



**Nulungu**

Research Institute

The University of Notre Dame Australia

**NULUNGU STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME AUSTRALIA**

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## Glossary

**ARC** – Australian Research Council

**CRN** – Collaborative Research Network

**EI** – Engagement and Impact

**ERA** – Excellence in Research for Australia

**FoR45** – Indigenous Studies Field of Research under ARC

**HDR** – Higher Degree by Research

**NCIS** – Nulungu Centre for Indigenous Studies  
(precursor to Nulungu Research Institute)

**NTRO** – Non-traditional research output

**TPP** – Tertiary pathway program

### About the artwork

**Galgaruru janyba ngan-ga**  
**(Kookaburra sharing stories)**  
**by Maxine Charlie**

The artwork represents the different Countries of the Kimberley: saltwater, ranges, desert and river. The bird is a kookaburra, travelling across the region, keeping stories alive and people connected.



# A brief history of Nulungu

Nulungu is the name of an important waterhole on Roebuck Plains Station on Yawuru country, near Broome.

Notre Dame's Broome Campus is located on the site of the former Nulungu Girls College that was founded in 1974 by the Sisters of St John of God and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions.

The Christian Brothers' College for boys in Years 6-10 was established three years earlier, on an adjacent parcel of Broome diocesan land. Both colleges catered for day students from Broome as well as provided boarding facilities for Aboriginal students from remote Kimberley communities.

The two schools combined in 1980 to form Nulungu College. The school was initially administered by two co-principals and included 23 buildings, a chapel and a sports oval. Nulungu College provided students with an opportunity to share and celebrate the diversity of their cultural heritage and learn from one another.

More changes occurred in 1995, when Nulungu and St Mary's Primary School amalgamated under the banner of St Mary's College. The eastern side of the campus, including many former Nulungu College classrooms and the boarding facility, was managed by The University of Notre Dame Australia in an arrangement with the Bishop of Broome.

The Nulungu Research Institute acknowledges the important work of the early educators and the significant cultural connection to the Aboriginal people who bestowed the name.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as the first peoples of this nation, are the holders of ancestral knowledge, law and wisdom. We acknowledge First Nations people from across Australia, particularly the Yawuru people of Broome where Nulungu is located, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation in Fremantle and the Gadigal people of the Eora nation in Sydney where our University has campuses. We pay respects to Elders past and present across the Kimberley, with whom we live and work closely, and extend that respect to all First Nations people who we collaborate with nationally.

# Nulungu's history

## Nulungu Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS)

2008 – 2013

Yawuru and neighbouring traditional owners chose the name 'Nulungu' for the Indigenous Studies Centre because of its special cultural significance and its treasured history on the site of the Broome Campus.

NCIS sought to 'empower and make a difference in the lives of Indigenous Australian people and contribute to the national and international bank of Indigenous knowledge'.

NCIS was to be a place of excellence in teaching and research located in Broome, servicing and being serviced by relevant Schools on all three campuses – Broome, Fremantle and Sydney.

NCIS offered a range of resources, skills and support across three core areas:

- Teaching – Aboriginal Studies units which examined the rich history of Indigenous peoples and their place in modern Australia
- Research – A research institution which focused on Education, Health and Country
- Community Relations – Working with community to ensure research was effective and followed appropriate protocols

In 2008 NCIS held its inaugural Reconciliation Lecture which was delivered by Professor Patrick Dodson. This event continues to be held annually on the Broome Campus.

## Nulungu Research Institute

2013 – Now

2014 Strategic Priorities:

- Incorporation of Indigenous community governance in Nulungu activities
- Consolidation of the 'Liyan/Indigenous Wellbeing' Collaborative Research Network (CRN) Project
- Increased HDR enrolments on the Broome Campus
- Diversification of research base through collaboration
- Increased promotion of Nulungu research and community outreach activities

2014 Research:

- Major focus on CRN projects with core areas of education, health and wellbeing, and caring for Country
- Expanding into new areas: native title, Indigenous governance, climate change, urban planning, linguistics, alternative food production systems, carbon sequestration
- A knowledge framework of 'Healthy People, Healthy Country'
- A focus on postgraduate programs to establish and maintain research capacity within the Kimberley region and across Northern Australia
- Multiple cross-institutional research collaborations, including the CRN in partnership with the Australian National University, and the Office of Learning and Teaching grant in collaboration with the University of Southern Queensland and Batchelor Institute, NT
- A regional, national and international focus





