

# Reconciliation and Education: Past-Present-Future Forum Summary Report

4 November 2023



Ngarrngga  
to know, to hear, to understand



### **About the Artwork**

This artwork represents the three journeys of the panel, the past, present and future. It tells the story of the responsibility and the commitment we all must walk to ensure reconciliation. How we acknowledge and draw on the work pioneered by those in the past to make sure we are doing the work in the present and for the future.

Artwork by Emily Gittins a Gumbaynggirr / Barkindji creative who enjoys the process of storytelling throughout all mediums of art, and likes connecting traditional storytelling methods with contemporary methods.

**WARNING:** *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that, as a forum exploring the past, present and future of Indigenous education, there are many references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders that have passed.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

The University of Melbourne's Ngarrngga team and Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team honour the Traditional Custodians of Country/place throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connections of First Peoples to lands, waters, cultures and communities.

We pay deep respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, histories and cultures, and to Elders past and present.

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# Executive Summary

The *Reconciliation and Education: Past-Present-Future* forum was held on 24 November 2023, on Ngunnawal Country at the National Museum of Australia. The forum took place less than 6 weeks after just over 60 percent of Australians voted no in response to the Referendum proposal to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. In the context of this disappointment, there was a remarkable sense of determination and purpose among participants that reconciliation was more important than ever and that there is a vital role for education in promoting the reconciliation agenda moving forward.

The forum, co-hosted by the team behind the University of Melbourne’s [Ngarrngga](#) project, and Reconciliation Australia’s [Narragunnawali](#) program, brought together education stakeholders from every state and territory. Stakeholders included representatives from the Government, Independent and Catholic education sectors; peak bodies and professional associations; Education academics and Initial Teacher Education experts and providers; individual school and early learning service leaders (including the Narragunnawali Awards 2023 finalist representatives); and First Nations-led youth, education, and truth-telling organisations.

## Forum purpose and structure

The purpose of the forum was to connect, share, and consider the future directions of Indigenous education, and the reconciliation-in-education ecosystem. The key objectives of the forum and prospective post-forum collaborations are described in Figure 1.

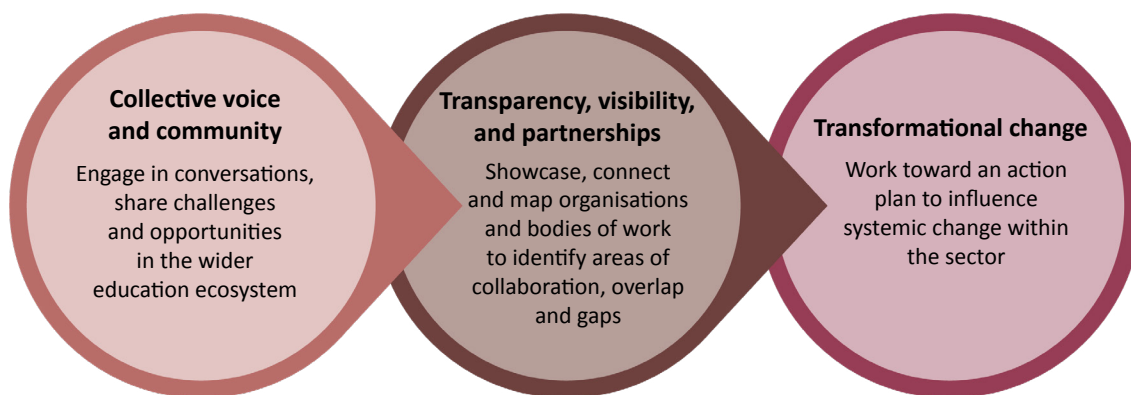


Figure 1: Forum objectives.

The forum was structured around three panels focusing on the Past, Present, and Future of reconciliation and education:

1. The Past Panel, focused on the critical people and events that have impacted education today, and highlighted the tenacity and enduring legacies of First Nations education champions.
2. The Present Panel, talked to the importance of surfacing structural, policy and resourcing challenges that are impacting on our continued work in the present, and which called on the sector to take the next steps to turn these challenges into opportunities.
3. The Future Panel, presented a space for rethinking and reimagining, in order to rise to the challenge of best practice education and reconciliation, with a focus on cultural responsiveness; youth voices and decision-making; as well as the significance of political, media and racial literacy and the role of education in supporting the development of these skills.

# Key Recommendations

The panel discussions, each of which were followed by critical and collaborative discussions among participants across the forum, identified a wide range of challenges, opportunities, and ideas for the future of education in Australia. The key recommendations emerging from the forum were:

**Build on past work:** to understand deeply and critically - and to actively acknowledge - the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the people and organisations who have contributed to this history-making.

1

2

**Strengthen education policy and implementation:** actively focus on the importance of revisiting, strengthening, and re-committing to education policy that can further reconciliation, with First Nations voices and perspectives at the core of policy and decision-making processes. In turn, all education settings should be transparent in their implementation of Indigenous knowledge across curriculum and in building the cultural capability of their workforce.

**Coordinate the sector:** work to develop a coordinated and collaborative sector approach toward shaping and actively committing to shared goals. Doing so should include mapping and modelling how the system can advocate for positive change in Indigenous education, and towards reconciliation.

3

4

**Resource reconciliation:** ensure additional targeted financial and non-financial resources - and corresponding policies and commitments of governments – are provided to support teachers and school communities to implement the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their work and practice.



# Forum Co-Hosts

## Narragunnawali

Launched in 2015, Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program has tools and resources for all Australian schools and early learning services to teach about, and take action towards, reconciliation between non-First Nations Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

*Narragunnawali* (pronounced narra-gunna-wally) is a Nggunnawal word meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. Reconciliation Australia pays its respects and thanks the United Nggunnawal Elders Council for giving permission to use the word *narragunnawali*.

