores themes of place, truth-telling, ecological transformation, and the ancient walking tracks that interlace our landscape, illuminating what remains and what continues to thrive within our walls. This painting symbolises the enduring matriarchal lineage and the timeless presence of Aboriginal Lands, encapsulating the ethos that NAS always was and always will be Aboriginal Lands. We are proud to support Jessica Tobin in this vital artistic endeavour, contributing to the ongoing narrative of reconciliation and respect for the First Peoples of this Land.





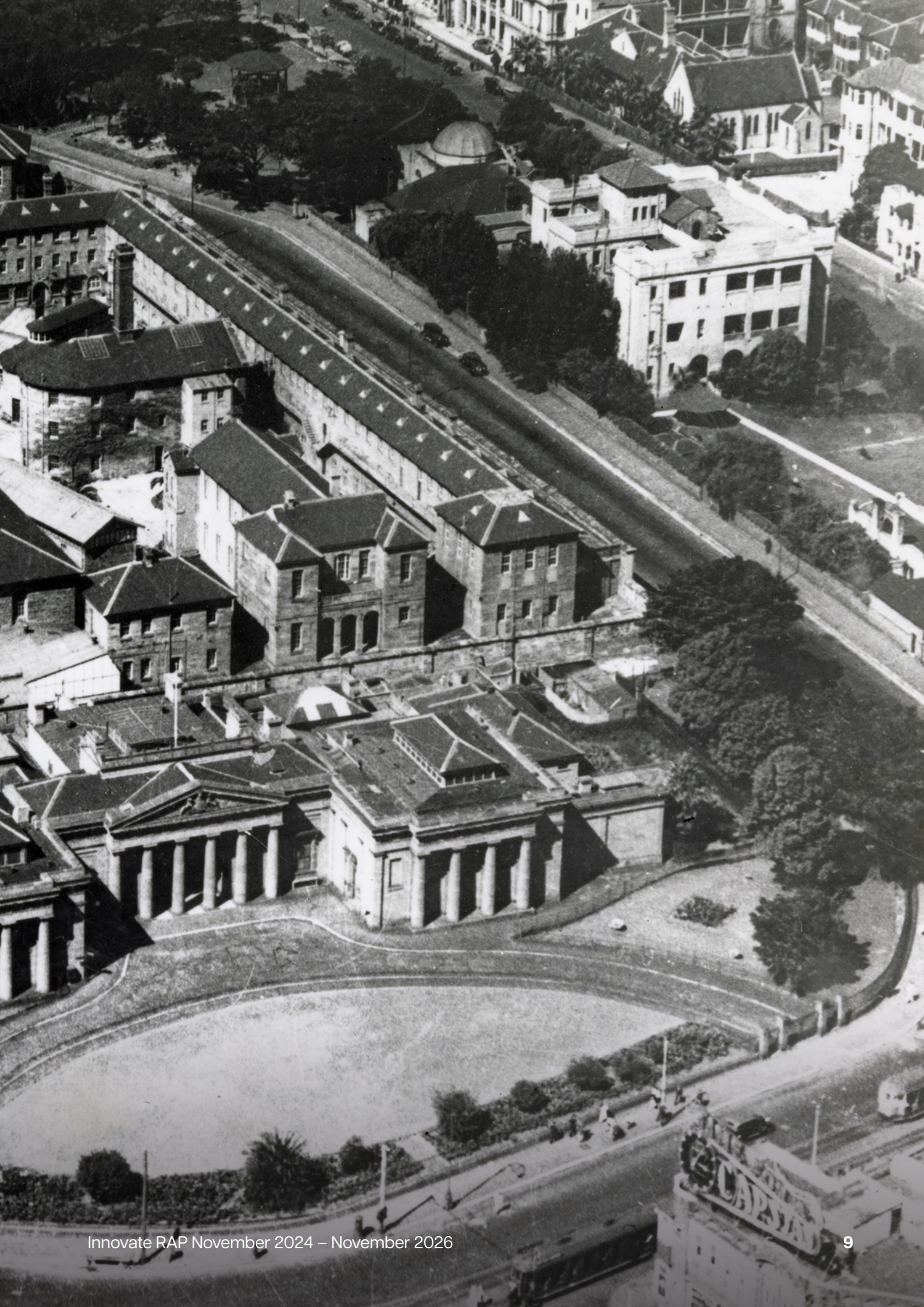
Jessica Tobin, *Darani Ngalawada - under the white gum trees we remain*, 2024, acrylic on canvas, commissioned by the National Art School, Sydney, 2024, image courtesy and © the artist, photograph: Peter Morgan





East Sydney Technical College (now National Art School),  
1936, National Art School Archive and Collection









Campus-wide smoking ceremony with Koomurri Group,  
National Art School, 2022, photograph: Peter Morgan



# OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

**At a broad level, our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that embraces unity between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples (referred to as First Peoples throughout this RAP) and other non-Indigenous Australians and a national culture that represents equality and equity, and historical acceptance of our shared histories.**

Importantly, our vision for reconciliation begins with and is informed by the site upon which NAS operates, being the former Darlinghurst Gaol, located on Gadigal Land. We recognise the importance of 'place' and the experiences of First Peoples at the NAS site, from prior to colonisation to current day.

We are aware of the important role that historical acceptance plays in our reconciliation journey. We are committed to and acknowledge the responsibility of raising awareness of the history of this site through our academic curriculum, engagement with staff, students and community through our public programs.

