

Gnibi Wandarahn
**INNOVATE
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**

MARCH 2019 – MARCH 2021



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

INNOVATE



**Southern Cross
University**

Gnibi Wandarahn Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2021

Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders both past and present, remembering that under the concrete and steel of the buildings, the land has and always will be Aboriginal Land.

This university-based RAP was undertaken at the behest of the Gnibi Elders, some of whom started a fledgling place of tertiary study for Aboriginal peoples more than 40 years ago.

© Southern Cross University

CRICOS Provider Code 01241G

ABN 41 995 651 524

Cover Artwork by Oral Roberts

Visual Mapping Artwork by Tristan Schultz

www.relativecreative.com.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this publication contains images and references to people who may now be deceased.

No part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples.

Email gnibi@scu.edu.au

Telephone +61 2 6620 3959

www.scu.edu.au/gnibi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4.	VICE CHANCELLOR STATEMENT
5.	MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA
6.	FOREWORD
7.	RAP COMMITTEE
9.	GNIBI ELDERS PRINCIPLES
10.	OUR BUSINESS
11.	SCU STRATEGIC PLAN
12.	STAFF RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS
14.	OUR RAP
15.	INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN
18.	INNOVATE RAP VISUAL MAP
30.	REPORTING & REVIEW OF THE PLAN
32.	VISION STATEMENTS

VICE CHANCELLOR STATEMENT

There is no doubt that Southern Cross University is on the cusp of great things. A key measure of this aspiration is our daily, lived respect for the Indigenous peoples of the Northern Rivers and coastal regions of New South Wales and Queensland - and all territories where the University operates.

In keeping with those sentiments, this is a highly innovative, progressive and creative Reconciliation Action Plan. It acknowledges with gratitude the pivotal role of Indigenous Elders as wise partners of, and advisors to, the University. It is practical. It is a cogent example of design thinking, and it is ambitious.

We are proud of the Indigenous community's outreach and participation in the University. We are delighted that core mentoring and educational programs which we undertake - such as those run in partnership with AIME - have the highest per capita participation and success rates in the country. We are delighted, too, with the progress of the University's doctoral research program in Indigenous Knowledge, led and auspiced by the talented staff of Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples. These provide the basis for knowledge, pride and even greater achievement.

Let me be clear: this is not a plan which will sit on a shelf or which will languish in digital storage.

When we purchase and procure goods for the University, we will be guided by this Plan. When we employ new staff colleagues, we will be guided by our aspiration to become the Australian University Employer of Choice for Indigenous peoples. When we acquire artworks for the University collection; seed new research initiatives; develop the skills and careers of our colleagues; we will be fulfilling this Plan. It dovetails perfectly with our commitment to provide safe, culturally appropriate and accessible student accommodation at all of our campuses. Finally, when we welcome Elders to meet with our University Council as equals, we will be fulfilling - and advancing - this Plan.

My congratulations to the many authors of this Reconciliation Action Plan. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Professor Norm Sheehan, the co-Chairs of the Plan, Rachel Lynwood and the much-missed Aunty Bertha Kapeen; and all those who contributed. A final thank you to Tristan Schultz for his distinctive, integrative artwork.

I commend this Plan to all of you.



PROFESSOR ADAM SHOEMAKER

**Vice Chancellor and President
Southern Cross University**

MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia is delighted to welcome Southern Cross University to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program by formally endorsing its inaugural Innovate RAP.

As a member of the RAP community, Southern Cross University joins over 1,000 dedicated corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006. RAP organisations across Australia are turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity, institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community—governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress these dimensions.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This Innovate RAP provides Southern Cross University with the key steps to establish its own unique approach to reconciliation. Through implementing an Innovate RAP, Southern Cross University will

develop its approach to driving reconciliation through its business activities, services and programs, and develop mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

We wish Southern Cross University well as it explores and establishes its own unique approach to reconciliation. We encourage Southern Cross University to embrace this journey with open hearts and minds, to grow from the challenges, and to build on its successes. As the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation reminded the nation in its final report:

“Reconciliation is hard work—it’s a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.”

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I commend Southern Cross University on its first RAP, and look forward to following its ongoing reconciliation journey.



KAREN MUNDINE

**Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia**



FOREWORD

THE SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN IS A FIRST FOR THIS UNIVERSITY.

This is strange given that Southern Cross University has a long and productive relationship with the Bundjalung Community and other Northern Rivers' Aboriginal Communities.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee was co-chaired by Aunty Bertha Kapeen, Aunty Irene Harrington and Rachel Lynwood. Our beautiful Aunty Bertha passed away in early 2017 and we dedicate this Plan to her. Aunty Bertha was a leader in Aboriginal Education for many years. Her incisive wit, intelligence and expertise are greatly missed. Aunty Bertha's legacy is great within the Bundjalung Community and it is also a powerful presence in the Gnibi Elders Principles that inform this Plan. We are all thankful to have known this beautiful spirit and to have had the opportunity to learn with her.

The Southern Cross University RAP is presented as an advanced plan to build authentic Reconciliation across the University and model this respectful engagement for other organisations.

The Plan is creative, engaging and innovative thanks to the excellent contributions from colleagues, our Elders and our community representatives. The RAP research gathered opinion and comment from staff across the University which showed a strong commitment to the Plan among Southern Cross University staff.

It is an honour to engage with the difficult issues that Reconciliation addresses as a company of intelligent, respectful and ethical University colleagues. This RAP presents an opportunity for us to make a difference in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education and research. I know that we have the ability, commitment and the support within the University to carry this Plan forward and to meet our objectives. The RAP is a great opportunity for us all to establish cultural security as a prominent and leading initiative within our University. I am honoured to be a part of this process and I commend and thank my colleagues, our Vice Chancellor, the Community and our Elders for their commitment to Reconciliation.



PROFESSOR NORM SHEEHAN

Dean
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples

RAP COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs

Aunty Bertha Kapeen
Aunty Irene Harrington
Rachel Lynwood

Elders

Uncle Greg Harrington
Aunty Gwenda Hickling
Uncle Larry Kelly
Aunty Jackie McDonald
Uncle Charles Moran
Aunty Chris Morgan
Aunty Hazel Rhodes
Aunty Joyce Summers

Staff

Airdre Grant
Anthony Olive
Barbara Rugendyke
Ben Roche
Bill Boyd
Brenda Gradwell
Bronwyn Barkla
Cameron Johnson
David Hadley
Deborah Donoghue
Don Johnston
Donna Moffitt
Erica Wilson
Gary Kafoa
Geoff Cottee

Geraldine Mackenzie
Gerald Hoskins
Iain Graham
Jackie Huggins
Janet Taylor
Jennifer Nielsen
Jerry Vanclay
Jonathan Munro
Julie Arthur
Kate Kelly
Kazia Lombardo
Lauren Schneider
Laurence Holzhauser
Lynn Griffin
Melda Moss
Nicole Cooper

Norm Sheehan
Paul Robinson
Rachel Callahan
Rob Cumings
Rob Garbutt
Rocque Reynolds
Rod Williams
Simon Sutton
Steven Griffin
Suzi Hellmundt
Tim Lane
Trevor Maher
Troy Robinson
Vickie Surwald
Virginia Ingham
Vivienne Roberts



Top: Laurence Holzhauser, Nicole Cooper, Virginia Ingham, Simon Sutton, Rachel Callahan, Rob Cumings, Norm Sheehan, Uncle Greg Harrington, Anthony Olive, Bill Boyd, Barbara Rugendyke **Middle:** Aunty Gwen Hickling, Aunty Irene Harrington, Rachel Lynwood, Deborah Donoghue, Airdre Grant, Jennifer Nielsen **Front:** Aunty Hazel Rhodes, Uncle Charles Moran