The Narragunnawali program comprises an online platform that provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school and with the community. Through the Narragunnawali platform, schools and early learning services can develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), and teachers and educators can access professional learning and curriculum resources to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

Ultimately, the program Vision is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination to be at the centre of Australian education systems, which actively engage the hearts and minds of future generations to contribute to the reconciliation process.

Narragunnawali  
Reconciliation in Education

**NAKRA  
GUNNA  
WALI**

## Ngarrngga

Ngarrngga (pronounced "Naan-gah") is a Taungurung word meaning to know, to hear, to understand and is a multifaceted, transdisciplinary program of works structured around three project nodes.

Ngarrngga strives to support educators to be confident in showcasing Indigenous Knowledge within their teaching and learning to provide opportunity for all Australian students to learn about the contributions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australian society through a practical and sustained approach.

Expanding on the work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curricula Project led by Professor Marcia Langton AO, Ngarrngga goes beyond the production of curricula resources by diving deep into the Australian Curriculum to draw out and illustrate how Indigenous Knowledge complements and deepens our understanding of the world and our relationships with one another. Further, it is committed to critically assess the system levers that exist across the wider education ecosystem that will need to be engaged to support all educators and reach all students.



Ngarrngga  
to know, to hear, to understand

# Introduction

Conversations between the University of Melbourne’s Ngarrngga team and Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali team helped to identify the complementary nature of our respective programs within the education ecosystem - with the former focusing deeply on the classroom/curriculum context, and the latter focusing broadly and sustainably on the wider school community context via a research lens. Early engagement between the programs highlighted the need to identify all education sector stakeholders and their particular, complementary ‘place in the space’ and to work together towards a more collaborative, consolidated approach to reconciliation and education into the future. This included recognising our programs’ positionality and vision for change in the sector, as well as the limitations of any individual program or organisation, in isolation, to make holistic, intergenerational change within the large and complex education system.

The vision of both programs for substantial and sustained system change requires wide sector engagement. It was on the basis of this shared understanding that the agreement to co-host a forum space for shared conversations at the national level ensued.

This report summarises the discussion points and reflections from the forum, including identifying key recommendations. It captures the key points made in

the hope that First Nations panellists and stakeholders don’t carry the burden of continuing to share their stories and insights repeatedly. And, importantly, that these conversations continue to inform and inspire collective, consolidated efforts towards the future of reconciliation and education; specifically, moving beyond talk and conversation to action and substantive change.

The day was opened with a heartfelt Welcome to Country from respected Ngunnawal emerging Elder and 2024 ACT Local Hero, Selina Walker, before the day’s proceedings were introduced by MC, Mx Sharon Davis, Co-Founder of Goorlil Consulting. Introductory remarks were provided by the CEO of Reconciliation Australia, Ms Karen Mundine, and Ngarrngga Director, Professor Melitta Hogarth.

The three panel sessions at the forum were structured around the past, present and future, each with a distinct yet interrelated purpose, and each guided by a specific position statement. Following each panel discussion, a provocation was provided to the participant audience for feedback, reflection, and discussion.



*(Left) Forum facilitator, Mx Sharon Davis, co-founder of Goorlil Consulting; (Right) Welcome to Country (Ngunnawal), Ms Selina Walker. Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.*

# The Past

## Purpose, Position Statement, and Provocation

The purpose of The Past session was to focus on the critical junctures in time where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have advocated for change in education, and to celebrate the tenacity and strength of Elders and senior leaders so as to better understand the present and honour the important legacies of the past both now and into the future.

The panel Discussant was Professor Melitta Hogarth, from the University of Melbourne, who led the discussion with the following panel members:

- Aunty Geraldine Atkinson (President, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association)
- Aunty Professor Tracey Bunda (Professor, Indigenous Education, The University of Queensland)
- Professor Leanne Holt (Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous, University of NSW)
- Associate Professor Joe Sambono (Lead Curriculum Writer for Ngarrngga, University of Melbourne & Program Lead (Embedding Indigenous Australian Perspectives), Queensland University of Technology)



Members of the Past Panel share with participants. From left: Professor Melitta Hogarth, Professor Tracey Bunda, Associate Professor Joe Sambono, Professor Leanne Holt and Aunty Geraldine Atkinson. Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.

The position statement that drove this panel session is from Uncle Jack Patten, regarding the 1938 Day of Mourning:

*“This is not a matter of race, this is a matter of education and opportunity. This is why we ask for a better education and better opportunity for our people.” – Uncle Jack Patten, 1938 Day of Mourning (Past position statement).*

The post-panel provocation considered the challenges and opportunities of engagement with the past, and asked attendees to consider how to take forward the lessons learned:

*Dr Aunty Evelyn Scott AO once stated, “Reconciliation does not work to a strict timeline like other projects. It succeeds or fails in the hearts and minds of all Australians”.*

What are the critical junctures in education where we have succeeded and failed to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge, histories and cultures is central to our work as educators?

What can we learn from these successes and shortcomings? (Past post-panel provocation).



# Key Reflections

The panel recognised the significant work that has been done by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the education space over decades, and recognised the work of Old People who have come before, those who Professor Tracey Bunda referred to as “the Ancestors of Aboriginal Education.”

The panel discussed the responsibility of future ancestors to ensure this legacy and tenacity is remembered, strengthened, and built upon with integrity, actively recognising “on whose shoulders we stand” (Professor Joe Sambono). But, also, the key role of all Australians in ensuring this work continues and does not unfairly rest on the shoulders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples alone was emphasised: “the ‘lift’ doesn’t rest solely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples... You need to be able to come with us to make that change” (Professor Tracey Bunda).