In the context of the core business of our organisation and the primary work that we do, our vision for reconciliation extends to supporting artists to continue their fine arts tertiary education. This includes learning under the guidance of First Peoples in an inclusive and culturally safe and diverse learning environment. In this regard, our culturally responsive practice and pedagogy is informed by our First Peoples Strategy. Where relevant, we will also seek guidance from the key findings set out in the Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning School Leadership Limited (AITSL) 'Building a cultural responsive Australian teaching workforce' document.

Together we will nurture respectful relationships that will see First Peoples and non-Indigenous people shape a shared understanding and respect.



# OUR BUSINESS

**NAS is Australia's leading independent fine art school, a producer of new art and a place to experience and participate in the arts. NAS attracts the best of the next generation of emerging artists from across NSW, Australia and internationally. At NAS we offer undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs centred on painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, photo media and art history and theory. The principal mission of NAS is to be a centre of excellence for the provision of higher education and research, scholarship and professional practice in the visual arts and related fields.**

NAS is a NSW State Significant Organisation (SSO), physically located at the heritage listed former Darlinghurst Gaol. In addition to the academic program offered onsite, NAS develops outreach programs across metropolitan and regional NSW in addition to short courses, school holiday programs, school programs, leading exhibition and public programs in partnership with key cultural organisations. In 2022, NAS marked 100 years of teaching art on our site, and 200 years since building began on the Darlinghurst Gaol. NAS is one of only two independent tertiary art schools operating in Australia.

NAS employs over 55 people, across academic, administrative, technical and support positions, and two First Nations identified staff, including the Head of First Peoples Programs and Academic Support Officer. NAS also engages a range of First Peoples arts industry professionals each year to support the academic and artistic development of students. NAS's sphere of influence includes but is not limited to:

- Our Board, CEO and Director and the Executive Leadership Team in addition to academic and administrative staff who are committed to the development of the RAP; and
- Our existing local, national and international relationships in the arts and education sector and across Local Government, State Government, Australian Government, metropolitan, regional and remote organisations, the galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) sector, tertiary arts education institutions and the broader Australian community.





Opening of *The Grad Show*, National Art School, 2023,  
photograph: Peter Morgan



# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

**Our RAP is championed by the NAS Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors. In developing our RAP, NAS has provided information, and sought input and engagement with stakeholders. In addition to this, NAS continues to build a strong network of relationships and connections with First Nations organisations and community groups to further support NAS in our ongoing journey of implementing reconciliation through the organisation.**

Our RAP governance structure is made up of the RAP Working Group, supported by commitments to deliver on actions from key NAS departmental leaders and staff members.

Throughout our RAP journey we will engage with relevant external First Peoples advisors from community to provide guidance and knowledge to support the implementation of our Innovate RAP through interaction with the RAP Working Group.

We will also engage with the local Gadigal Peoples and the broader New South Wales First Peoples' communities, and organisations where NAS operates.

The RAP Working Group operates through a Terms of Reference developed by the Executive Leadership Team and are responsible for initiating, implementing and driving all activity in the development of the RAP.

NAS is undertaking a RAP, because we value the diverse cultures of our First Peoples and the contributions that shape Australia's national identity.

NAS celebrates the continuing significance of First Peoples being the longest living and surviving culture in the world. We reflect on this truth as we continue our reconciliation journey.

NAS actively connects with Elders and communities; locally, state-wide and nationally to inform NAS' way of working by, for and with First Peoples.

We will work with our students and staff to identify ways to strengthen our support of First Peoples identified students and artists in a culturally sensitive and safe way. We will continue to connect with First Peoples communities on site, through the provision of education and outreach programs and work in partnership with appropriate First Peoples stakeholders.

As part of our reconciliation journey, we will reflect on avenues available to embed cultural awareness across the organisation and formulate strategies to achieve greater diversity and inclusion of First Peoples across our student enrolments, workforce, and engagement with the site.





Campus-wide smoking ceremony with Koomurri Group, National Art School, 2022, photograph: Peter Morgan

NAS is committed to working towards Closing the Gap through teaching, learning, education and employment outcomes for First Peoples identified staff and students and alignment with relevant Closing the Gap outcomes, being outcome 6 (Students reach their full potential through further education pathways), outcome 7 (Young people are engaged in employment or education) and outcome 8 (Strong economic participation). As part of our RAP, we formalise our commitment to continuing this work, bringing First Peoples and non-Indigenous people together on common ground at NAS, to deepen our understanding of each other.

**The NAS RAP is championed internally by:**

- NAS Board of Directors
- Director and CEO
- Executive Leadership Team (Head of Studies, Chief Operating Officer and Company Secretary)
- Head of First Peoples Programs
- Academic Board
- RAP Working Group, including staff members across all school operations.



**The NAS RAP Working Group includes members of the Executive Leadership Team who work closely with departmental leaders:**

The following five (5) members of senior management:

- Director and CEO (Chair)
- Head of First Peoples Programs
- Deputy Director, Head of Studies
- Chief Operating Officer
- Head of People and Culture

At least one (1) staff representative from the following NAS operational areas:

- Academic
- Academic Services
- Marketing & Communications
- Gallery / Programming
- Academic Support Officer, First Peoples (Secretary)

To ensure First Peoples perspectives are meaningfully incorporated through the NAS RAP, we will from time to time invite (and remunerate for their participation) other First Peoples stakeholders with relevant expertise to participate in the RAP Working Group. This is to ensure that NAS' RAP is informed and guided by appropriate expertise from First Peoples. This is in addition to the permanent First Peoples representation on the RAP Working Group through the role of the Head of First Peoples Programs.