**THE BUNDJALUNG ELDERS WHO ADVISE
GNIBI COLLEGE AT SOUTHERN CROSS
UNIVERSITY SHARED THIS LIST OF
GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN 2014.**

GNIBI ELDERS PRINCIPLES

- 1** Indigenous Knowledge is relevant, ethical, intelligent, effective and a useful way of knowing.
- 2** Indigenous peoples are active, able and worthy peoples.
- 3** The truth about our histories and value of Indigenous ways are determined by us, we carry this knowledge.
- 4** Elders hold our Aboriginal spirituality and our culture close. We choose what is open and shared and what will be closed. Aboriginal spirituality is the basis for life, Indigenous education and cultural competency, it infuses everything.
- 5** Our knowledge is relational. Our principles are the basis for Southern Cross University to establish and sustain an active, informed and respectful relationship with Indigenous Elders who will give considered collective input. The continuance of this relationship through the Elders group is essential.
- 6** Culture is sacred to us. We are and own this living culture. We do not need a 'book'. We share with you so that you can learn how to listen and hear what we say.
- 7** Identity is based upon things [inside] beneath the surface. Empowered, individual, affirmed identity is the basis of positive, productive, healthy and non-destructive lives – opportunities to engage and build knowledge builds *strong mob* through [inside] learning.*
- 8** Learning everyday with each other has to be informed and sustained by a politic of open, positive and ethical interactions.
- 9** We as Elders have presented these things all our lives without being heard – we are often listened to but our message is not heard nor heeded. We take this opportunity to speak in the understanding that you will listen in the right way, hear us and learn.

* [...] denotes culturally significant understandings in English words.

OUR BUSINESS

Southern Cross University is located on three campuses across the natural beauty and creativity of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yugambeh nations. These three campuses are at Coffs Harbour on the Mid North Coast, Lismore in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales and the Gold Coast in southern Queensland. The core business of a university is to undertake high level teaching and research. We have 900 staff of whom 2.4% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples and 17,000 students study with us, with 4.5% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Adam Shoemaker is one of Australia's leading researchers in Indigenous literature and culture. He was integral in establishing that our Elders' Council meets annually with the University Council. An Elders Group also advises Gnibi College. The Dean of Indigenous Knowledge, Professor Norm Sheehan oversees our courses based in Indigenous Knowledge: a Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge and a Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies. Other faculties at the university include the School of Arts and Social Sciences, the School of Business and Tourism, the School of Education, the School of Environment, Science and Engineering, the School of Health and Human Sciences, the School of Law and Justice, and the National Science Centre and the Southern Cross University College which provides pathways to university.



Above: Swan by Oral Roberts

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2020

It was an aim of this RAP that it comply with the overall strategic plan of Southern Cross University, as well as the Elder's Principles.

VISION

Southern Cross University will be recognised for enriching our communities through the excellence of our scholarship and the achievements of our graduates.

MISSION

We equip our students to live a life they value and to be effective global citizens. We do this by creating inspirational and engaged learning experiences. We create and apply knowledge in partnership with our communities in fields that are regionally relevant and globally significant.

VALUES

COLLEGIALITY

Openness and Respect

- Being open with each other and open in our thinking
- Saying what we believe and doing it in a constructive and respectful manner
- Engaging with diverse cultural and Indigenous perspectives in both global and local settings

Collaboration and Trust

- Working as a team, drawing on combined strengths to meet our shared goals
- Trusting our colleagues to challenge us in a positive manner, and supporting each other
- Engaging with our local and global communities and partners for mutual benefit

INTEGRITY

Honesty and Ethical Behaviour

- Being truthful in all our dealings
- Acting consistently with what is said and the principles held
- Pursuing practices that develop the social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of our University, and local and global communities
- Advancing human rights and our commitment to providing opportunities for students and staff in an inclusive, culturally safe environment

Drive and Accountability

- Striving to ensure the University's ongoing success
- Having the drive and commitment to innovate based on rigorous analysis
- Being accountable for our individual and collective actions and for the performance of those we lead

STAFF RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

STORIES AND VISUAL ARTS CONNECT US ALL.

Connective Art is a visual and narrative methodology for sharing knowledge in a group, similar to the spirit of 'yarning', an Indigenous way of sharing stories. Using design concepts and Indigenous Knowledge, Connective Art generates interactions within a group using artworks and hidden word streams. Professor Norm Sheehan used this process to address the social and emotional wellbeing of members of the Stolen Generations in urban regional and remote communities across Queensland. In contexts where relationships and culture have been disrupted, this way of doing research brings art works and the people who have made them together. In this gathering of images people can discuss elements publicly and also begin to have the private conversations essential to cultural healing.

The consultative process of this RAP involved all members of staff. To do this, connective art workshops were held in every school, office, division and work unit in the university. Examples of the words that came from these groups are below – a joint statement from colleagues on what reconciliation means to them.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Below are the collaborative staff Reconciliation statements elicited through Connective Art workshops held across the University:

- Respect leads to equality which leads to reconciliation
- Without respect there can be no equality
- Through respect and listening with care we acknowledge we come together as family and build harmony
- Remember you have a right to love and understanding
- Healing, kindness and respect mutualises contentious truth
- Acceptance and recognition of identity leads to forgiveness and freedom. Active listening encourages mutual healing
- A connection between forgiveness and vulnerability provides a pathway to new beginnings and opportunities
- Acknowledging people empowers people



PLACING THE CARDS

The process involves participants drawing on rectangle cards, each with connecting registration marks to guide the participant doing their art work. When placed alongside another's card all the individual designs connect to make the Connective Artwork; a visual narrative to assist the group to share knowledge.



REVEALING THE WORDS

Adding another layer of meaning, participants also write a word on the back of the cards. Once the group has discussed the visual narrative, participants turn over the cards to reveal the words. These words are then used to generate a group Reconciliation statement.



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2016

Since National Reconciliation Week 2016, Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples have hosted numerous Connective Art workshops across the University to generate collaborative Reconciliation statements. To date, more than 700 art works have been created, with the most prevalent words being respect, beginning, togetherness and trust.



OUR RAP

Southern Cross University is a leader in adapting the university to include an Indigenous world view. The campuses are on Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yugambah lands. There is a strong presence from the Elders at each campus and the Elders Council meets annually with the University Council. It was these close ties that led to the Elders and staff coming together to create this RAP. Elders across our regions were the champions of our RAP, led by Aunty Bertha Kapeen and Aunty Irene Harrington. Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker and Professor Norm Sheehan, Dean of Indigenous Knowledge championed from within the university, with Professor Bill MacNeill, Dean of Law and Justice now co-chairing the committee.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

Southern Cross University deeply values the long and productive relationships it has with the Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal communities in the Northern Rivers and beyond. We respect Aboriginal Elders, communities and cultures for their inherent diversity and their generosity sharing their understandings with Southern Cross University. Southern Cross University acknowledges the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and we reaffirm our commitment to enhancing social and emotional wellbeing disadvantages through our teaching, learning, research and community engagement. We support Indigenous Knowledge as a productive valuable and strong understanding that informs us all. In living these values we will support the ongoing relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by maintaining the Gnibi Elders Group as a permanent Advisory Committee of the University.





Above and below: Yarning Circle at Southern Cross University

INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

This Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan aims to support Southern Cross University as a culturally well institution that seeks to develop strengths in cultural competency to eliminate any overt and implicit sources of cultural harm. This Cultural Strengths approach to social and emotional wellbeing seeks to redress the harm enacted through dispossession, removal and disconnection by actively eliminating discrimination, social exclusion and cultural elitism. This is the deeper aim of Reconciliation.