Aunty Geraldine Atkinson highlighted the need for ongoing work to strengthen the efforts of previous generations: “We have to keep fighting. We need to make sure what we are doing for the generations coming behind us is to make sure the programs are there, and the wider community has the cultural capability to effectively support our children”. Professor Leanne Holt also acknowledged the need for action and activity to honour the legacy of those education ancestors. Participants heard how one of the key drivers of the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was “to provide confidence for our community that they deserve an education under our terms and they need to use their voice to achieve that” (Professor Leanne Holt). We need to review and refresh Aboriginal education policies to ensure that they are responsive and have impact both on and through practice.

The reflections and insights from the panel, along with the post-panel provocation, led to discussion and collaborative work amongst participants, whose dialogue and feedback was captured via the online Slido tool and are represented visually in Figure 2 below.

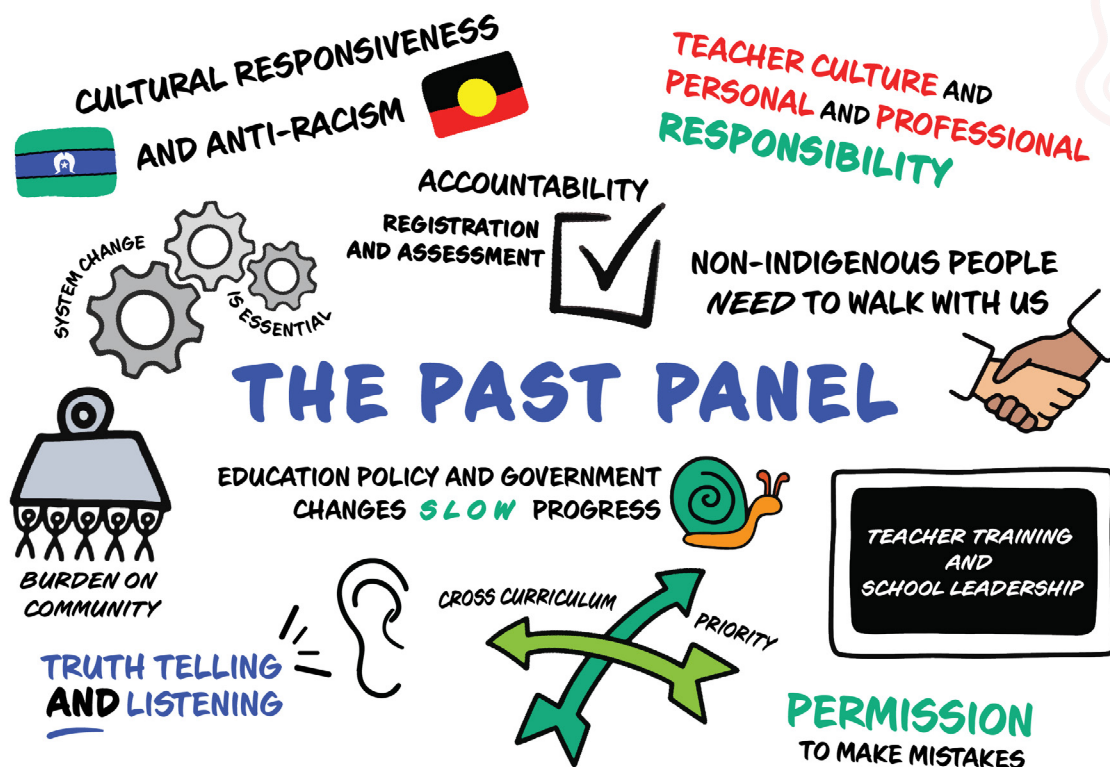


Figure 2: Visual representation of feedback, ideas, and questions raised by attendees in response to the Past panel. Visual: Emily Gittins.



## Key Recommendations

The Past panel highlighted the following key priorities and recommendations:

- The need to understand and acknowledge the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the people and organisations who have contributed to this legacy.
- The need for all (including non-Indigenous) members of educational communities to critically understand their positionality within the education system and the nation's education story.
- The importance of truth-telling and acknowledging history within the education space and of revisiting, strengthening, and recommitting to responsive Education policy. This must be supported by appropriate resourcing from Government and leadership at all levels.
- The need to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented in all aspects of the education ecosystem, including in positions of leadership and decision-making power.
- The value of respectfully including Indigenous Knowledges in teaching and learning and the need to actively prioritise this work across the entire curriculum.



Participants at the forum held at the National Museum of Australia, Ngunnawal Country. Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.

# The Present

## Purpose, Position Statement, and Provocation

The Present session interrogated whether current education policies, pedagogies, and praxis are answering the calls for equality and equity in education for all.

The panel Discussant was Professor Larissa McLean Davies, from the University of Melbourne, who led the discussion with the following panel members representing the key agencies that make up the Australian education architecture:



Representatives from the national education architecture. From left: Professor Larissa McLean Davies (Panel facilitator), Ms Sally Cooper, Mr Cameron Power, Mr Max Lenoy, Ms Rhonda Livingstone, and Mr Danny Pinchas. Source Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.

- Mr Max Lenoy (Curriculum Specialist, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority)
- Mr Danny Pinchas (General Manager - Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)
- Mr Cameron Power (CFO and General Manager Corporate Services, Education Services Australia)
- Ms Rhonda Livingstone (National Education Leader and General Manager of Leadership, Quality and Regulatory Support, Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority)
- Ms Sally Cooper (Principal Advisor, First Nations, Australian Education Research Organisation)

The session position statement was drawn from the Mparntwe Education Declaration:

*“Our vision is for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face” – Mparntwe Education Declaration, 2019 (Present position statement).*

The post-panel provocation for the Present session was a challenge from First Nations leaders after the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum:

*“It is evident that many Australians are unaware of our cultures, our histories, or the racism imbued in the Australian Constitution. That so many Australian people believe there is no race or division on race in the current Australian Constitution speaks to the need for better education on Australian history and better civics education. We have faith that the upswelling of support through this Referendum has ignited a fire for many to walk with us on our journey towards justice. Our truths have been silenced for too long.” – An open letter to the Australian Prime Minister, all MPs and Senators from a group of First Nations leaders, community members and organisations who supported Yes, 22 October 2023 (Present post-panel provocation).*



# Key Reflections

Reflecting on the previous session, and the position statement for the Present panel, speakers identified that they too have a vital role in telling the stories of those who have come before, alongside actively assuming a personal and sectoral responsibility to drive forward the reconciliation agenda both in and through education. In doing so, it cannot be forgotten that *“We are part of policy; our practice today is part of policy”* (Max Lenoy), and that all stakeholders have agency to make sure that such policies are active, living documents which have personalised and localised meaning and impact.