Harley and Amelia Lynch, installation view, *The Postgrad Show*, National Art School, 2020, photograph: Peter Morgan



# OUR JOURNEY AND KEY LEARNINGS

**Our reconciliation journey has been ongoing for some time. In 2019, Steven Alderton, former Director and CEO identified reconciliation at NAS a core priority, supported by both the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team. A re-invigorated RAP Working Group has now formed including senior staff representation across the organisation.**

NAS' RAP is a strategic document that supports NAS' Strategic Plan and operations. It includes practical actions that guide NAS' contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities we operate. The RAP will be a resource to hold the organisation accountable.

The RAP supports NAS' process of establishing respectful relationships and creating meaningful opportunities for First Peoples. As part of the reconciliation process, we will continue to foster greater understanding and respect of First Peoples lived experiences among the non-Indigenous in the NAS community.

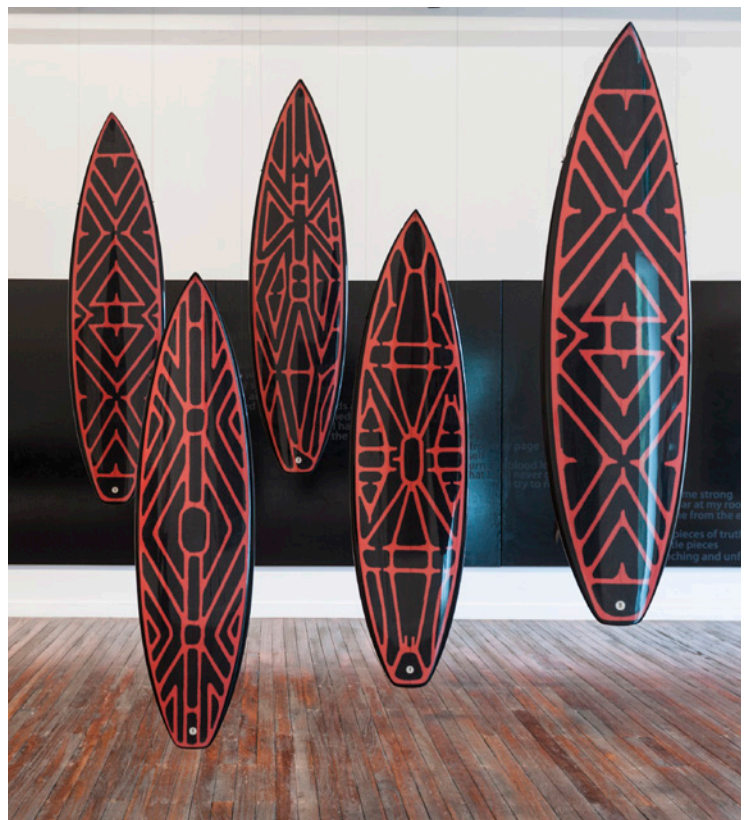


Students in the Printmaking studio, National Art School, photograph: Peter Morgan



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- NAS offers various scholarships and opportunities per year for NSW First Peoples students, including through the First Peoples Student Grants Scheme (including funds for student materials, hardship fund, emergency fund and travel fund for professional development).
- Established in 2016, *Solid Ground* is delivered in partnership between NAS, Carriageworks and Blacktown Arts Centre. The initiative was established to provide pathways for Year 10 and 11 First Peoples identified students in NSW to pursue further study in the arts.
- In 2017, NAS presented a major survey exhibition of First Peoples artist Vernon Ah Kee, *Not An Animal Or A Plant* as part of the Sydney Festival attracting 5,480 people. The exhibition marked the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum which recognised and included Australia's First Peoples in the national census. A member of the Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidinji and Gugu Yimithirr peoples, Ah Kee was not counted as a citizen upon his birth in Far North Queensland. This exhibition was reported by *assemblepapers.com.au* as, "a provocative investigation of race, ideology and politics."



Vernon Ah Kee, *acontentedslave*, 2015, installation view, *Not an animal or a plant*, National Art School Gallery, 2017, photograph: Peter Morgan





Curator Emily McDaniel, installation view, *Measured Response*, National Art School Gallery, 2018, photograph: Peter Morgan