Anne Poelina  
Nyikina/Warrwa

# Nulungu Leadership

## Nulungu Co-chairs of Indigenous Studies

Professor Anne Poelina and Associate Professor  
Stephen Kinnane

### Anne's vision for Nulungu includes:

- supporting bottom-up governance and leadership in bio-regions
- enabling collective wisdom sharing and learning in community and Country
- land, living waters, people, healing and spirit through lived and academic experiences
- the intersection of faith and spirit-based approaches to cooperative inquiries

### Stephen's vision for Nulungu includes:

- building on Nulungu's strong reputation and being community-led
- ensuring pathways for Aboriginal people and supporting the next generation of researchers
- supporting individual's skillsets and partner needs with a focus on wellbeing and culture



Stephen Kinnane  
Mirriwoong



Melissa Marshall

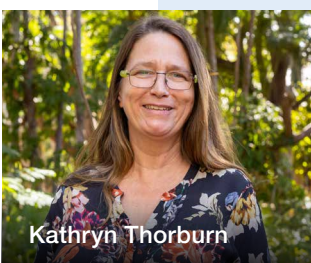
## Nulungu Directors

Melissa Marshall as Director  
Kathryn Thorburn as Assistant Director

The Nulungu team is strengthened by the direction now permanently in place via our Co-chairs of Indigenous Studies.

There is much work to be done if we are to achieve our joint ambitions, and to operationalise the strategic direction set out in this document.

We will be continuing to build our research portfolio to ensure it reflects the changing research needs of Kimberley people, whilst providing pathways for Aboriginal people to conduct research and to own the data and results. We will strive to ensure that the Nulungu Research Institute remains a vibrant, ethical and culturally safe place to work, as well as continuing to be financially sustainable.



Kathryn Thorburn

# UNDA Research, Faculty and Strategic Plans



## The UNDA 2022-2026 Strategic Plan seeks to:

- Integrate and embrace differences, equipping students for our rapidly changing world
- Provide interdisciplinary learning that recognises the unity of knowledge and contributes a confidence to act and serve
- Develop capable citizens, with a confidence to act and contribute to serving the common good
- Integrate partnerships to develop new knowledge and solutions to impact and change lives
- Form the whole student in preparation to be an integrated, universal and impactful force for good

## The Objects of the University remain:

- the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values; and
- the provision of an excellent standard of –
  - teaching, scholarship and research;
  - training for the professions; and
  - pastoral care for its students.



The University of Notre Dame Australia's Strategic Plan





## UNDA Research Plan 2022-2026

### Vision:

**To create new knowledge and solutions that will address real world challenges, improve the lives of people in our communities, and impact for the common good in society.**

### Strategic Priorities

1. People. Investing in our people, enhancing our research culture, and growing the capability we need to achieve our vision.
2. Partnerships. Forging ambitious Transformative Research partnerships, nationally and internationally.
3. Environment. Building a dynamic research environment across the University that drives performance.
4. Performance. Achieving high-quality research with transformative impact.

### Our Culture – Principles of our Research Community:

- Mutual enhancement
- Continual development
- Prioritising our partners
- Integrity + ethical behaviour

### Transformative Research Themes:

- Good lives
- Exceptional care
- Strong communities

## Faculty of Arts, Science, Law and Business Strategy

### Vision statements:

- A welcoming Faculty community which supports a diverse range of staff and students and increases access to and completion of tertiary education and research
- An outward-looking Faculty community where every member of staff is valued and supported to thrive and embrace new opportunities
- A responsive Faculty community which facilitates the broad development of each student and encourages them to reflect on and engage with society around them
- A respectful Faculty community which reflects the cultural diversity of the wider Australian community, and encourages access and participation of Aboriginal Australians as teachers, researchers and students
- A collegiate Faculty community which sustains excellence in all our programs, courses and research, challenging people's perspectives and having a positive impact on people's lives
- A supportive Faculty community, guided by Catholic faith and tradition, which develops local and global partnerships and seeks to grow sustainably, complementing our expertise and strengths
- Multiple cross-institutional research collaborations, including the CRN in partnership with the Australian National University, and the Office of Learning and Teaching grant in collaboration with the University of Southern Queensland and Batchelor Institute, NT
- A regional, national and international focus

**The Nulungu Way respects traditions that underpin Aboriginal community resilience to create a better future for the people of the Kimberley and beyond.**

## Nulungu's vision

**To conduct exceptional and collaborative research which is transformative, decolonising and of value to Aboriginal people.**