The panel acknowledged that many current policies and curricula included a focus on anti-racism, reconciliation, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, however, these policies and goals must also be enacted and enlivened according to the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As Danny Pinchas noted, *“writing them [(curricula and professional teaching standards)] is not enough. It is the doing that is most important”*.

Furthermore, standards and frameworks addressing anti-racism, reconciliation and Indigenous education should not be considered as optional or “add on”, but instead be understood as essential to the work of being an educator in all settings in Australia. The panel encouraged educators to move away from being afraid of doing the wrong thing – to instead be curious, brave, vulnerable, and willing to learn and critically reflect on their practice when addressing reconciliation and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives in their classrooms. However, the panel also noted that this work will only succeed if there is additional and targeted resourcing and support to strengthen educators’ confidence and cultural responsiveness to do this work.

The reflections and insights from the Present panel, along with the post-panel provocation, led to discussion and collaborative work amongst participants, whose discussion and feedback was captured via the online Slido tool and are represented visually in Figure 3 below.

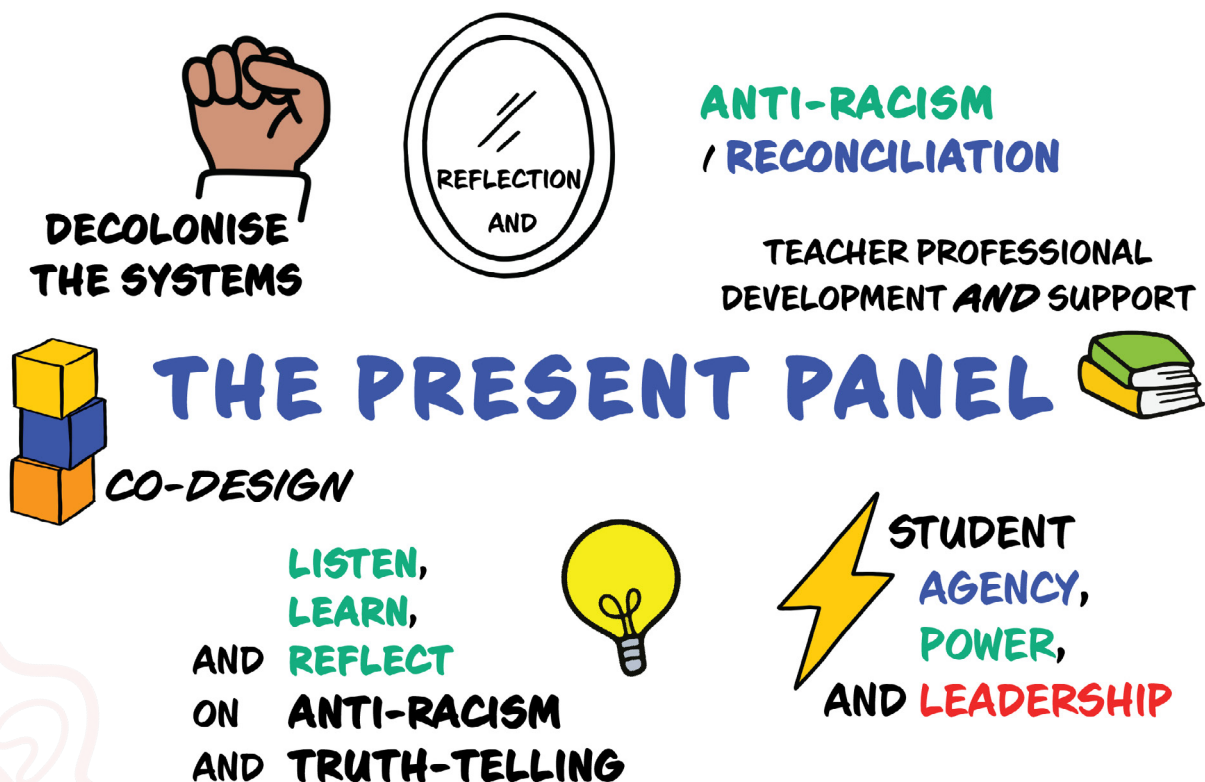


Figure 3: Visual representation of feedback, ideas, and questions raised by attendees for the Present Panel. Visual: Emily Gittins

## Key Recommendations

The Present panel identified a number of priorities and recommendations:

- Ensure anti-racism and its interconnection with reconciliation is actively considered in policy and standards for education and that these policies are responsive and flexible to sector needs, with resourcing and professional development supports on the ground.
- Empower all educators to be brave and curious about their engagement with Indigenous content and ensure there is adequate support at a system, school, and individual level to respectfully achieve this.
- Additional, active recognition of the skills and knowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students bring into school environments.
- Socialise the understanding that engaging with Indigenous knowledge and content, and progressing reconciliation, is required work for which all educators are accountable.
- The need to scale and sustain the resourcing of institutions and evidence-based initiatives that work with teachers, schools, sector bodies and communities to enhance reconciliation and Indigenous education practice/outcomes.



