

Interim Strategic Plan 2025–2026

Poche Centre for
Indigenous Health





UQ acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which UQ is situated.
— Reconciliation at UQ

Acknowledgement of Country

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health acknowledges the Yuggera and Turrbal Peoples as the custodians of this Country since time immemorial. This Country has long been a place for gathering, teaching, learning and research. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. They have cared for the nation for tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded, and we are grateful for their custodianship of what is now known as Australia.







UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health



The University of Queensland (UQ) Poche Centre for Indigenous Health was established in 2015 following a \$10 million donation from Mr Greg Poche AO and Mrs Kay Van Norton Poche AO. Initially founded as a research centre focused on urban Indigenous health, a key partner of the UQ Poche Centre since the beginning, is the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), which delivers world-class primary health care services to the Indigenous population of South-East Queensland.

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health brings together Indigenous and health expertise across the University and works collaboratively with Indigenous community organisations and health providers to transform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences of injustice and inequity in health and wellbeing. The UQ Poche Centre works in urban, regional and remote settings across Australia, and with other Indigenous peoples internationally. With a mandate to respond to challenges in Indigenous health, the UQ Poche Centre undertakes and facilitates a broad range of transdisciplinary research activities as well as developing a new generation of researchers to rise to the challenge of Indigenous health research. The UQ Poche Centre is governed by an Advisory Board and is situated within the UQ Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences.

Indigenous Health Network Poche

The UQ Poche Centre is part of the national Poche Indigenous Health Network, together with Poche Centres at the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney, the University of Western Australia and Flinders University in Adelaide and Alice Springs.

"The Poche Network is an important initiative to advance Indigenous health in Australia. With a focus on turning research into outcomes, we will be harnessing some of the best minds around the country to focus on wicked problems and creative solutions that will deliver lasting benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Patron and Chair of the Poche Network,
Professor Tom Calma AO

Our vision and mission

Our vision is striving toward equitable health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through research excellence.

Our mission is to achieve excellence in transformative and impactful research to improve the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will achieve this by ensuring our research is co-designed with our partners, uses decolonising methods and is guided by principles of self-determination, equity, and cultural integrity.

We strive to provide national and international leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and workforce development to improve quality of life, life expectancy and transform health inequities and injustices, both in Australia and internationally.

Our Centre Values

We share the values of the University of Queensland and have tailored the UQ values statements to appropriately reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, connecting and doing.

Truth Telling

Truth telling must underpin our research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, understanding the historical and ongoing colonial and political context impacting them. Truth telling means we will be bold in our actions, decisions, and relationships with each other, resulting in research that is truthful in all ways, privileging the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is strength-based and speaks back to harmful narratives. We will advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and uphold their lived experiences of inequity, injustice, discrimination, and racism as truth in our research and research outputs.

Courage

We are courageous in our decision making. We are ambitious, bold and agile. We demonstrate moral courage, so that we are always guided by a sense of what is right. We are committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing are embedded in the Poche Centre's work. Through reflexivity and reciprocity we have a commitment to building and maintaining strong relationships with our research partners. This will enable our research to redress injustices and health inequities experienced by our peoples and communities within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference.

Excellence

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities deserve not just research, but research excellence. Research Excellence is a commitment to planning, conducting and translating high-quality, impactful research, that is guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, cultures, perspectives and health priorities.

Our research therefore must be centred in meaningful and respectful collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our research outcomes in terms of excellence mean that they are novel, relevant, ethical, and impactful in improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Creativity

Creativity means we are inspired by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and doing. By privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways in all that we do, our research has the greatest potential to impact the communities and people we work with.

Integrity

At the Poche Centre, integrity is at the heart of how we work, guided by honesty, transparency, and a deep respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve. It is our responsibility as a Centre and as individuals to ensure our research is driven

by meaningful and equitable partnerships, where trust and ethical practice are foundational to every collaboration. By centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices and prioritising culturally safe approaches that honour First Nations knowledges and values, we strive in meeting communities' needs and values in everything we do.