VISUAL MAP

PEOPLE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected people; we operate through relationships. Our identity is crucial to our success and wellbeing. Our cultures identify strongly and this identity is based on connection respect and sharing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are inclusive and open to social sharing and exchange when relationships are positive and respectful. We celebrate our cultures, identities and histories through ceremonial events and practices that enhance and express our cultural wellness. The freedom to follow our good ways is essential to our cultural safety and we believe that such safety is beneficial to all peoples.

PLACE

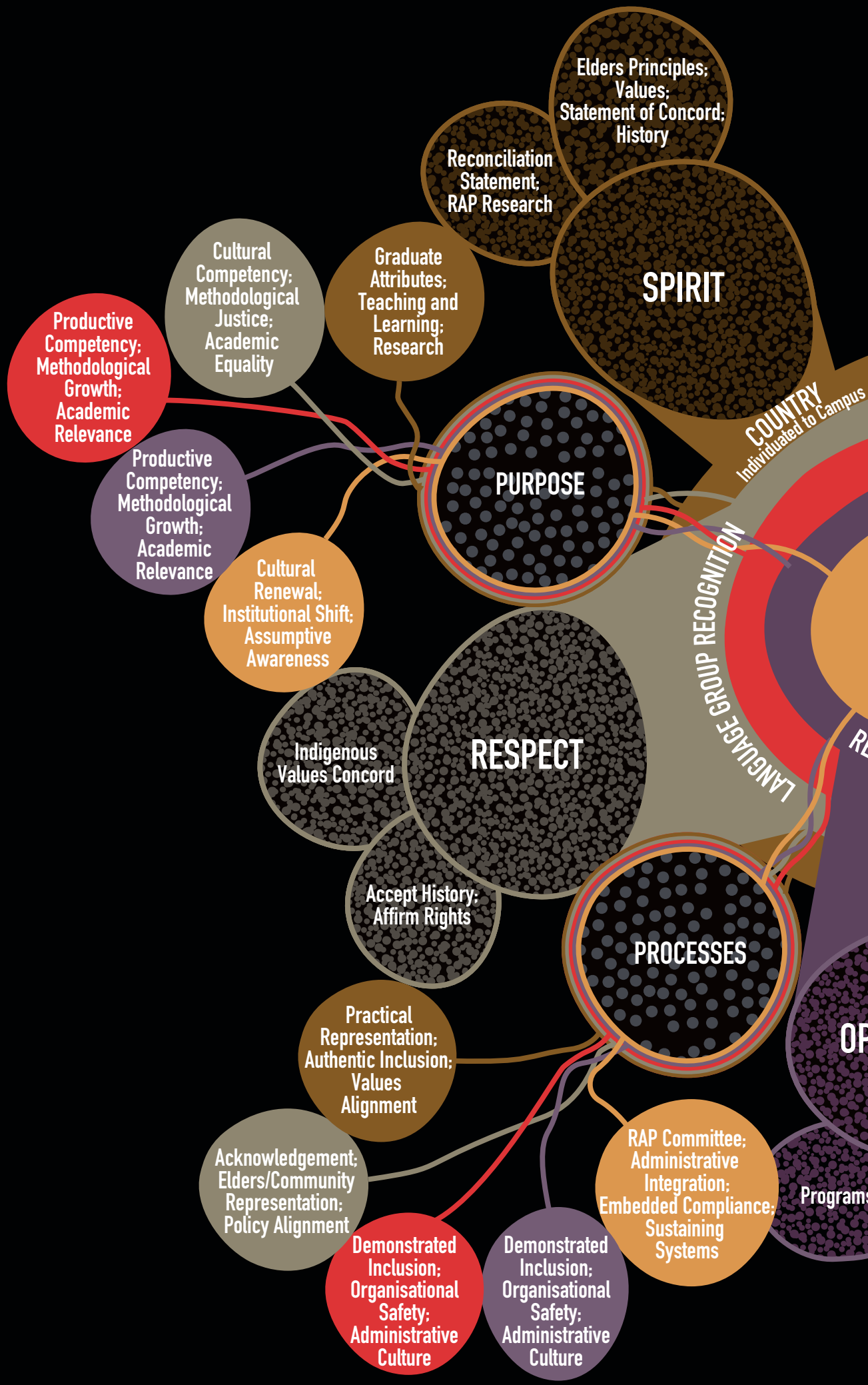
A positive and visible identity is crucial to the success, comfort and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our relationships with places are vital to our productive engagement and significant to our wellbeing. Different places relate directly to different activities and respect is demonstrated when we are able to use safe places for different activities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, peoples and culture are often presented as curiosities that are open to inquiry. Identified places provide cultural sanctuary where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures can affirm authority over their knowledge and share this knowledge in their own way for the benefit of all peoples. The free expression of identity and culture is everywhere in university environments. Representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander places opens up free expression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