### We embrace collaboration with all groups

- Collaborate and co-design Indigenous methodologies
- Build capability in groups we work with to hold, manage and grow knowledge
- Underpin our work with free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)
- Create a safe space where people can define issues, especially where opinions differ, and tensions exist

### We are accountable to our partners

- Act with honesty and integrity
- Maintain transparency with people, groups, and organisations we work with
- Employ ethical processes and practices
- Engage partners for feedback on our methods and outputs
- Use an evidence-based approach and are not afraid to challenge the status quo
- Adhere to the principles of data sovereignty

### We are respectful

- Respect for Aboriginal cultural authority, agency and governance
- Respect for Aboriginal knowledge and ensuring we work in a respectful way
- Respect for Indigenous sovereignty
- Respect for partnerships with leading Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

### We amplify the voice of the community

- Amplify Indigenous community voices
- Respond to research needs as articulated by the community
- Present research regionally, nationally and globally to strengthen dissemination of results
- Ensure research outputs that are understood, valued and utilised by Aboriginal communities
- Strive to showcase our expertise in the specialised research fields
- Offer accessible and community-focused reporting







# Nulungu





# Putting the Nulungu Way into practice

## **We will be community-led in everything we do.**

- Engage with Indigenous-led research methodologies
- Collaborate with community-grounded capability and engagement
- Incorporate a place-based approach
- Provide evidence base for effective advocacy
- Work with and report back to community on engagement and research process and outcomes

## **We will prioritise mutually beneficial relationships with partners.**

- Deepen existing relationships, and build new ones, to drive outcomes via best practice processes
- Maintain standing as an independent, quality Research Institute
- Integrate with internal UNDA partners and Faculties to support development of a deeper interdisciplinary approach

## **We will continuously develop our researchers.**

- Continue to build on the strong foundation of teamwork, supporting each other and our flexible and creative approach
- Progress our HDR and post-doctoral pipeline to support succession planning with the next generation of researchers
- Attract and support local researcher pathways
- Build capacity through collaborative and scaffolded approaches to publication via the Nulungu Publication Series

## **We will be deliberate with translation of our research.**

- Increase understanding of ERA and EI to support awareness and consideration of how to support world-class rankings
- Ensure research outputs are tailor-made to the audience and users
- Raise public profile of the team and allocate appropriate resources to communication strategies
- Translate and disseminate through impactful and diverse media (non-traditional research outputs – NTROs) and community engagement activities such as Talking Heads seminars

## **We will leverage our unique campus, perspective and experience.**

- Tell the Broome and broader Kimberley story
- Attract local, HDR and international students
- Offer transformative and educational experiences for domestic students

## **We will pursue financial stability.**

- Be strategic whilst driving creative problem-solving and resource allocation to ensure “bang for buck”/value for money
- Selectively respond to tenders where Nulungu has a distinct advantage
- Pursue relevant revenue generating opportunities across UNDA
- Manage appropriate contract research opportunities to support grant applications



# Nulungu's five core research themes

## Transformative Learning

Aboriginal people are students, teachers and researchers at Nulungu.

Nulungu seeks to provide opportunities for non-Indigenous Australians to learn from and with Aboriginal staff and teachers.

This theme also explores the extent to which 'conventional' education systems interact with young Aboriginal people across the region – as well as traditional education systems that exist outside of Western models.

## Culture, Country & Language

The theme of Culture, Country & Language sits at the core of everything we do at Nulungu. This theme recognises the authority of the three oldest peak Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the Kimberley: The Kimberley Land Council, the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre. Nulungu works across the cultural and geographic breadth of their members.

Holding true to this theme across all projects makes us always accountable to the cultural governance of the region, and to the values of the Aboriginal people and communities we work with, and for. This theme also informs how we conduct ourselves, our research practice and how we communicate results and strive for impact.

## Aboriginal Wellbeing

Evidence shows that Aboriginal wellbeing depends on connectivity – with each other, with Country, with culture and language. We know that when these connections are damaged through trauma or dislocation, wellbeing is undermined.

This theme seeks to build up from the Kimberley concept of 'liyan' to explore more holistic and culturally grounded ways of talking and thinking about wellbeing, health and all that contributes to mabu liyan (Aboriginal wellbeing).

## Sustainable Lifeways and Social Justice

How might Aboriginal people in the Kimberley live sustainably on Country? In a post-Native Title world, this is a priority issue and one which encompasses questions around climate change and the energy transition, as well as caring for Country and ranger groups, cultural knowledge and language transmission across generations, and building relevant and Indigenous-owned enterprises.