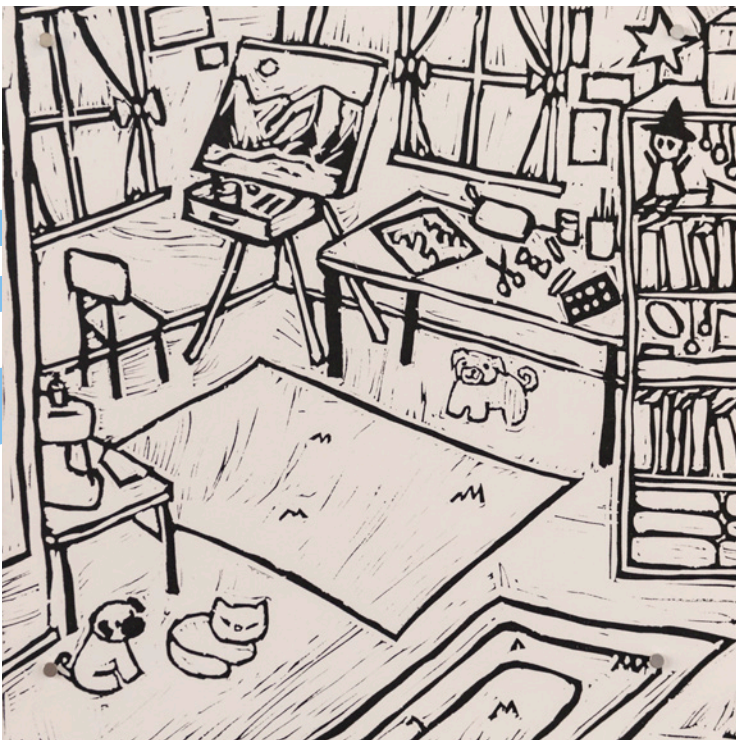


Opening night at *Measured Response*, National Art School Gallery, photograph: Peter Morgan

- Curated by Emily McDaniel in 2018, a *Measured Response* featured female-identifying First Peoples artists. Over 2,700 visitors attended the exhibition featuring 11 First Peoples artists including: Lorraine Connelly-Northey (Waradgerie people); Penny Evans (Gamilaraay/Gomeroi people); Julie Freeman (Gorrawarl Jerrawongarla people); Yhonnie Scarce (Kokatha and Nukunu people); Lucy Simpson (Yuwaalaraay region); Dr Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher (Thanakupi) AO; (Thaynakwith people of Weipa region); Delissa Walker (Kuku Yalanji people); Euraba Artist Paper Makers (Gomeroi people of Toomelah, based in Boggabilla, North-Western NSW); Aunty Joyce Hampton, Aunty Lorraine Tye, Aunty Sandy Warren from the Hands On Weavers Collective of Wagga Wagga in Wiradjuri Country, Central NSW.
- Run over 10-weeks, the First Peoples Art Centre Internship Program provides graduating students practical arts management experience and training in an active First Peoples community art centre environment. In 2019 internships were offered with Ernabella Arts Incorporated in Far North-West South Australia and Tapatjatjaka Arts located at Titjikala, Northern Territory.
- NAS presents up to 26 free weekly Art Forum lectures as a platform for artists, curators, writers and professionals from diverse fields to speak about their contemporary arts practice reaching almost 1,500 audience members. In 2019, First Peoples artists included Amrita Hepi, a choreographer and dancer from Bundjalung and Ngāpuhi (NZ) territories and Dean Cross a trans-disciplinary artist, born and raised on Ngunnawal/ Ngambri Country and a Worimi man.



- Symposium - *The Australian Object: Material Culture in Context* was held at NAS on 3 and 4 October 2019. Presented in partnership with the Power Institute, it showcased new scholarly research on the material culture of Australia beyond anthropology and archaeology, stimulating discussions between scholars, artists, curators and collectors. First Peoples speakers included: Dr Fiona Foley; Shannon Foster; Stephen Gilchrist; Jonathan Jones; and Greg Lehman.
- Presented as part of the 2020 Sydney Festival, and in partnership with the Ballarat Foto Biennale, NAS fellow, alumni and significant contemporary Aboriginal artist Dr Fiona Foley presented her solo exhibition, *Who are these strangers and where are they going?* attracting over 2,500 visitors. On 9 January, we hosted *Fiona Foley: In Conversation* featuring Dr Foley in discussion with the exhibition curator, Aboriginal curator, writer, artist and activist Djon Mundine. The sold-out event attracted 80 people, with a transcript uploaded to the NAS website afterwards.
- In 2020, NAS partnered with the 22nd Biennale of Sydney; NIRIN. A First Peoples-led exhibition by Artistic Director and contemporary visual artist Brook Andrew. First Peoples artists and groups represented at NAS include: Tony Albert (Sydney), Iltja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre (Alice Springs) and Andrew Rewald (Mullumbimby, NSW). Over 2,200 people attended the exhibition before closing in response to Covid-19 restrictions.
- An exhibiting artist of the Biennale of Sydney in 2020, NAS hosted an informal artist talk with award-winning artist and Alywarr man Dion Beasley and his collaborative partner, writer Johanna Bell on 16 March 2020. Attended by 30 guests, Johanna in partnership with Dion and his carer, spoke about their collaborative work together in producing the award-winning illustrated children's book series *Cheeky Dogs*, and Dion's drawing practice as a First Peoples artist with disability working in a remote community.



Coda Ridley, *Art Room*, 2024, lino print, image courtesy and © the artist





Freyja Fristad, installation view, *The Postgrad Show*, National Art School Gallery, 2024, photograph: Peter Morgan

- Awarded Highly Commended in the 2020 Youth Action Youth Work Awards, NAS partnered with WEAVE, Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) and Koori Radio to produce the Youth Photography Program. Young artists were mentored to photograph young people in the community including a strong representation of First Peoples youth.
- On 2 June 2021, NAS hosted an Art Forum, artist talk with First Peoples activist and contemporary artist, Richard Bell. Coinciding with his largest solo exhibition, *Richard Bell: You Can Go Now* curated by Clothilde Bullen at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA). Featuring over 30 years of the artist's practice from the late 1980s through to 2021, Bell is acknowledged as an artist who has significantly shifted the discourse locally, nationally and internationally of First Peoples.
- On 25 March 2021, NAS hosted a lunchtime talk with Betty Kuntiwa Pumani from the Mimili Maku Arts Centre. A vibrant contemporary art studio located on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands, located within the beautiful Everard Ranges, around 500 kms south-west of Alice Springs. Today, Mimili is home to about 250 Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people who refer to themselves as Anangu.
- NAS offers the Contemporary Indigenous Art (AHT267) unit of study. This elective unit is available to all NAS students and provides a strong knowledge base of both traditional and contemporary First Peoples arts and cultural practices. Guest lecturers are regularly invited, including: Shannon Foster; Blak Douglas; and Stephen Gilchrist in 2020.