Participants at the forum held at the National Museum of Australia, Ngunnawal Country. Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.



# The Future

## Purpose, Position Statement, and Provocation

The Future session considered the possible future directions in education to build positive two-way relationships informed by the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and supported by the nation's institutions. Building on the insights of the previous two panels, the Future panellists were asked to imagine if and how reconciliation in education can be achieved.

The panel Discussant was Ms Karen Mundine, from Reconciliation Australia, who led the discussion with the following panel members:

- Professor Marcia Langton AO (Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne)
- Professor Tom Calma AO (Co-Chair, Reconciliation Australia)
- Ms Dyonne Anderson (CEO, Stronger Smarter Institute)
- Ms Hayley McQuire (CEO, National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition)
- Ms Shannan Dodson (CEO, Healing Foundation)



Looking to the potential future in Indigenous education and reconciliation. From left: Professor Marcia Langton (on screen), Ms Shannan Dodson, Ms Hayley McQuire, Ms Dyonne Anderson, Professor Tom Calma AO, Ms Karen Mundine (Panel facilitator). Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.

The session position statement drew on the visions of the two host programs – Ngarrngga and Narragunnawali:

*“Imagine an Australia where all future Australian citizens have a deep understanding of the depth, wealth and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and knowledge systems” - Ngarrngga, 2022.*

*“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is at the centre of Australian education systems, which actively engage the hearts and minds of future generations to contribute to the reconciliation process” - Narragunnawali, 2022 (Future position statement).*

The post-panel provocation for the Future session noted that equality and equity is one of the five dimensions of reconciliation in Australia<sup>1</sup>, and that a review to inform a better

and fairer education system is currently in place:

*“A fairer education system as one which actively honours the rights and self-determination of First Nations students, families and communities towards improved school-based experiences.*

*A better education system as one which is culturally responsive and actively recognises the business and benefits of reconciliation for all members of educational communities” – Reconciliation Australia submission to the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, 2023.*

What is the one thing that you can do to effect change in education to shape a better and fairer education system? (Future post-panel provocation).

<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/State-of-Reconciliation-Report\\_FULLL.pdf](https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/State-of-Reconciliation-Report_FULLL.pdf)

# Key Reflections

Panellists reflected on the deep hurt and disappointment of the 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum result and there was robust discussion about how to move forward, with a focus on the value of education. Professor Marcia Langton stressed the importance, time, and work involved for intergenerational change within education and towards reconciliation to be achieved: *“This is a 50-year project and we must be successful this time around.”* Panellists noted that action into the future should be informed by both the struggles and successes of the past, and by the voices and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Hayley McQuire highlighted how, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, the future of education should be grounded in Country/place: *“When I ask Elders what they want it to look like in 100 years, they want our rivers to flow, we want our kids to be strong in who they are, in their culture and identity”.*

While the referendum results revealed that there is still significant work to be done, panellists also saw hope in future generations, and argued that education has a key role in ensuring positive change is achieved: *“Next time we have a referendum, the kids currently in schools and early learning services will be voting, and there’s great hope we’d have a very different – and much better – result”* (Professor Tom Calma).

Panel reflections highlighted the importance of not just school-based education but also of building political literacy, media literacy, and racial literacy for all members of Australian society. Dyonne Anderson reflected on the relationship and distinction between reconciliation and self-determination, emphasising that accountability is key, and that future solutions must be place-based, *“fit for purpose,”* and cannot be based on a *“one size fits all”* approach.

Finally, Shannan Dodson made it clear that the future must be one of healing, where the wrongs of the past are actively understood but never repeated, and where there are no excuses around the need to respectfully bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the education context.

The reflections and insights from the Future panel, along with the post-panel provocation, led to discussion and collaborative work amongst participants, whose discussion and feedback was captured via the online Slido tool and are represented visually in Figure 4 below.

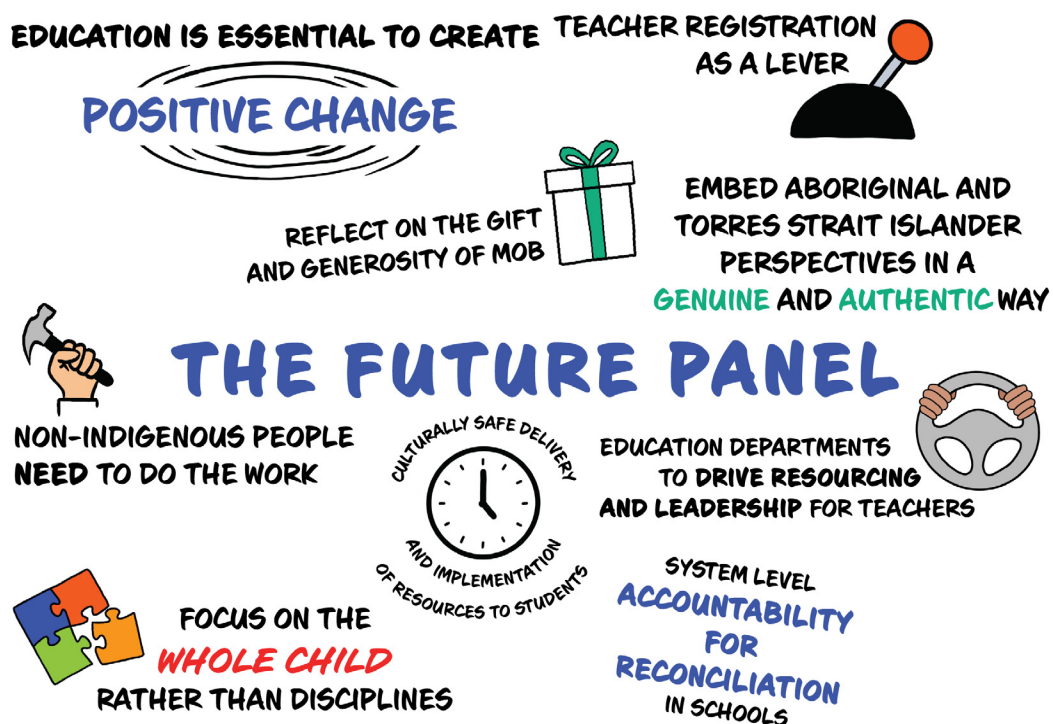


Figure 4: Visual representation of feedback, ideas, and questions raised by attendees for the Future Panel. Visual: Emily Gittins