Any form of social justice in the region must enable people to live on Country, without sacrificing comparable measures of health, income, education and housing.

## Policy, Practice, Evaluation

How are Aboriginal people responding to government policies? How can Aboriginal people influence policy decisions and frameworks? This theme explores the interaction of everyday life with a range of policy settings and programs.

It also seeks to expand on methodologies in evaluation that are decolonised, and owned and delivered by Aboriginal people in the region and beyond.



# Realising our vision

SIX PRIORITY AREAS	ACTIONS	EVIDENCE
<b>Transformative Impact</b>	Deliver transformative impact in the Kimberley and beyond – supporting the community and our partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research is applied and implemented by community (used to inform decision-making) and referenced in public dialogue</li> <li>• Partners and communities approach Nulungu to conduct research and drive change</li> <li>• Number of EI case studies under development across FoR45 for next ARC EI assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing Policy</b>	Build an evidence base to influence government policy, program delivery and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies show evidence of change in recognition of Nulungu research</li> <li>• Policy makers request to partner with Nulungu and invest in targeted applied research (allowing work with community to determine the research, process, impacts and outcomes)</li> </ul>
<b>World Class Research</b>	Produce high-quality and innovative outputs that are recognised through national assessments and international relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of quality outputs and publications of Nulungu research</li> <li>• Achievement of a world class ERA ranking through increase in citations, h-index results and peer reviews</li> <li>• Achievement of the highest EI ranking possible in FoR45</li> </ul>
<b>People Development</b>	Attract, support and retain Nulungu staff and students, building skills and establishing pathways for the next generation of researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high and growing percentage of Nulungu staff are Indigenous and on continuing employment contracts</li> <li>• Increased numbers of Indigenous HDR students supervised to completion</li> <li>• Increased number of professional development opportunities and industry conferences attended by Nulungu staff</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Stability</b>	Effectively resource the Institute to ensure ongoing growth and continuous impact for years to come	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nulungu's funding profile is diversified through targeted grant opportunities, strategic contract research and philanthropic sources that contribute to UNDA's block funding</li> <li>• Discretionary funding exists at the project and Institute level to support researchers</li> <li>• Nulungu is appropriately resourced through a departmental budget</li> </ul>
<b>UNDA Engagement and Innovation</b>	Provide advocacy and advice across UNDA to inform policies, process, pedagogy and contribute to the research-teaching nexus, whilst supporting the development of institutional and international partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural safety is understood by UNDA staff and students, and formally implemented as a policy across Faculties</li> <li>• There is Aboriginal input and knowledge in relevant courses</li> <li>• Nulungu is invited to collaborate across UNDA</li> </ul>



# Next steps 2023 - 2026

PRIORITY AREA	NEXT STEPS
<b>Transformative Impact</b>	Examine opportunities to innovate communication of research via non-traditional means (NTROs)
	Build on our mandate to lead community-grounded research, explore opportunities to embed accountability mechanisms
	Strategically prioritise and formalise selected partnerships and develop a matrix of deliverables
<b>People Development &amp; World Class Research</b>	UNDA influence and support of young Indigenous people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building pathways for Indigenous people from entry level (TPP) to Grad Cert/Dip on to HDR research considering recognition of prior learning</li> </ul>
	Team culture and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Nulungu communications plan and associated professional development</li> <li>• Build team capability and understanding of traditional research publications to ensure greatest impact</li> <li>• Plan research to maximise impact</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Stability</b>	Develop structured approach to ongoing financial security for Nulungu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research grants are evaluated using a consistent framework to maximise return on investment</li> <li>• Determine criteria for assessing contract research opportunities</li> <li>• Identify professional development courses that will be delivered by Nulungu in the next five years</li> </ul>
	Develop model with all UNDA Research Institutes and the Research Office for the provision of discretionary research funds
	Develop a tool to calculate Nulungu contribution to UNDA research block grants and teaching programs
<b>Influencing Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage policy makers and the political landscape</li> <li>• Connect to formal and informal networks relating to policy and draw on existing evidence bases and community input to guide contributions</li> </ul>
<b>UNDA Engagement and Innovation</b>	Review of Indigenous landscape at UNDA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute as subject matter experts as part of cultural audit</li> <li>• Determine role in supporting Reconciliation Action Plan</li> </ul>
	Progress interdisciplinary focus and intersection of Indigenous studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum development</li> <li>• Intensives and micro-credentials</li> <li>• Research-teaching nexus</li> <li>• Contribute to Broome Strategy</li> </ul>



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