- During June – August 2023, NAS presented OCCURRENT AFFAIR: proppaNOW Collective Exhibition a major exhibition of new and recent works by Meanjin/Brisbane-based Aboriginal artist collective proppaNOW, featuring the practices of Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Richard Bell, Megan Cope, Jennifer Herd, Gordon Hookey and the late Laurie Nilsen. OCCURRENT AFFAIR references the sensational journalistic style of certain television current affair programs, and embraces the slippage between language and its associated readings to probe and present new narratives. The exhibition highlights and reflects on the ongoing state of affairs affecting Aboriginal communities – issues relevant to all Australians.
- In 2024, the establishment of the NAS First Peoples Centre Darani Ngalawada. In Gadigal language Darani Ngalawada loosely translates to Under the White Gum Trees We Remain, and this title encapsulates both deep historical connection of Gadigal people to this site and the continuing history of First Peoples engagement and success at NAS. The Darani Ngalawada

name was identified through an inclusive roundtable process with NAS students, staff and local community. The Centre plays a crucial role in the development of culturally inclusive policy and procedure at NAS with particular focus on the inclusion of First Peoples knowledge, perspectives and practices throughout the school’s curriculum and academic operations for the benefit of all NAS staff and students. The centre plays a crucial role in enabling engagement and success at NAS by providing mentorship and learning support and outcomes to students to establish pathways to their professional futures.



Opening of *Occurrent Affair*, National Art School Gallery, 2023, photograph: Peter Morgan





Grace Buckley, *Tassel Girl*, 2024, found stool, upholstery, fringe, pins, thread, image courtesy and © the artist, photograph: Jennifer Leahy





Mae Mei Stanbury in her studio, National Art School, 2023, photograph: Peter Morgan







# RELATIONSHIPS

**As Australia’s leading independent fine art school, we recognise and understand the importance of building respectful and strong relationships in our sector.**

Importantly, this extends to the relationships that we have and will continue to establish and maintain with First Peoples locally and across the nation. When the time is taken to develop and build respectful relationships, it means that we are able to meaningfully engage and work with First Peoples to achieve good outcomes. We also acknowledge that our curriculum has included limited First Peoples histories and art practices, so we are addressing this with the new Head of First Peoples Program and updating our curriculum to incorporate First Peoples art history.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Peoples stakeholders and organisations.</b>	Meet with local First Peoples stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	April 2025	Lead: Director & CEO Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with First Peoples stakeholders and organisations.	May 2025	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Review and implement changes to audience engagement strategies with a particular focus on First Peoples audience development to address barriers and strengthen attendance and participation in NAS programs.	February 2025	Marketing Manager
	Identify local First Nations stakeholders and community organisations within our sphere of influence to strengthen reconciliation and opportunities to build relationships.	March 2025	Lead: Director & CEO Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop a plan to strengthen existing internal and external First Peoples programs delivered at NAS.	February 2025	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Establish a relationship and partnership agreement with the Campbelltown Art Centre to develop pathways for First Peoples higher school certificate students.	November 2024	Lead: Future Students Advisor Support: First Peoples Academic Support Officer
	Establish First Peoples partnerships and sponsorships included but not limited to NITV, Koori Radio, First Nations Media Australia, National Indigenous Times, Koori Mail.	February 2025	Marketing Manager



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).</b>	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff and students.	May 2025, 2026	Lead: Head of People & Culture (staff comms) Support: Head of Academic Services
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2025, 2026	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2025, 2026	Director & CEO
	Organise at least one NRW event each year where staff, students, community groups and stakeholders are invited.	May 2025, 2026	Director & CEO
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2025, 2026	Marketing Manager
<b>3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.</b>	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	February 2025	Head of People and Culture
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	March 2025	Lead: Director and CEO Support: Marketing Manager
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	February 2025	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	March 2025	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Provide a copy of the RAP as part of the standard induction program for new employees.	November 2024	Head of People & Culture
<b>4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.</b>	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	February 2025	Head of People Culture
	Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	March 2025	Head of People & Culture
	Engage with First Peoples staff and/or First Peoples advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	February 2025	Head of People & Culture
	Educate the NAS board, academic board and all senior academic and operational staff on the effects of racism and what it means to be 'anti-racist' through training programs.	March 2025	Head of People & Culture
<b>5. Reflect First Peoples content and perspectives in relevant NAS internal and external materials, promotions and campaigns.</b>	Develop and promote internal and external publications that are inclusive of First Peoples perspectives.	June 2025	Lead: Marketing Manager Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop and maintain understanding of First Peoples historical and contemporary art practices through reviewing and maintaining course delivery including but not limited to NAS academic course content (AHT 267).	November 2024	Lead: Head of Learning & Teaching Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop and maintain understanding of First Peoples historical and contemporary art practices through reviewing and maintaining NAS website and social media.	November 2024	Gallery Manager Marketing Manager
	Develop First People's alumni engagement and mentorship through NAS First Peoples Centre.	April 2025	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Marketing Manager
	Promote First Peoples students and alumni achievements through internal and external media channels.	August 2025	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Marketing Manager



# RESPECT

## Respect for and understanding of First Peoples histories and cultures is of great importance to the work that we do at NAS.