## Key Recommendations

The priorities and recommendations of the Future panel included:

- The need for truth-telling, guided by culturally and psychologically safe and responsive pedagogy and practice, and with an active recognition of the interrelationship between wellbeing, reconciliation and education.
- Bolstering both school-based and adult education, with a focus on the development of political, media, and racial literacy skill development.
- Ensuring place-based approaches accompany, and are supported by, national policies and processes in the Indigenous education space.
- Supporting teachers, school leaders and education systems to effectively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures as a core and integrated part of education operations.



Participants at the forum held at the National Museum of Australia, Ngunnawal Country. Source: Tom Hoy, Wirrim Media.

## Next Steps

Four high-level recommendations emerged from the forum:

- 1. Build on past work:** to understand deeply and critically - and to actively acknowledge - the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the people and organisations who have contributed to this history-making.
- 2. Strengthen education policy and implementation:** actively focus on the importance of revisiting, strengthening, and re-committing to education policy that can further reconciliation, with First Nations voices and perspectives at the core of policy and decision-making processes. In turn, all education settings should be transparent in their implementation of Indigenous knowledge across curriculum and in building the cultural capability of their workforce.
- 3. Coordinate the sector:** work to develop a coordinated and collaborative sector approach toward shaping and actively committing to shared goals. Doing so should include mapping and modelling how the system can advocate for positive change in Indigenous education, and towards reconciliation.
- 4. Resource reconciliation:** ensure additional targeted financial and non-financial resources - and corresponding policies and commitments of governments – are provided to support teachers and school communities to implement the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their work and practice.

These recommendations and the wider insights presented in this report highlight the significant work that still needs to be done to actively honour the work to date and drive a stronger future of reconciliation both in and through education. The Ngarrngga and Narragunnawali teams will collaborate to begin work to address these recommendations via the following kinds of next step activities:

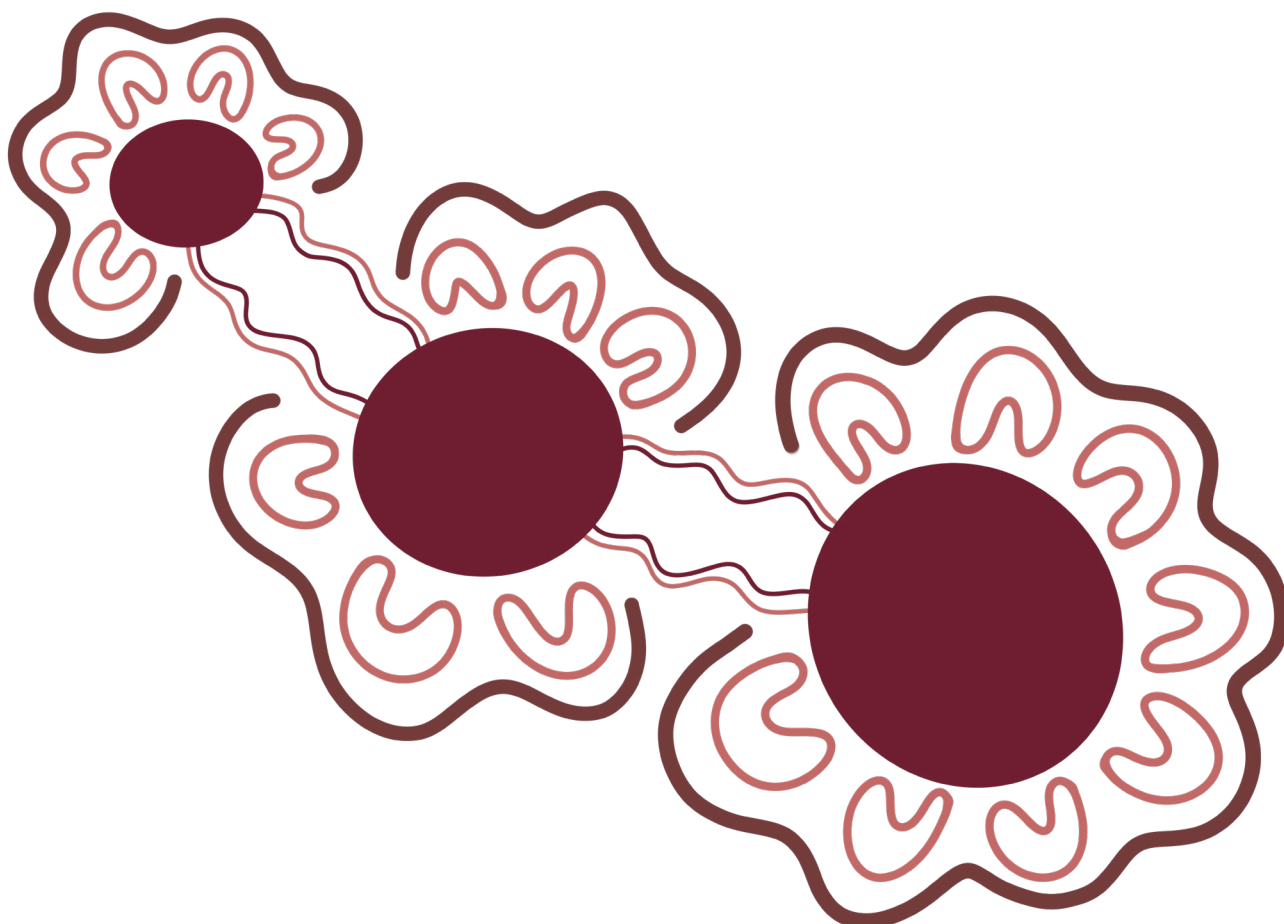
- Disseminate and socialise the reflections and recommendations of this report with education stakeholders and other key leaders and decisions makers.
- Map the education ecosystem and facilitate (such as via roundtables, symposia or otherwise) cross-sectoral and inter-sectoral engagement, idea generation, and the development of prospective collaborative models to further test and address the key recommendations of the report.
- Co-develop professional learning and curriculum resources based on recorded content from the forum to widen the audience and support the longevity of, and (re)engagement with, the conversations and calls to action from the forum.
- Further building the evidence-base and advocacy for the work of current and prospective institutions and initiatives focused on First Nations education and reconciliation to be appropriately supported, scalable and sustainable into the future.