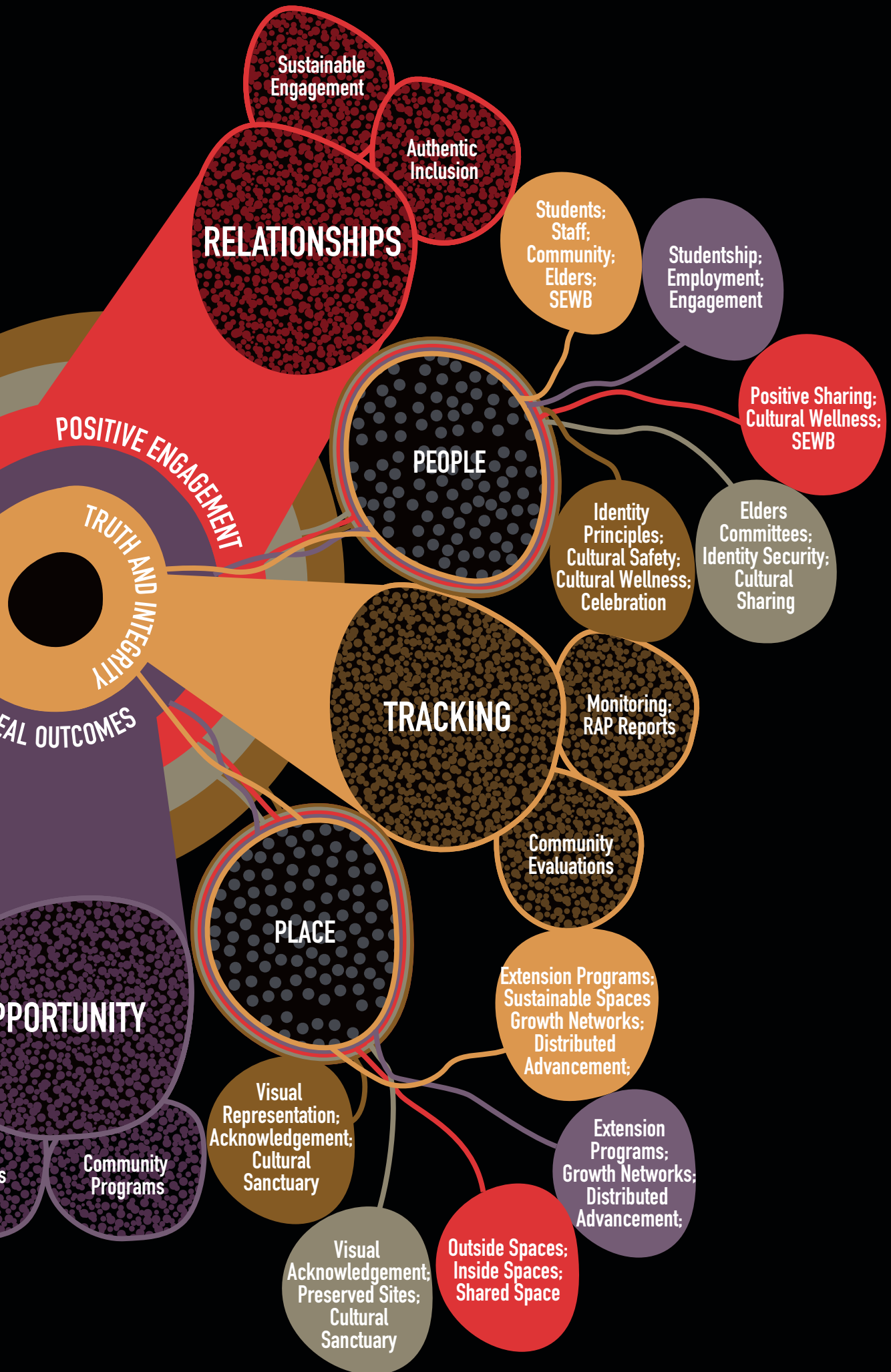
PROCESS

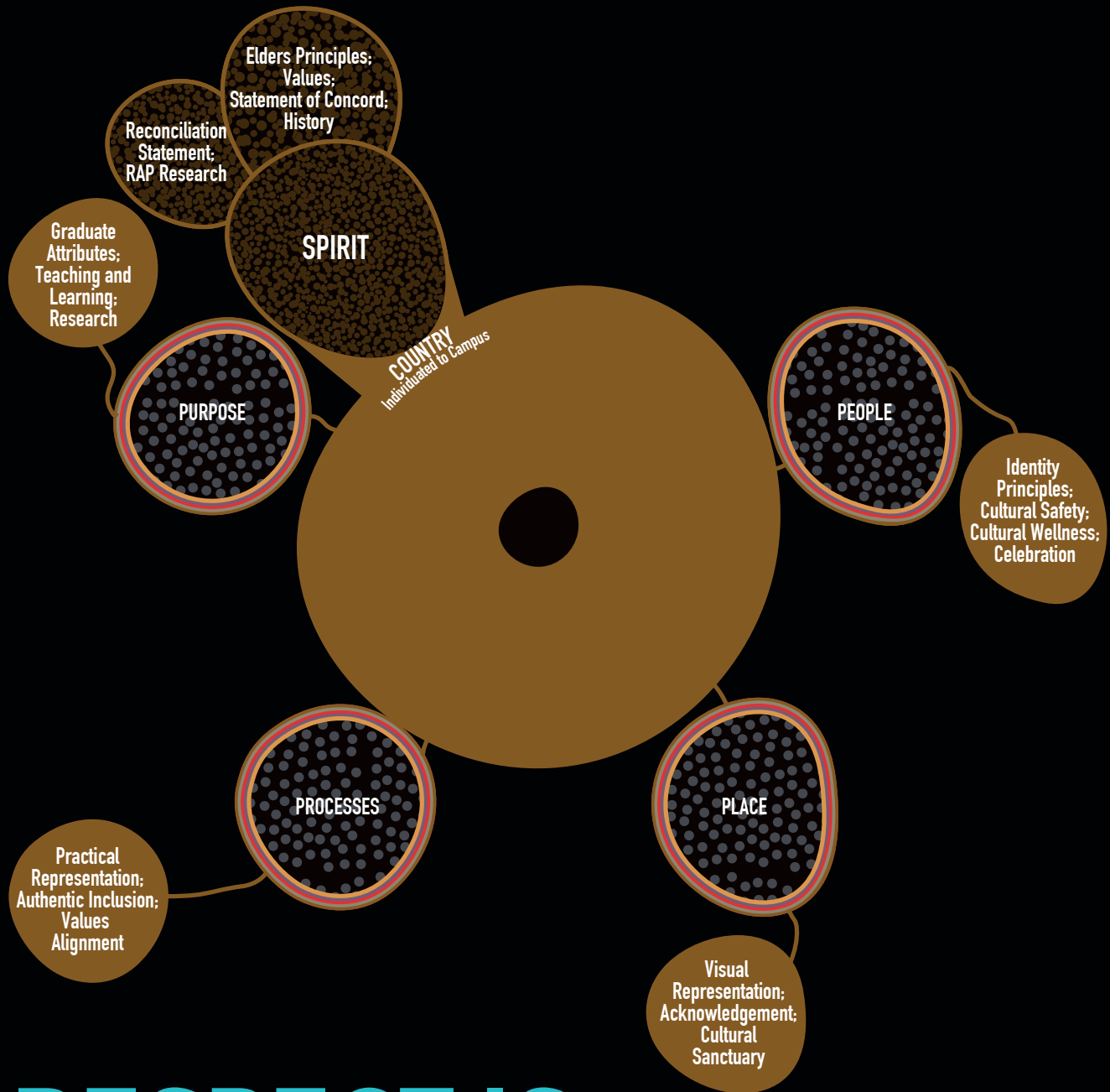
Reconciliation has to be practically demonstrated and embedded in the administrative processes of the University to achieve the sustained effort necessary for success. This authentic presence in administrative processes builds the necessary alignment between administrative systems and the Reconciliation values promoted by the University. An embedded and sustained approach situates all staff and work units as responsible for Reconciliation. Procedural diversity also signals that cultural flexibility is at work for the benefit of the whole university into the future.

PURPOSE

Southern Cross University's commitment to Reconciliation demonstrates the alignment of the University to social justice and cultural success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This affirmation shows that teaching, learning and research initiatives within Southern Cross University are accessible to all students and engaged with diversity at deeper methodological and systemic levels. Reconciliation values enacted in Southern Cross University promote the most positive and future oriented conception for higher education.







RESPECT IS COUNTRY



THE SPIRIT OF THE COUNTRY, THE ELDERS AND THE UNIVERSITY.

Country is an area of land that is directly related to a group of Aboriginal peoples through ancestry, cultures and languages. The relationship between a people and their Country extends beyond time and is recorded in stories laid down in Country that are the spiritual source of knowledge essential to generations. Country is alive and intelligent providing everything that it's people need. As a conception, Country exists outside as a living, vital place that we inhabit and through learning culture and respect it also exists inside as a model for being human in a proper way. Country provides everything we need.