We aim to demonstrate respect for First Peoples through our engagement strategies, public programming, and curriculum. Educating ourselves, students and communities about the cultures, histories and knowledges of First Peoples can only increase our respect and that is something we are committed to doing as part of our RAP journey.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Peoples cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	November 2025	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Chief Operating Officer
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or First Peoples advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	November 2024	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	November 2025	Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	June / July and November 2025	Lead: Head of People & Culture Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	New permanent staff will undertake cultural awareness training	March 2025	Head of People & Culture
<b>2. Demonstrate respect to First Peoples by identifying, learning about and adhering to cultural protocols.</b>	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols and cultural authority, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.	February 2025	Head of People and Culture
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	November 2024	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	November 2024	Director & CEO
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	November 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	Develop and implement a First Peoples terminology guide to inform use of language throughout the organisation.	March 2025	Head of First Peoples Programs



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Build respect for First Peoples cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week of July 2025, 2026	Director & CEO
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff and students participating in NAIDOC Week activities.	March 2025	Lead: Head of People & Culture (staff) Support: Head of Academic Services (students)
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff and students.	June 2025, 2026	Marketing Manager
	Deliver at least one internal NAIDOC Week event/program per year.	First week of July 2025, 2026	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Partner with another organisation to deliver at least one external NAIDOC Week event/program per year.	First week of July 2025, 2026	Head of First Peoples Programs
<b>4. Support and build broader understanding and respect for First Peoples across the organisation</b>	Finalise the 'NAS First Peoples Strategy'.	June 2025	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Implement the 'NAS First Peoples Strategy' across the organisation.	July 2025	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
<b>5. Recognise and celebrate First Peoples days of significance and cultural expression in all forms</b>	Provide opportunities and support for staff and students to engage with cultural events and functions.	November 2024	Lead: Head of People Culture (staff) Support: Head of Academic Services (students)
	Feature and promote First Peoples artists, arts, languages, and cultures across our gallery, collection, website and print material.	November 2024	Marketing Manager
	Visually acknowledge First Peoples diverse cultures at NAS reception, including but not limited to, on events/dates of cultural significance (i.e. NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day and the Apology Anniversary).	November 2024	Marketing Manager
<b>6. Increase understanding, respect and inclusion of First Peoples perspectives in curriculum</b>	In consultation with First Peoples artists, communities, arts professionals, appropriate First Peoples advisory committees and organisations, review the NAS academic curriculum to ensure it is inclusive of First Peoples experiences, perspectives, truth-telling and histories.	November 2024	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of Learning & Teaching and/or Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop and implement culturally informed curriculum.	January 2026	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of Learning & Teaching
	Provide and support professional development opportunities for teaching staff to foster understanding and inclusion of First Peoples perspectives in the academic curriculum.	November 2024	Lead: Head of Studies Support: Head of People & Culture
	Develop a plan to increase participation of First Peoples creatives and content across NAS annual program of exhibitions and public programs.	November 2024	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Research and share the First Peoples histories of the National Art School site with staff and students.	November 2024 and ongoing	Archive and Collections Manager



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>7. Include and integrate First Peoples cultures, knowledges and languages into building, project and landscape planning at the NAS site</b>	Research and identify opportunities to work with First Peoples to integrate First Peoples' perspectives and content into planning, design and project development at the NAS site including to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporate language names on site signage that are relevant to the local rivers that intersect near the NAS site;</li> <li>incorporate native plants and Indigenous knowledges into site design.</li> </ul>	November 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Review the existing Conservation Management Plan (Darlinghurst Gaol) for the opportunities to incorporate First Peoples knowledge and input.	November 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Ensure Masterplan or conservation activities carried out at the site are also informed by First Peoples' cultural heritage considerations and requirements.	November 2025	Chief Operating Officer
<b>8. Increase awareness and regard for First Peoples' perspectives and cultural protocols in NAS academic operations</b>	Embed key principles of cultural safety within all NAS Academic policy and procedure.	November 2024 and ongoing	Lead: Head of People and Culture (staff) Support: Head of Academic Services (student)
	Deliver cultural awareness training for all NAS faculty.	September 2025	Lead: Head of People and Culture (staff) Support: Head of Academic Services (student)
	Develop cultural awareness guidelines for NAS staff and student inductions.	September 2025	Lead: Head of People and Culture (staff) Support: Head of Academic Services (student)
<b>9. Honour First Peoples histories and connection to the Country that NAS operates</b>	Scope options for the placement of an Acknowledgement of Country at each entrance to NAS, as part of NAS' signage strategy in liaison with local Gadigal Elder/ representative from the Local Metropolitan Land Council.	November 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Marketing Manager
	Publish an Acknowledgement of Country in NAS publications and on the NAS website, and all digital marketing channels.	November 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Marketing Manager
	Incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country in all permanent staff signature blocks.	November 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Marketing Manager
	Begin meetings, teaching opportunities and all other gatherings with an Acknowledgement of Country.	November 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Marketing Manager
	Incorporate that NAS is on Gadigal Land in the postal address block.	November 2025	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Marketing Manager