## Appendix 1: Key resources and references

Please note that this list is not prescriptive nor exhaustive, but does provide some suggestions for further reading and resources:

- Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program: [reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali](https://reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali)
- Ngarrngga: <https://www.ngarrngga.org/>
- Healing Foundation: <https://healingfoundation.org.au/schools/>
- Stronger Smarter Institute: <https://strongersmarter.com.au/>
- National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition (NIYEC): <https://www.niyec.com/>
- AITSL's Building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce project: [www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/cultural-responsiveness/building-a-culturally-responsive-australian-teaching-workforce](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/cultural-responsiveness/building-a-culturally-responsive-australian-teaching-workforce)
- Cite a Blakfella: Bibliography: <https://unimelb.libguides.com/first-nations-in-education/cite-a-blakfella>



## Appendix 2: Panellist biographies

### Ms Selina Walker

Ngunnawal woman Selina Walker is a respected emerging Elder and leader whose integrity has supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reconciliation across the ACT. The granddaughter of Aunty Agnes Shea, a recipient of the Order of Australia and a former ACT Chief Minister's Senior Citizen of the Year, Selina continues her grandmother's legacy of influencing and driving change with her unwavering efforts. Since 2018, Selina has promoted reconciliation as co-chair of the ACT Reconciliation Council.



### Mx Sharon Davis

Sharon Davis (they/them) is from both Bardi and Kija peoples of the Kimberley. Sharon holds a Bachelor in Education (K-7) specialising in Aboriginal education, and graduated from the University of Oxford with a Master of Science in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition. Sharon is the Co-Founder of Goorlil Consulting, where they apply anti-racism and gender-affirming lens to support organisations to better engage with First Nations and gender diverse people and content.



### Aunty Geraldine Atkinson

Aunty Geraldine Atkinson is a Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman who has devoted her career to expanding the possibilities available to Koorie people through education. Geraldine is President of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and has made a significant impact in the area of early childhood, and has always regarded education as being the best instrument of progress. Aunty Geraldine is an elected Member and Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, the elected voice representing First Peoples in Victoria through the States historic Treaty negotiations with the Victorian Government.



## Professor Leanne Holt

Professor Holt is a Worimi/Biripi woman from the mid-coast of New South Wales. She is the inaugural Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous at UNSW. Contributing to Indigenous higher education for over 25 years she was previously the inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy at Macquarie University and prior to this co-Director of the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle. Dr Holt has Chaired and been a member of a number of national and international Indigenous education committees. She is currently Chairperson of Yadhu Maru and the Westerman Jilya Institute for Indigenous Mental Health, as well as Board member of Barabarang Aboriginal Corporation. Dr Holt is additionally a member of expert panels including the Department of Education Equity in Higher Education Panel and the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education Advisory Board. She is an expert panel member for the Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) and has Chaired a number of panels reviewing Indigenous programs and services at universities nationally and internationally.



## Aunty Professor Tracey Bunda

Professor Tracey Bunda is a Ngugi/Wakka Wakka woman and The University of Queensland Professor of Indigenous Education. She has an extensive 3-decade career in the university sector as a leader of Indigenous Higher Education. Her research and scholarly interests address the value of storying as methodology, power inequities in white institutions and Indigenous women's leadership. Her most recent co-authored book with Louise Phillips is *Storying Social Movement/s*: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-09667-9>



## Associate Professor Joe Sambono

Associate Professor Joe Sambono is a Jingili man and curriculum specialist in embedding Australian First Nations histories and cultures throughout the Australian education sectors, primary to tertiary. Joe followed his passion and cultural connections to wildlife to start his career as a zoologist later merging his biology and cultural background with a career in education. Joe has previously led national curriculum initiatives at the CSIRO and ACARA and is currently the Program Lead for Embedding Indigenous Australian Perspectives with the Queensland University of Technology.



## Professor Melitta Hogarth

Professor Melitta Hogarth is a Kamilaroi woman and the Director of Ngarrngga. She is the Associate Dean, Indigenous, and Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne. Prior to entering academia, Associate Professor Hogarth taught for almost 20 years in Queensland, particularly in secondary schools. Her PhD on the rights of Indigenous peoples in education won multiple awards, including the Ray Debus Award for Doctoral Research in Education.



## Mr Max Lenoy (ACARA)

Max Lenoy is Kuku Yalanji, Jirrbal, and Warungnu from North Queensland. He is the Curriculum Specialist, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Max is developing First Nations resources with communities, schools and institutions for the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0.