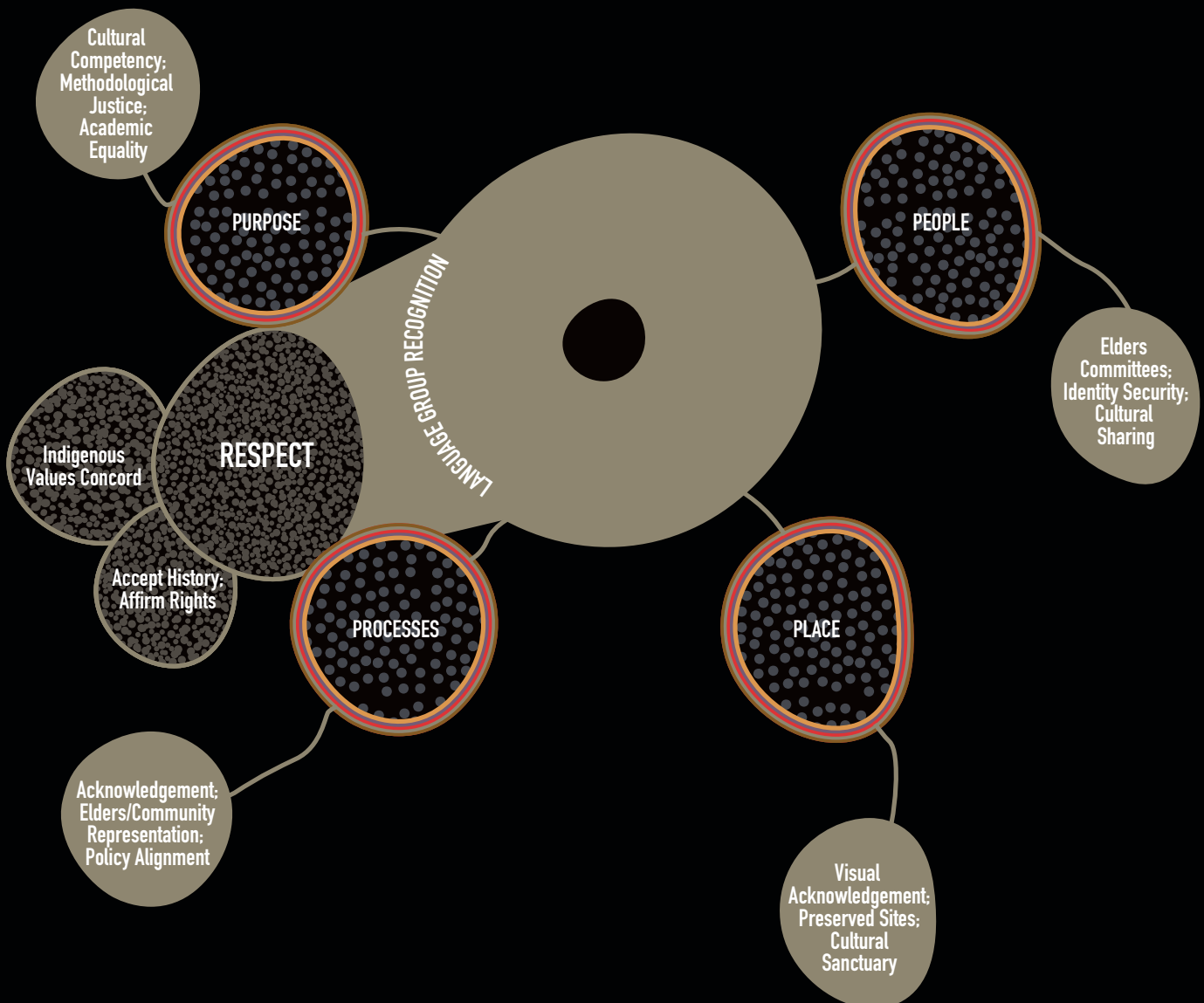
RESPECT IS COUNTRY RECONCILIATION ACTIONS

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with their culture and communities by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	Head, Governance Head, Human Resources	June 2019 & 2020
	Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate with their cultures and communities during NAIDOC Week.	Chair, RAP Committee	June, 2019
Engage employees in understanding the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country to ensure there is a shared meaning.	Establish Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country across all University events and engagements.	Vice Chancellor, Head, Governance Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2019
	Encourage all staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings.	Vice Chancellor, Head, Governance Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2019
Equity Diversity: Goal 3 Strategic Plan: Values	Continue to invite a Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at significant events, including NAIDOC and Sorry Day.	Chair, RAP Committee Chair, Elders Council	December, 2020
	Review list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country and maintaining respectful partnerships.	Chair, RAP Committee Chair, Elders Council	December, 2020
	Evaluate the cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country: including format, pronunciation and values guide.	Vice Chancellor, Head, Governance Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2020
Acknowledge the value of the time and support of Elders.	Acknowledge the value of Elders as wise advisors to the University and ensure they receive appropriate remunerations for their time and services.	Chair, Elders Council Head, Governance	June, 2019
	Publish Elders Principles on-line in companion with University values statements	Chair, Elders Council Head, Governance	March, 2020

RESPECT

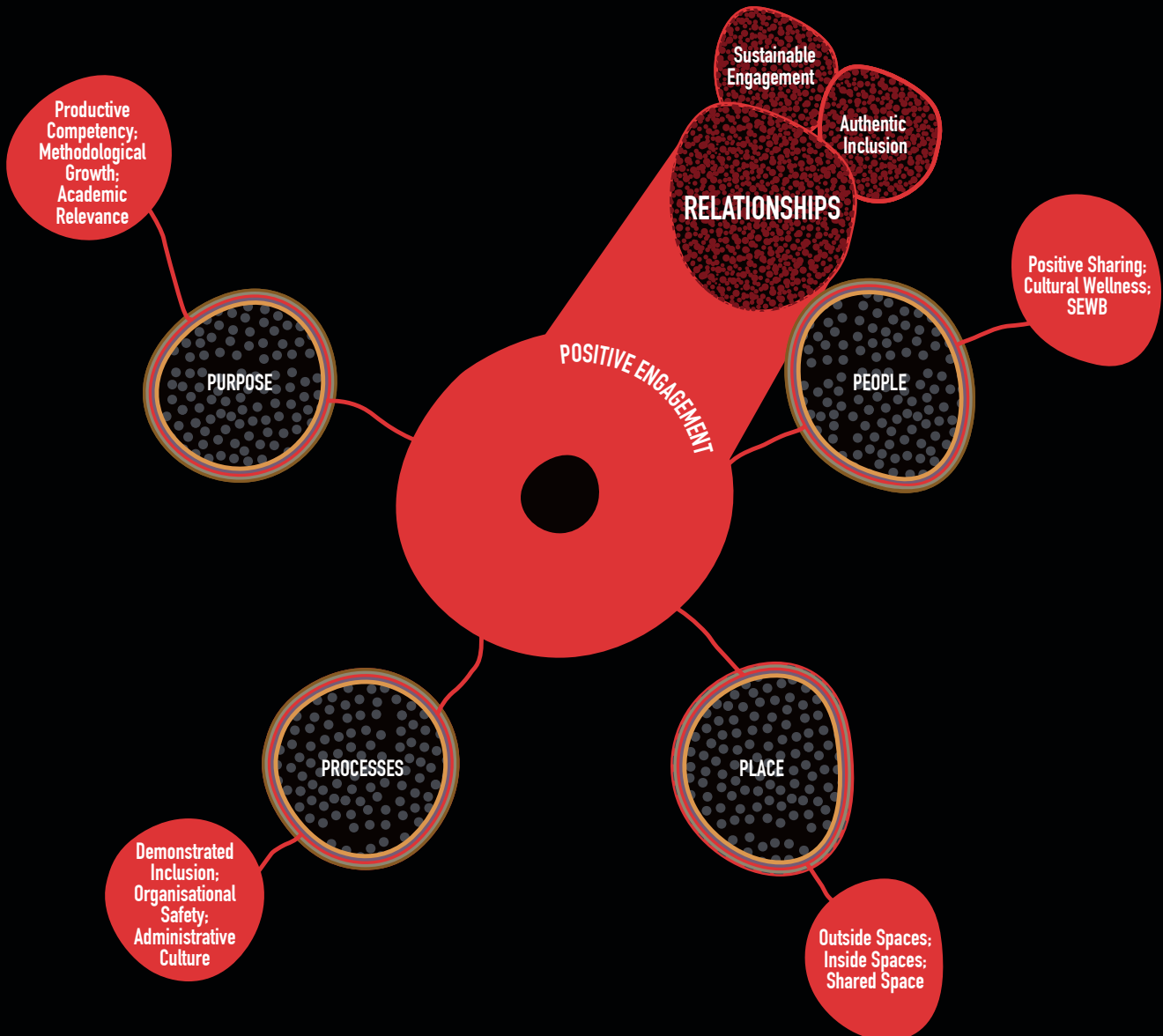
IS OUR FIRST PRINCIPLE THAT INFUSES EVERYTHING.

This principle includes respect for the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yugambah nations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all Indigenous nations worldwide. Southern Cross University acknowledges that showing respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their lands, cultures and histories is critical to working together for better outcomes for all Australians and essential for building a better society based on a shared and mutual understanding.