Isabella Kennedy, Master of Fine Arts printmaking studio,  
*The Postgrad Show*, National Art School, 2024,  
photograph: Peter Morgan



# OPPORTUNITIES

**We believe the opportunities we can provide through our education, employment offerings, public programs and financial support through our existing First Peoples Student Grants Scheme (including funds for student materials, hardship fund, emergency fund and travel fund for professional development) are integral in supporting greater economic participation, social inclusion and reconciliation through the cross-cultural exchange of diverse skills, knowledge and lived experiences.**

Our actions and deliverables provide a significant opportunity to change the way our staff, students and community think about and perceive First Peoples, the importance of history and place and involvement in current society. We believe this is a powerful tool for advancing reconciliation.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Peoples recruitment, retention and professional development</b>	Build understanding of current First Peoples staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	November 2024	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Support: Head of People and Culture
	Engage with First Peoples staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	November 2024	Head of People & Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy; utilising the Australian Human Rights Commission Recruitment Guide and other relevant policies.	November 2025	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop and implement culturally appropriate recruitment processes for First Peoples identified applicants.	November 2025	Lead: Chief Operating Officer Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Peoples stakeholders, through First Peoples media and employment agencies, to increase applications from First Peoples across NAS recruitment opportunities.	November 2024	Head of People and Culture
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Peoples participation in our workplace.	March 2025	Lead: Head of People and Culture Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in our workforce.	August 2026	Head of People and Culture
	Identify, develop and maintain relationships with First Peoples and arts organisations locally and nationally to facilitate First Peoples education and employment opportunities.	November 2024	Head of First Peoples Programs



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>[Continued]</b> <b>1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Peoples recruitment, retention and professional development</b>	Seek opportunities for First Peoples staff professional development opportunities across First Peoples networks including but not limited to: secondments, participation in First Peoples roundtable events, and attendance at exhibition openings.	November 2024	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Head of People & Culture
	Seek opportunities for First Peoples student professional development opportunities including but not limited to: cultural leadership programs, roundtables, symposiums, conferences, attendance at exhibition openings.	November 2024	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop a leadership pathway and plan for the long-term training of at least one First Peoples staff member into a leadership role.	August 2026	Lead: Director and CEO Support: Head of People and Culture
	Research the potential for First Peoples staff Cadetship(s) in discussion with industry partners such as Indigenous Careers and CareerTrackers.	August 2026	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Identify arts organisations with a commitment to Reconciliation to discuss development of a peer network to share experiences, knowledge, and opportunities to support professional development and retention of First Peoples staff.	November 2024	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Head of People & Culture
<b>2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes</b>	Develop and implement a First Peoples procurement strategy.	July 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Research Supply Nation membership, which links organisations with certified First Peoples suppliers to help sustain a vibrant and prosperous First Peoples business sector.	July 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from First Peoples to staff.	July 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Peoples businesses.	July 2025	Chief Operating Officer
	Develop commercial relationships with First Peoples businesses.	July 2025	Chief Operating Officer



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Increase First Peoples engagement and participation at NAS through targeted and tailored approaches</b>	Establish and sustain a First Peoples work experience and opportunities in creative industries, for example: through the Aurora Internship Program.	November 2024	Head of People & Culture
	Continue to provide financial support to students through the development and implementation of First Peoples Student Grants Scheme.	November 2024	Future Students Advisor
	Continue to provide scholarships for First Peoples students undertaking academic studies.	November 2024	Future Students Advisor
	Promote scholarships for First Peoples students to our sphere of influence.	November 2024	Future Students Advisor
	Increase support towards Bachelor of Fine Art First Peoples scholarships.	August 2026	Lead: Future Student Advisor Support: Head of Development
	Remove financial barriers to participation through continued expansion of NAS First Peoples Scholarships Program.	November 2024	Lead: Future Student Advisor Support: Head of Development
	Investigate and source benefaction/ sponsorship for First Peoples secondary student(s) to undertake the high school certificate (HSC) Intensive program.	August 2026	Head of Development
	Strengthen engagement to support First Peoples' students and artists, including the development of an Indigenous scholarship and a mentorship program.	August 2026	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Indigenous Academic Support Officer
	Provide culturally appropriate pastoral support for First Peoples students.	November 2024 and ongoing	Lead: Head of First Peoples Programs Support: Indigenous Academic Support Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>4. Develop and increase First Peoples representation across academic and student services</b>	Continue to support the role of the First Peoples Academic Support Officer to support academic outcomes of First Peoples students.	January 2025	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Investigate models to develop Bachelor of Fine Art, First Peoples Contemporary Art course framework.	March 2025	Lead: Head of Learning & Teaching Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop course component/s for revised Bachelor of Fine Art program focussing on exploration of First Peoples histories and cultural traditions / protocols.	March 2025	Lead: Head of Learning & Teaching Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Develop (or re-develop) course component/s or units of study focussing on Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art.	June 2025	Lead: Head of Learning & Teaching Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Implement visiting artist/lecturer scheme to introduce Contemporary First Peoples artists/scholars to studio/subject areas school-wide.	September 2025	Lead: Head of Learning & Teaching Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Ensure academic recruitment processes support and encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.	December 2024	Head of People & Culture
	Develop identified positions within academic workforce with specific regard for appointments associated with the development and teaching of First Peoples content	February 2025	Head of People & Culture
	Develop and implement First Peoples student recruitment strategy.	February 2025	Lead: Future Students Advisor Support: Head of First Peoples Programs
	Continue to implement and expand the First Peoples Centre Darani Ngalawada as a culturally safe space for First Peoples students and artists.	November 2024	Head of First Peoples Programs