## Danny Pinchas (AITSL)

Danny Pinchas has more than 15 years' experience as a leader across the education sector and joined AITSL in 2013. As General Manager, Teaching and School Leadership, Danny leads AITSL's work across initial teacher education reform, quality teaching support, and school leadership development. Danny's responsibilities involve driving and supporting the development and implementation of a range of policy initiatives and resources to empower teachers and school leaders. Prior to joining AITSL, Danny held positions at the Victorian Department of Education and before that, spent several years in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, working in remote communities as a principal, teacher, and numeracy coach.



## Ms Rhonda Livingstone (ACECQA)

Rhonda Livingstone is the National Education Leader and General Manager of ACECQA's Leadership, Quality and Regulatory Support Group. Rhonda brings a wealth of experience to this role, having worked in preschools, long day care centres and as an assessor, developer and deliverer of programs and services for both government and non-government organisations.





## **Cameron Power (ESA)**

Cameron has held various executive roles across the not-for-profit sector and is currently General Manager of Corporate Services at Education Services Australia. Cameron is also a current board member at Are-Able who focus on creating opportunities for inclusiveness in communities. With a technology and financial background, Cameron has enabled organisations to develop mature processes, practices and strategies to lift organisation's capability. Cameron is a fellow of the CPA, holds a Master of Business Administration, and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## **Ms Sally Cooper (AERO)**

I have committed my career to driving positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with a keen focus on enhancing health and education outcomes. Currently serving as the Principal Advisor First Nations at AERO (Australian Education Research Organisation), I have a wealth of experience in stakeholder engagement, strategic analysis, and effective leadership. In previous roles as the National Director for Indigenous and Remote COVID-19 Governance at the Australian Government Department of Health, and as a Manager at NSW Dept of Education, I led teams in implementing innovative strategies that privileged First Nations voices. My journey is marked by a steadfast commitment to creating culturally safe environments and fostering authentic collaboration with First Nations communities.



## **Professor Larissa McLean Davies, Faculty of Education**

Larissa McLean Davies is Deputy Dean and Professor of Teacher Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne. A leading Australian academic, her research spans the fields of teacher education and professional learning, literacy and English education and literary studies. Her scholarship is concerned with issues of justice, anti-colonial and feminist practices and sustainability as this is manifest in teacher knowledge and curriculum enactment. Larissa leads large teams that work closely with State and Territory Education Departments on these issues, to improve educational experiences for diverse learners. Larissa's long commitment to Australian writers and writing in education has resulted in invitations to speak at the Melbourne Writer's Festival, a partnership with the Stella Prize and the opportunity to Chair the Australian Literary Studies Gold Medal in 2023.



## **Ms Hayley McQuire (CEO, NIYEC)**

Hayley McQuire is a Darumbal and South Sea Islander woman born and raised in Rockhampton, Central Queensland. Her work is centred on community, relationality and convening new collectives to rethink education. She is the co-founder and CEO of The National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition, Co-Chair of Learning Creates Australia and board director for a number of non-profit organisations. She brings over 10 years of experience working across Indigenous policy and training, and has worked on education campaigns and initiatives with young people, coalitions and organisations from around the world.



## **Ms Shannan Dodson**

Shannan Dodson is a Yawuru woman whose family is from Broome in Western Australia. Shannan is the CEO of The Healing Foundation; a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that provides a platform to amplify the voices and lived experience of Stolen Generations survivors and their families. She has worked in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs for almost 20 years.

Shannan was previously the Deputy CEO of NASCA and Co-Chair for the National NAIDOC Committee. She has also worked on the constitutional recognition for Indigenous peoples and Australian Marriage Equality campaigns. Shannan is passionate about First Nations' rights and understanding mental health issues, particularly intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



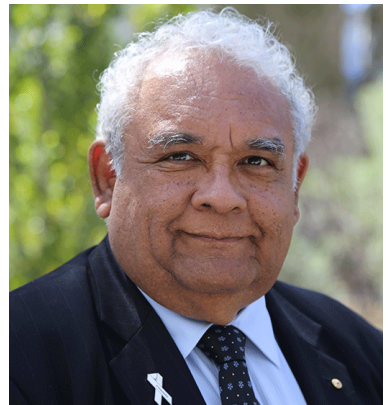
## **Professor Marcia Langton AO**

Professor Marcia Langton AO is one of Australia's most respected Indigenous academics. She has held the Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne since 2008. As an anthropologist and geographer, Professor Langton has produced a large body of knowledge across political and legal anthropology, Indigenous agreements and engagement with the minerals industry, and Indigenous culture and art.



## Professor Tom Calma AO

Professor Tom Calma is Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja tribal group in the NT. Currently the National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking and Chancellor of the University of Canberra, Professor Calma previously served as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and the Race Discrimination Commissioner. Professor Calma has a special interest in Indigenous education, employment and training programs.



## Ms Dyonne Anderson

Ms Dyonne Anderson is a proud Githabal woman. She has over 30 years' experience with the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. She has worked in various roles and locations throughout NSW, including, principal at Cabbage Tree Island Public School, classroom teacher, curriculum advisor and consultant. Ms Anderson was also recently appointed the CEO of the Stronger Smarter Institute where she previously served as Chief Operations Officer. Dyonne is President of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA) and represents NATSIPA on the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) National Advisory Committee and AITSL's School Leadership Expert Standing Committee and the Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (AGATSIE) as well as ACARA's Parent and Teacher Expert Group.



## Ms Karen Mundine

Karen Mundine is from the Bundjalung Nation of northern NSW. As the CEO at Reconciliation Australia, Ms Mundine brings to the role more than 25 years' experience leading community engagement, public advocacy, communications and social marketing campaigns. An architect of the landmark Australian Reconciliation Barometer, Ms Mundine works with governments, the business sector and civil society to advocate for change. Over the course of her career, she has been instrumental in some of Australia's watershed national events including the Apology to the Stolen Generations, Centenary of Federation commemorations, Corroboree 2000 and the 1997 and 2021 Australian Reconciliation Conventions.