RESPECT RECONCILIATION ACTIONS

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Acknowledge the values of student achievement.	Ensure Indigenous students with competitive rewards for their participation in and with the University at all stages of learning.	Chair, Academic Board Head, Student Success	December, 2019
Equity Diversity: Goal 1 Strategic Plan: Goal 1	Engage Language speakers for Welcome to Country at graduations.	Chair, Academic Board Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2019
	Ensure culturally secure teaching and learning spaces for Indigenous Knowledge courses to be available for students and staff.	Office of the Vice President (operations)	December, 2019
	Develop culturally relevant online engagement for Indigenous student recruitment and support.	Chair, Indigenous Student Success Program Committee Director, Marketing Director, Technology Services	December, 2020
	Ensure and evaluate On Country education and research support programs.	Chair, RAP Committee Chair, Elders Council	December, 2020
	Develop Adjunct positions for Elders and Community Members	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic	December, 2020
Engage employees and students in continuous cultural learning opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories and achievements.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers the ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion).	Dean, Gnibi College Director, Human Resources	December, 2020
	Investigate opportunities to work with local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop cultural awareness training.	Chair, Elders Council Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2020
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, RAP champions, Human Resources managers and other key leadership staff to participate in cultural training.	Chair, Elders Council Chair RAP Committee Director, Human Resources	December, 2020
Increase awareness of histories and cultures.	All staff are required and strongly encouraged by their Work Unit to attend or participate in at least one Indigenous cultural competency or cultural recognition event annually.	Director, Human Resources Director, Work Unit Heads and Managers	December, 2020
Equity Diversity: Goal 3 Strategic Plan: Values			



RELATIONSHIPS ARE POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT



AUTHENTIC INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT.

Authentic engagement starts with a shared purpose and engagement, inclusion and participation, openness, transparency and trust. It is achieved through culturally strong community centred practices that respectfully activate individual and community agency and acknowledge community ownership. Southern Cross University aims to build mutual understanding through meaningful connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by adopting a consultative process and ethical behaviours in all our activities, based on nurture, celebration, inclusion and Reconciliation.

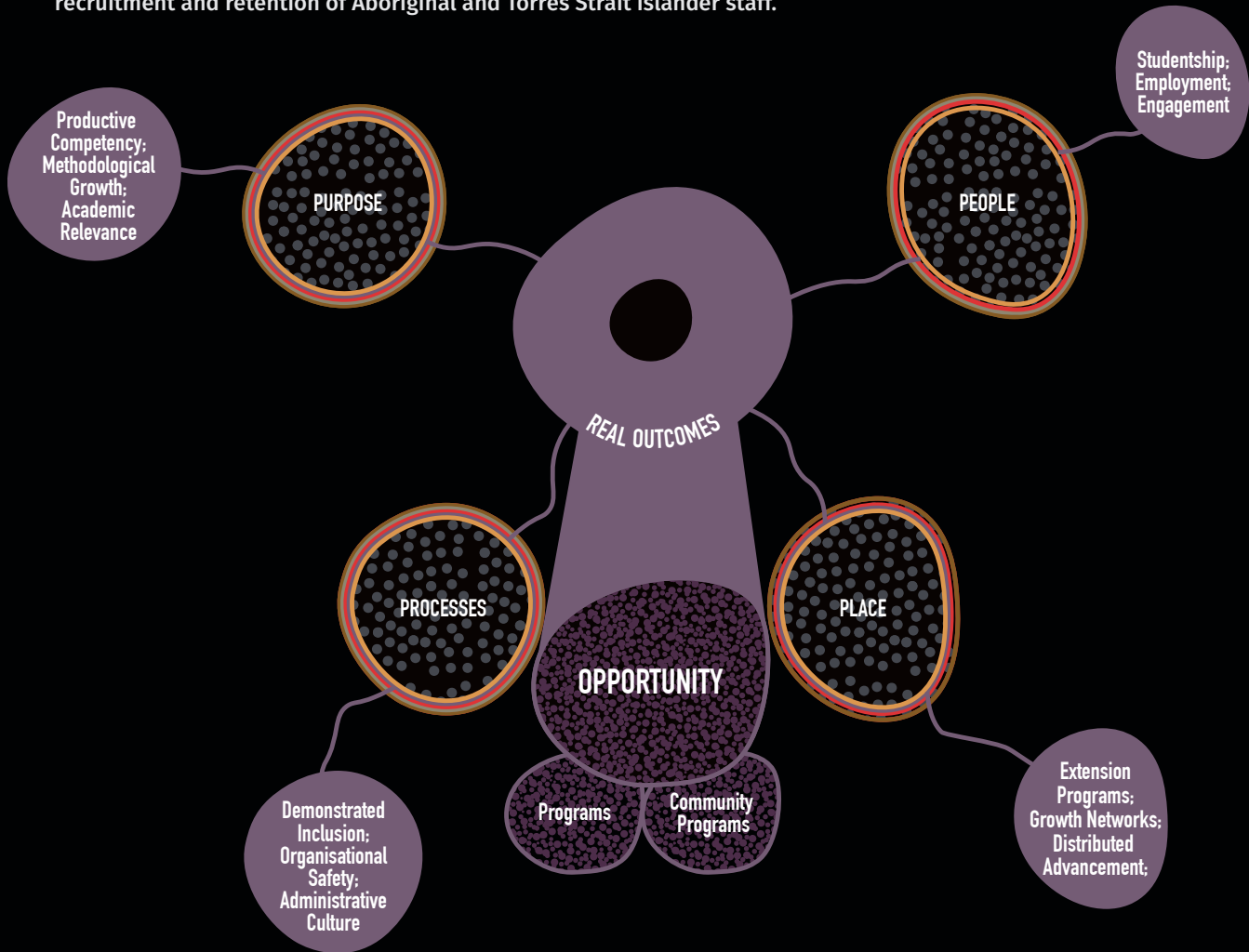
Action	Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
RAP Working Group actively monitors RAP development and implementation of actions, tracking progress and reporting.	RAP Working Group oversees development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.	Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2020
	Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on the RAP Working Group.	Chair, RAP Committee	June, 2019
	Meet at least twice per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	Chair, RAP Committee	March 2019, 2020 & 2012
	Establish Terms of Reference for the RAP Working Group.	Chair, RAP Committee	June, 2019
	RAP Committee oversees the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.	Vice Chancellor Chair, RAP Committee	June, 2019
Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector.	Develop and implement a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	Chair, RAP Committee Head, Marketing	March, 2020
	Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.	Vice Chancellor Chair, RAP Committee	March, 2019, 2020, 2021
Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.	Organise at least one internal event for National Reconciliation Week each year.	Head, Governance Head, Marketing Chair, Indigenous Events Committee	May 2019, 2020
	Register all National Reconciliation Week events via Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week website.	Secretariat, RAP Committee	May 2019, 2020
	Support an external National Reconciliation Week event.	Head, Marketing Chair, Indigenous Events Committee	May 2019, 2020
	Ensure our RAP Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate National Reconciliation Week.	Chair, RAP Committee	May 2019, 2020
Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes. Strategic Plan: Values	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.	Vice Chancellor Chair, RAP Committee	October, 2019
	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	Chair, RAP Committee	October, 2019
	Continue the annual Elders meeting occurring with University Council meeting.	Vice Chancellor Chair, RAP Committee Chair, Elders Council	October 2019, 2020
Professional codes of conduct for staff. Equity Diversity: Goal 2	Evaluate the enactment of professional codes of conduct.	Work Unit Head	December, 2020