Respect & Inclusivity

We care for, include and empower each other. We honour the diversity of those we work with and acknowledge the strength this provides. We value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing, and we collaborate with and seek leadership from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (including staff) and their communities.



Overview of our strategic development

Our first ten years

The University of Queensland's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health was established in 2015. The first 10 years of our Centre's strategic plans were focused on building the Centre's personnel, infrastructure, facilities and outcomes to achieve our goals of becoming a leading research centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, peoples and researchers.

Given visual identity holds significant importance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and serves as a powerful representation of our commitment and trust, the first 10 years were represented in an original artwork by proud Kalkadoon artist Sid Domic, titled 'Potential' (Sid Domic, 2015).

"Potential" Sid Domic, 2015



The plant doesn't reach its full potential until it flowers; a symbol of its expression and growth. In the image, the U shapes represent the UQ community (staff, students, Indigenous community, our partners). From the UQ community comes their individual growth, directed towards the centre circle, which represents a focal point of all this knowledge and energy. This creates the flower, which is symbolic of our potential as a community working together.

Our current strategic plan

Having built a critical mass of research capacity in our first 10 years, this Strategic Plan aims to consolidate our progress for long-term, sustainable research growth and impact. This next iteration of our priorities has been captured by artist Sid Domic in his beautiful artwork titled 'Consolidate' (Sid Domic, 2023).

Everything that has a spirit – whether it be grass, rocks, water – is living. If it's living, it has a spirit; well, you can communicate with it. So that's knowledge that has been pushed to the invisible. It doesn't connect with Western ways. But if you can speak to the spirit of the lands, country, animals you can heal anything here in the present. We always can connect with the past and that knowledge for better cycles in the future when it comes to healing. Symbolising Aboriginal people through the Sand Goanna represents a connection to land, sea, water, forest, desert right across the country.



“Consolidate” Sid Domic, 2023

The turtles and Torres Strait Islander Dhari represent Torres Strait Islander culture and their connection to the sea and maritime. You can see two of the oldest living cultures in the world and the knowledges that they possess in the areas of astronomy with the Milky Way, the emu in the sky, and the pattern of the bark of the tree representing ecological knowledges and knowledges for country and being able to access medicines, food for nutrition, also the ability to craft utensils, or weapons which we use in everyday life. The wedgetail eagle has a great story with regards to his perspective on life. From his perspective he sees 360 degrees. All that’s below him from that vantage point, he can see the past the present and the future unfold in front of him. These circles that spread across the painting represent different communities throughout Australia that the UQ

Poche Centre is engaging with and collaborating with on research. The six circles around the outside represent research methodologies that will give an overview of the issue and look at pathways to healing in community.

The alignment of our interim 2025–2026 strategic plan

Alignment with UQ's Strategic Plan and the Queensland Commitment

UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health contributes to UQ's commitment to research excellence, knowledge translation and global impact. None of this is possible without building trusted and agile partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and peoples, and UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health takes a lead role in building these partnerships.

Alignment with UQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commitments

UQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy (2025 – 2027) and Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (2025 – 2027)

Our Centre actively contributes to the actions outlined in UQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Stretch Reconciliation Plan. Our strong focus on building respectful and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and health organisations guides the development of our research priorities.

UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy (2021 – 2025)

Our Centre remains committed to advancing UQ's objectives for Indigenous research excellence, innovation, leadership, accountability, and integrity. Operating under Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance, we ground our work in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing to ensure or multidisciplinary research reduces health inequity and improves health outcomes.

We foster a culturally safe and supportive environment to nurture the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers

and encourage impactful engagement with communities and partners.

Alignment with the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences

Our Centre is situated in the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science, which was established in 2025. It is committed to transforming health outcomes and wellbeing through innovative multidisciplinary research, education and collaboration. We actively engage with the Faculty's Wisdom Council to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander post-graduate students and staff. We provide guidance and support for the Indigenisation of curricula, to help embed inclusive and culturally safe teaching practices across the Faculty's programs.