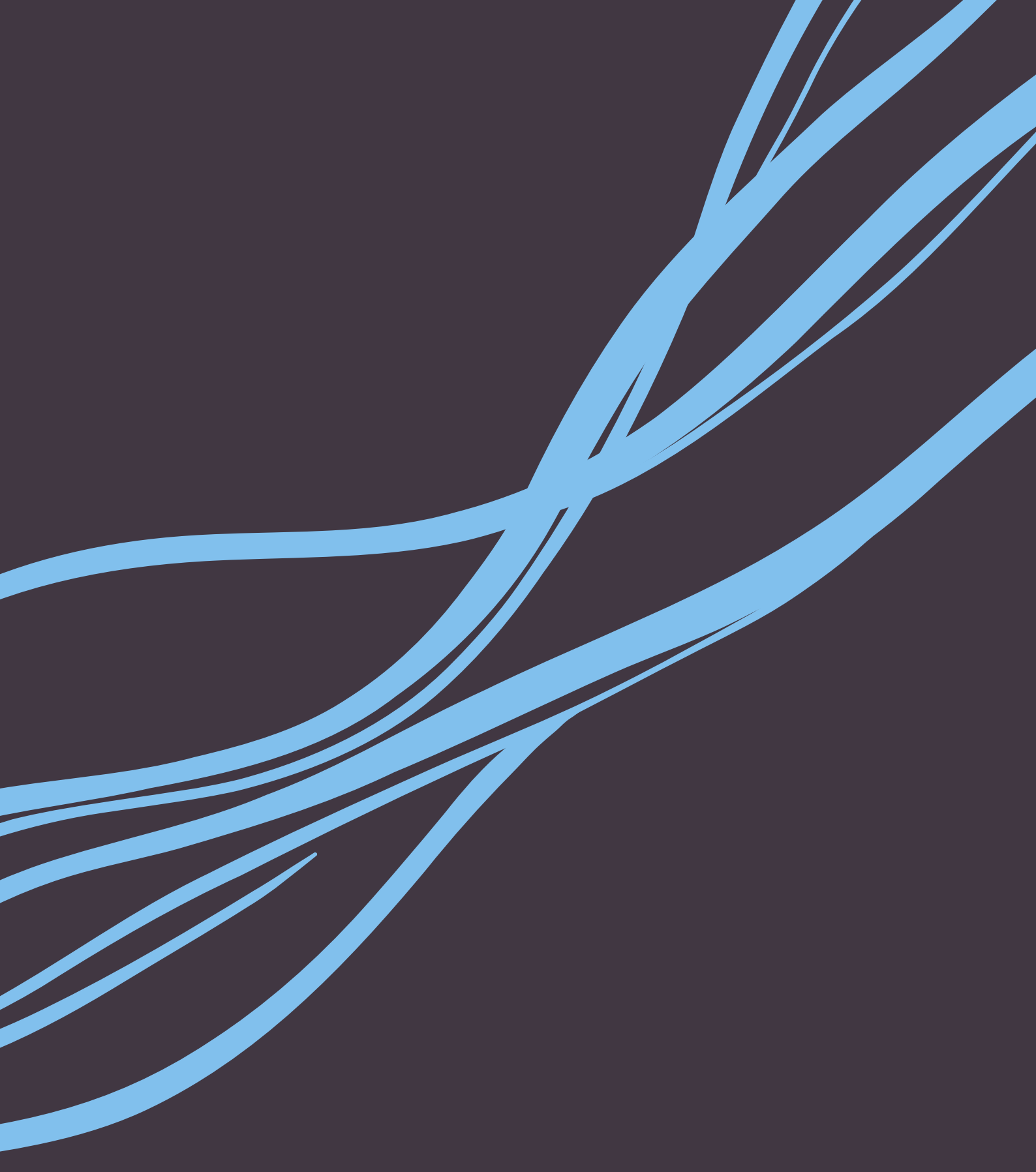


# GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	Maintain First Peoples representation on the RWG.	November 2024	Director and CEO
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2024	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	November 2024	Director and CEO
		December 2024	
		March 2025	
		June 2025	
		September 2025	
		December 2025	
		April 2026	
		June 2026	
<b>2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	Engage our Executive Leadership Team, senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	November 2024	Director and CEO
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	November 2024	Chief Operating Officer
	Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion.	November 2024	CEO and Director

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	August annually	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
	Report RAP progress to all staff, senior leaders, Executive Leadership Team and the NAS Board quarterly	March, June, September, December annually	Director and CEO
	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	August annually	Director and CEO
	Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	July 2026	Head of First Peoples Programs
	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	November 2026	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
	Report on development and implementation of RAP in NAS Annual Report, State Significant Organisation Reporting to NSW Government and on the NAS website.	June 2025	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
	Request and assist to recruit a First Peoples NAS Board member to NSW State Government, through Create NSW; as positions become available.	November 2024	Lead: Director and CEO Support: Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)
Engage with relevant external First Nations stakeholders on the development and implementation of our RAP.	September 2025	Director & CEO	
<b>4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	April 2026	Chief Operating Officer (Company Secretary)





**John Waight**  
Head of First Peoples Programs  
National Art School  
[john.waight@nas.edu.au](mailto:john.waight@nas.edu.au)