OPPORTUNITIES ARE REAL OUTCOMES



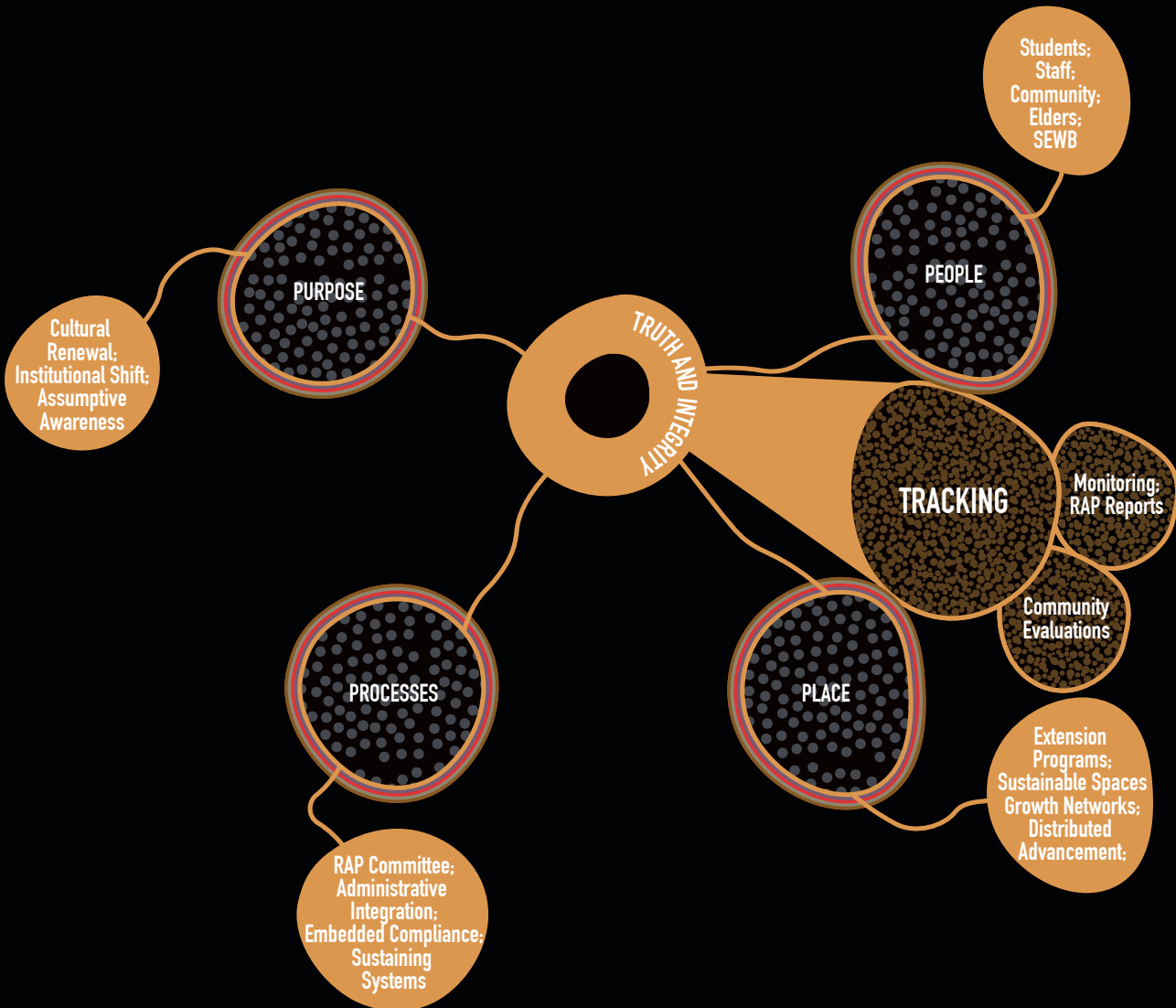
EQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A JUST SOCIETY.

Southern Cross University aims to create beneficial opportunities and supporting successful educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and optimise the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.



OPPORTUNITIES ARE REAL OUTCOMES RECONCILIATION ACTIONS

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Investigate opportunities to improve and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes within our workplace. Equity Diversity: Goal 2 Strategic Plan: Values	Develop and implement a Southern Cross University policy on Indigenous preferred supplier arrangements.	Director, Financial Operations	October, 2019
	Collect information on our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to inform future employment opportunities.	Director, Human Resources	October, 2019
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy.	Director, Human Resources	March, 2020
	Engage with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies including professional development	Director, Human Resources	March, 2020
	Advertise all vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.	Director, Human Resources	March, 2020
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	Director, Human Resources	March, 2021
Investigate opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within our organisation.	Review and update procurement policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Director, Financial Operations	October, 2019
	Evaluate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Social Enterprise and Social Enterprise development through new Southern Cross University Enterprise and Engagement Centre.	Pro Vice Chancellor (Engagement)	December, 2020
	Develop and communicate to staff a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that can be used to procure goods and services.	Senior Procurement Officer	December, 2020
	Evaluate implementation of commercial relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business.	Senior Procurement Officer	December, 2020
	Continue Supply Nation membership	Senior Procurement Officer	March, 2021



GOVERNANCE IS TRACKING



TRUTH AND INTEGRITY.

Annual reporting aims to ensure that Reconciliation objectives are carried forward across the University. Tracking this implementation also includes recognition and celebration of initiatives that occur in different work units so that the Reconciliation movement is kept alive within Southern Cross University. Annual Reconciliation awards will highlight participant achievements and promote diversity of approaches across the University.

GOVERNANCE IS TRACKING RECONCILIATION ACTIONS

Action	Deliverable	Responsibility	Timeline
Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, including annual report to SCU Executive.	Chair, RAP Committee	October, 2019
	Work Units to include reconciliation actions in their reports.	Head, Governance Heads of Work units	October 2019, 2020
Report RAP achievements challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia.	Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	Chair, RAP Committee	September 2019, 2020
	Investigate participating in the RAP Barometer.	Chair, RAP Committee	October, 2020
Review, refresh and update RAP.	Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.	Chair, RAP Committee	December, 2020
	Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for review and feedback.	Chair, RAP Committee	March, 2019
	Submit draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal endorsement.	Chair, RAP Committee	February, 2019

REPORTING AND REVIEW OF THE PLAN

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) provide a framework for organisations to realise their vision for reconciliation.

RAPs are practical plans of action built on relationships, respect and opportunities. RAPs create social change and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (Reconciliation Australia).

The Southern Cross University RAP will be registered with Reconciliation Australia. This registration requires annual reports to be published and presented to Reconciliation Australia that outline initiatives developed and progress achieved within the University.

The Reconciliation Action Plan Committee charter outlines the structure for reporting within the University.

Crucial to the success of the Plan are the following:

- Reconciliation actions are taken up and owned by participants within all work units of the University
- Participant initiatives are positively supported to ensure flow down of RAP vision to all staff and students
- Reconciliation Actions included in School and work unit operational plans
- Reconciliation awards presented each year to celebrate participant achievements
- Heads of Schools and work units provide annual report on initiatives and achievements to RAP Committee
- Review of RAP will be conducted in 2020



Left: Uncle Greg Harrington, Janine Dunleavy, Aunty Irene Harrington and Dr Kath Fisher

GNIBI RESEARCH

INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGIES IN OUR TEACHING, LEARNING AND SCHOLARLY PRACTICES.