Our interim 2025–2026 strategic plan

Our Strategic Plan for 2025–2029 aims to consolidate the growth of our first 10 years through five strategic priorities.

The five strategic priorities of UQ Poche Centre’s interim 2025-2026 Strategic Plan



Our people



**Community
engagement and
partnerships**



**Research innovation
and impact**



**Research training and
student experience**



**Securing our
future**

Operationalising our interim 2025–2026 Strategic Plan

We will employ a strengths-based approach to action our strategic priorities, with an emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, governance and training.

Our five strategic priorities for 2025–2026 focus on:



Our people

We recognise that Indigenous health research is a key component of Closing the Gap but also not always a priority for communities and can be protracted in transformational change. This requires the very best researchers to be working in Indigenous health that are driven by our values, and who are determined to create impactful research and professional staff excelling in their roles. Within the term of this Strategy, we will continue to foster research leadership, and undertake research that:

- Further develops and privileges career pathways and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Provide professional development and mentorship opportunities for all staff
- Develop a Centre that is culturally safe for all our staff and partners.
- Enrich Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural experiences for all staff.



Community engagement and partnerships

Impactful community engagement and mutually beneficial partnerships are essential to identify issues and research questions that are of the highest priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, communities and individuals. Our community engagement strategy allows us to:

- Continue to strengthen existing relationships with partners while also establishing new partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services and organisations, as well as with communities themselves.
- Develop international Indigenous collaborations to bring new ideas to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia.



Research innovation and impact

A key innovation for our 2025–2029 Strategic Plan is the development and centre-wide implementation of a research impact plan that will ensure impact is always front and centre of our efforts. This will shape our Centre as a national and global leader in systematically engaging with, and responding to, community priorities. We will consolidate our capacity to deliver innovative and high-quality research that:

“Operationalising our 2025–2029 Strategic Plan is about ensuring communities drive the research agenda, making sure that we’re supporting our peoples to become the future leaders in health research, done by us, for us, with us. It’s also making sure that our research has direct impact, creating real change and transforming health inequities that have been here too long.”

Professor James Ward, Director,
UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health





- Is of high priority and impact to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and communities.
- Is focused on developing solutions to the complex and wicked problems that are identified and prioritised by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners in research.



Research training and student experience

Our motivated and passionate higher degree researchers, early- and mid-career researchers, and professional staff are the life-blood of our centre and the key to our long-term growth strategy. Consequently, we aim to optimise the research training for all our staff and provide a unique and rewarding student experience. Given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are under-represented in HDR programs and all levels of academia across Australia, we will:

- Focus on developing a leadership pipeline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDRs and early-and-mid-career researchers.
- Include the provision of formal career development and mentorship opportunities.



Securing our future

Having successfully established our Centre, we will now consolidate our foundations for long-term growth and sustainability. This involves:

- Building a cohort of talented staff, with a clear priority on the growth of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and professionals.
- Nurturing our early-and-mid-career researchers.
- Ensuring our executive, leadership, resources and governance mechanisms are fit-for-purpose in supporting our aspirations.



How we will operationalise our strategic priorities

The following table details how we will operationalise our strategic priorities through objectives and goals, and how we will monitor our progress against the measures of success

Strategic priority:

1. Our people		
Objectives	Goals	Measures of success
Our Centre values experiences, expertise, and cultures and provides an environment where all staff can develop personally and professionally. A key focus of our approach is the centring and privileging of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and doing.	1 (a) Ensure the Centre's staffing profile is appropriate to achieve our vision and strategy. 1 (b) Prioritise opportunities to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and invest in tailored, formal career development and mentorship for all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. 1 (c) Continuously work on making our Centre a vibrant and culturally safe-space for all staff and students, creating opportunities for non- Indigenous staff to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, methods and aspirations.	• Develop a future-proofed staffing strategy to guide recruitment, retention and career progression of all UQ Poche research pathways and professional staff. • The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all levels within our Centre. • All staff have access to informal/formal mentorship and career development support. • Continue a formal induction program that is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. • Provide opportunities for all staff to cultural experiences through participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community gatherings/events. • Provide opportunities for all staff to increase knowledge, understanding and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing through our seminar series, retreats or special events. • Operationalise UQ's values and our own Poche Centre values in all that we do.

2. Community engagement and partnerships

Objectives	Goals	Measures of success
To enrich and expand our community engagement and partnerships.	2(a) Achieve a balance in the Centre's research capability and capacity across four levels of community-based partnerships: i) with Community-controlled primary health care and clinical services (urban, regional and remote); ii) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for public health/health promotion; iii) with health and social services agencies delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; iv) with mainstream health services to improve the access, utilisation and experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who use them. 2(b) Build the capability and skills of all our Centre's staff for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and communities. 2(c) Elevate the visibility of our Centre internally and externally and build on its reputation as a leading Indigenous health research centre. 2(d) Build international collaborations that leverage complementary capability to advance Indigenous research outcomes, bring new ideas to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and create international professional development opportunities in Indigenous research for our staff.	• Continue to partner and grow partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-controlled Health services and organisations. • Build new partnerships with communities as exemplars for how to undertake impactful public social, health and wellbeing health/health promotion research that is responsive to the needs of communities. • Develop new partnerships with NGO and government agencies responsible for delivering health and social services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Develop new partnerships with agencies that are not Community-controlled but are accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Develop access to Elders who can provide guidance to researchers and knowledges critical to successful research partnerships. • Facilitating access to, and encouraging, all our staff and students to participate in community events. • Build a research ideas development framework that includes a community involvement plan to guide community involvement in all phases of research. • Encourage all staff and students to attend conferences and events to present their research. • Build partnerships and relationships with centres and schools in UQ's Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science, and further across the University. • Grow the number of partnerships with international Indigenous research centres

3. Research innovation and impact

Objectives	Goals	Measures of success
To consolidate our capacity to deliver innovative and high-quality research that: • is of high priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and • is focused on developing solutions to the complex and wicked problems facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	3(a) Consolidate our Centre's research competitiveness and sustainability. 3(b) Diversify our research income to align with UQ's strategic direction, enhance our research impact and mitigate the risk of over-reliance on one income stream. 3(c) To develop and implement an innovative research impact plan that will identify us as national and global leaders in systematically engaging with, and responding to, community priorities.	• Maintain or increase our annual number of successful grants obtained through external, competitive grant schemes. • Increase the proportion of Poche academics who are driving the submission of funding applications. • Secure appropriate resourcing to continue programs initiated through research funding.. • Maintain or increase the annual proportion of our research income from Category 2-4 sources, including contract research and philanthropic income. • Design, implement and evaluate a centre-wide Impact plan. • Develop innovative ways for translation and feedback of research outcomes back to communities.

4. Research training and student experience

Objectives	Goals	Measures of success
To optimise research training and student experience.	4(a) Increase or maintain participation in our Pathways to a HDR program and Yarning for Success. 4(b) Optimise the usefulness and acceptability of Poche's HDR program.	• Number of applications are maintained and grown in the Pathways to a PhD Program. • Sustained conversion of Pathways participants to a HDR program within two years of completing the program. • Number of applications for HDRs at Poche. • Maintain a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDRs within the Centre. • Additional and tailored support is provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout their HDR program through the Yarning for Success program.

5. Securing our future

Objectives	Goals	Measures of success
To ensure our Centre's long-term growth and sustainability.	5(a) Maintain or grow a cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and professional staff. 5(b) Ensure the Executive and key roles within our Centre are appropriate and operating effectively. 5(c) Ensure the governance structure of our Centre is fit-for-purpose and supports our aspirations. 5(d) Develop diverse funding streams to achieve the goals of this Plan.	• Ensure appropriate governance of our Centre. • Ensure the resourcing model is right to achieve the goals of this Strategic Plan. • Review, broaden and strengthen the multiple pathways into our Centre for academics and professional staff. • Annual review of the management structure and key roles by the Executive Team. • Continue to be responsive to their requests for when and how we undertake and report on our activities.



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

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