Principles

- The basis for true teaching, learning and scholarship is to be inclusive of culturally diverse perspectives and knowledges. Southern Cross University acknowledges and understands that Indigenous Knowledge is meaningful to all disciplines and honours the truth of our shared/collective histories. Southern Cross University is therefore committed to genuine inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge as a discipline and an integral pedagogy within all facets of its teaching, learning and scholarship.
- The active and meaningful participation of Elders in working with staff and students in the areas of teaching, learning and scholarship is recognised as essential, in the sharing and imparting of Indigenous Knowledge. Southern Cross University respects and is committed to the ongoing deeply valuable relationships with Elders in all facets of teaching, learning and scholarly activity.
- Southern Cross University acknowledges and understands that Indigenous Knowledge is relational and involves Indigenous spirituality, culture and sacred knowledge – some which can be shared, and some which cannot. Southern Cross University is therefore committed to engaging with Indigenous Knowledge and knowledge holders with integrity and respect through truthful, open, positive and ethical interactions.
- Southern Cross University acknowledges and understands the historical and present impediments many Indigenous people experience in progressing through higher education pathways. Southern Cross University is therefore, committed to the successful academic progression of Indigenous scholars in undergraduate and higher degree pathways.
- A culturally safe and inclusive teaching and learning environment is an essential facet in supporting the successful progression and completion for Indigenous scholars in undergraduate and higher degree pathways. Southern Cross University respects and is committed to the ongoing development and implementation of culturally competent practices when working with Indigenous scholars to achieve these aims.

Protocols

- Research process is initiated by identifying the question with an analysis of need. Researchers ask, what do we need, why do we need to, which need is addressed, whose needs are served and finally what are the needs with the researchers? Having identified the needs framework, the next question is how can we position ourselves respectfully so that the knowing the context reveals or unfolds so that true context emerges?
- The next step is to prioritise needs in relation to:
 - Culturally safe relationships for everyone and celebrated by everyone
 - A protected sustaining place where researchers can review (re-cover, re-think, re-image, re-culture) needs
 - Respect for the knowledge alive in each context

VISION STATEMENTS

OUR VISION IS FOR EVERYONE TO WAKE TO A RECONCILED, JUST AND EQUITABLE AUSTRALIA.

Our vision for Reconciliation is based on five inter-related dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, unity, institutional integrity, and historical acceptance. These five dimensions do not exist in isolation; they are intrinsically connected, and Australia can only achieve full reconciliation if we progress in all five dimensions (Reconciliation Australia).

We see a future where Aboriginal communities of our regions will be culturally secure in their homelands. Cultural security means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and knowledge are respected and accepted with an equal standing within institutions because they are valued as essential for the sustainable future of everyone. Unity and integrity are very high objectives for any group, striving to meet these high ideals makes the Country we share better for everyone.

ACHIEVING OUR VISION

To achieve this vision, we will:

- Establish an Aboriginal Elders Council for the University
- Directly present and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures on our campuses
- Establish Indigenous Knowledge as a discipline area within the University
- Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and events as vital and significant to campus life for all staff and students
- Create and maintain culturally safe places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship, events and ceremonies at each campus
- Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises where appropriate within our operations
- Lead the Reconciliation movement among other organisations and institutions for the benefit of our communities

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Social and emotional wellbeing is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of mental health that is broad and holistic, recognising the importance of connections to land, ancestry, culture, spirituality, identity, family and community.

Within the University:

- Public recognition of culture
- Recognition of Indigenous Knowledge
- Being a strong and public advocate for reconciliation
- Embedding inclusivity into our operations and practices
- Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, experiences and perspectives is invaluable

Across universities:

- Stronger networks
- More opportunities

In the wider community:

- The University will use its resources and operations for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- The University will employ resources to support the continuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language
- The University will develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Sanctuary at each campus

EMPLOYMENT

Southern Cross University is one of the largest employers on the New South Wales (NSW) North Coast and border region of NSW and Queensland. These areas are the traditional home of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yugambah people. The region continues to be home to large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Lismore (4.5%), Coffs Harbour (4.1%) and Tweed Heads (3.5%) all have Indigenous populations greater than the NSW average of 2.9%. Southern Cross University is therefore, well placed to provide employment opportunities to the Indigenous communities in which it is located.

Southern Cross University aims to create employment opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all levels of the University. The University is committed to addressing Indigenous disadvantage in our community. Increasing Indigenous participation in employment is an important part in 'closing the gap' in Indigenous disadvantage.

Southern Cross University recognises that Indigenous staff and their cultural knowledge are important contributors to the scholarship of the University.

Southern Cross University acknowledges that the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff assists in providing a welcoming and culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

CULTURAL STRENGTHS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the primary source for strength because they endure, and are a basis for resistance, resilience and survival under cultural dominance. These strengths implicitly work, and are sustainably enabled through practices guided by the Elders' principles that reflect the deeper understandings of Indigenous people and reinforce their identity. These understandings are self-positioning and connection building; vital for the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because they provide a sound and beneficial basis for cultural continuation and positive identity development in modern society.

Non-Indigenous Australians also have difficulty dealing with our traumatic past which reveals the most atrocious aspects of Australian society. Coming to terms with this history is difficult because the responses to trauma such as denial, disbelief and emotional withdrawal will limit engagement with this essential area of human rights and cultural competency education. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Strengths approaches are based on respect, truth, sharing and caring. This is valuable because they provide a framework where non-Indigenous groups and individuals can productively connect with this history and become culturally competent. The Western paradigm tends towards a medicalised and over-individualistic assessment of wellbeing needs, focusing on identification of individual problems and focusing interventions and treatments for that single problem.

Wellbeing programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders require a broad, sustained approach including consideration of cultural, group, spiritual, historical and political factors. A consensus of the literature and experts stress that these programs must have a broad culturally safe, community and family focus.

Engaging with the cultures of others benefits everyone because it renders our own culture legible allowing us to read into and understand and unravel dominance by identifying our best responses to difference. There are very few places where Indigenous cultures can be shared and experienced in safety. The demands of contemporary life also mean that there is little time for cultural sharing and cultural continuance.

In the often divisive clutter of contemporary acculturation and cultural tourism, a normative social space where Indigenous Australian cultural understanding can be respectfully shared as an everyday basis for wellbeing is also difficult to sustain.



RECONCILIATION STRATEGY

EACH GOAL OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN IS TIED IN OUR RAP TO ACTIONS OF RECONCILIATION.

GOAL 1

We will equip our students for diverse futures and global careers that enrich society.

Reconciliation Actions

- Cultural Competency, cultural safety and social and emotional wellbeing
- We will strengthen the identity of our Indigenous staff and students by providing culturally safe, affirming and agency building opportunities in professional development, scholarship and research

GOAL 2

We will strategically grow our research profile, building a sustainable culture of research excellence.

Reconciliation Actions

- Affirm methodological diversity, relevance and sustained ethical engagement for Indigenous Research
- We accept the necessity for Indigenous methodological diversity in research for ethical, socially sustainable and cognitively just advancement of knowledge



Above: Deadly Bunarhms with Dhinawan

GOAL 3

We will pursue targeted growth to ensure a sustainable future.

Reconciliation Actions

- Establish goals for Aboriginal employment, staff development, cultural safety and wellbeing
- We aim to grow Indigenous enrolment, employment and cultural competency towards our establishment as an Indigenous university

GOAL 4

We will create distinctive opportunities for engaged learning and research, as a hallmark of the Southern Cross University experience.

Reconciliation Actions

- New degrees, community based learning and research. Culture sanctuary, language and culture engagement events
- We will create and sustain unique and productive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, developing programs based on Aboriginal Cultural Strengths as a basis for cultural safety and social and emotional wellbeing

GOAL 5

We will transform our service delivery, building a culture among our professional and academic staff of providing the highest level of flexible support.

Reconciliation Actions

- Cultural competency and staff social and emotional wellbeing, cultural safety, Indigenous scholarship
- We will embed Indigenous approaches to scholarship, research and student support as a fundamental element of Southern Cross University culture

