

# **BEL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Working Party Final Report**



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## Executive Summary

The BEL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Working Party (BEL-ATSI-WP) was established to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy for the BEL Faculty.

The BEL-ATSI-WP held four meetings, between November 2023 and May 2024, and have developed a number of recommendations for the Faculty.

The BEL-ATSI-WP **recommendations** are as follows:

### 1. Research Excellence and Impact

**Recommendation 1.1** *An investigation of the most appropriate and effective way for the BEL Faculty and its researchers to engage with community-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, including co-design of projects and community consultation.*

*This recommendation is premised on the notion that Indigenous research must be deemed significant, relevant, and important by at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Working Party proposed several options that should be explored as part of this recommendation, including*

- *the formation of a panel or “jury” of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people similar to the Inala Community Jury for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. This panel might also include representatives from peak bodies (i.e. community-based and state organisations).*
- *a community-led expression of interest process, whereby members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be supported to determine and/or nominate research questions and projects that will benefit their communities and/or Indigenous peoples generally, following which UQ BEL researchers can be engaged in collaborative research relationships.*
- *an expression of interest process for UQ BEL staff, whereby they can identify their skill sets and potential research questions that can then be offered to specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*

*These options may be refined, and other options may also be identified as part of the investigation proposed in this recommendation.*

**Recommendation 1.2** *Develop clear policy and procedural documentation, including consideration of finance processes and rates, to facilitate financial compensation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities and groups involved in and/or contributing to BEL research.*

*In actioning this Recommendation, the Working Party suggests considering approaches currently in use in other areas of UQ (e.g., the Faculty of Medicine).*

**Recommendation 1.3** *To consider seeking a request for a blanket indirect cost reduction in funding from Indigenous not-for-profit and community organisations partnering with BEL researchers.*

### 2. People and Opportunities

**Recommendation 2.1.** *The identification and appointment of a senior leadership role within the BEL Faculty that is an identified position and encompasses a significant focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and support.*

**Recommendation 2.2.** *The identification and appointment of a professional staff role within the BEL Faculty focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and support across the Faculty.*

**Recommendation 2.3** *The development of an annual Faculty-level funding research grant scheme to provide seed funding (over 12 months) for research projects led by an Indigenous academic staff member and/or involving partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, undertaking preliminary or pilot research that is expected to lead to an application for major competitive grant funding (e.g., ARC) or an equivalent source of research funding.*

**Recommendation 2.4** *Continue to actively engage with and seek to implement mechanisms and strategies to progress towards population parity targets for BEL academic staff and students.*

**Recommendation 2.5** *Facilitate the recognition of service undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff within workload planning and performance reviews, whilst ensuring adequate capacity to undertake research, to the extent expected within their position, and to reduce overall employee burnout.*

**Recommendation 2.6** *Explore and consider mechanisms to reduce additional service workload on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff associated with initiatives and projects related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters or requiring the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including seeking capacity elsewhere in the organisation or externally (e.g., consultants).*

*The Working Party proposed this could be supported through operational budgetary allocation and planning as well as clear guidance and due consideration of service expectations within the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.*

**Recommendation 2.7** *Seek new sources of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students, including philanthropic and industry, for stipends, top-up scholarships and additional funding to enhance the PhD experience.*

**Recommendation 2.8** *Explore and facilitate outreach activities to help familiarise prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with areas of BEL research and study (e.g., explainers).*

**Recommendation 2.9** *Provide support for the mentoring of Undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are considering undertaking higher degree research.*

**Recommendation 2.10** *Advocate for the enhancement of and engage with University-level support for Indigenous HDR students with the UQ Graduate School.*

**Recommendation 2.11** *Advocate for the establishment of a Yarning space on the UQ St Lucia campus.*

**Recommendation 2.12** *Organise a traditional welcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including HDR students, during O week each year and also hold another ceremony during Graduations.*

### **3. Enabling Environments**

**Recommendation 3.1.** *Monitor any issues experienced with ethics approval processes and provide feedback to the UQ Human Research Ethics section around such processes and related policies for ethics applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

**Recommendation 3.2** *Promote and encourage all BEL researchers who are intending to undertake research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to complete the new UQ online training module, Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Program.*

**Recommendation 3.3** *Explore additional mechanisms to provide cultural capability training and mentoring to BEL staff and HDR students.*

## Introduction

The UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy (2021-2025) (hereafter the “UQ Strategy”) describes UQ’s framework for achieving excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and innovation, and support for the career progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. The UQ Strategy lists five core values – Indigenous Research and Innovation Excellence, Indigenous Research and Innovation Leadership, Indigenous Knowledges and Methods, Respect, and Accountability and Integrity – and three strategic imperatives, namely Research Excellence and Impact, People and Opportunities, and Enabling Environment. The BEL-ATSI-WP has been tasked with the development of a Faculty-wide strategy that aligns with and supports UQ’s vision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and embodies the values laid out in the UQ Strategy.

## Overview of the Working Party – Structure, Timing and Objectives

### Structure

The BEL-ATSI-WP Party members are as follows:

- Professor Brendan Hokowhitu, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures (Co-Chair)
- Gregory Egert, Elder-in-Residence ARC Centre of Excellence Indigenous Futures (Co-Chair)
- Dr Samantha Cooms, UQ Business School and BEL Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
- Associate Professor Julie Moschion, School of Economics
- Dr Dani Linder, TC Beirne School of Law
- Dr Jean Spinks, Centre for the Business and Economics of Health
- Dr Meredith Downes, Faculty Research Manager, BEL (also Secretariat).

### Timing

The BEL-ATSI-WP met on four occasions: in November 2023, February 2024, March 2024, and May 2024.

## Updated Terms of Reference

### Objectives and outcomes

The Working Party will support the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy for the BEL Faculty, which addresses the strategic imperatives of the UQ Strategy at a local level, namely:

1. *Research Excellence and Impact*, by identifying key approaches and supports necessary to facilitate Indigenous-led research and for addressing challenges to the successful conduct of ethical and socially responsible research in the Faculty that contributes to the empowerment of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, including cultural, social, environment and economic benefits.

2. *People and Opportunities*, by identifying key approaches to support and advance the Faculty's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research leadership, as well as building the capacity of all Faculty researchers collaborating with Indigenous peoples and communities to undertake impactful and ethical research, including shared decision-making.
3. *Enabling Environment*, by identifying key approaches in the creation of a Faculty research culture and ethos that enables Indigenous research excellence and translation, and for the promotion of informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research practices.

Expected outputs of the plan include:

- Faculty goals in relation to research innovation, excellence, leadership, and accountability in the context of ethically conducted research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in the BEL Faculty
- Current and anticipated barriers; to the enhancement of BEL relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly in the context of research; to the implementation of best practice in Indigenous research, knowledges, and methods by BEL researchers; to support of BEL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research leadership opportunities; and to BEL research constituted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' self-determination.
- Recommendations for strategies and actions that can achieve BEL goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, whilst addressing the above barriers in the short and long term for the Faculty, its schools and centres.

Key focus areas for discussion may include consideration of the following areas:

- Mechanisms of support for Indigenous-led research, Indigenous research innovation and Indigenous researchers, including development pathways, networks, and support for Indigenous academic staff; support for Indigenous student involvement in research through summer scholarships and higher degree research; grant-writing support for Indigenous competitive grant schemes.
- Ethics approval processes for Indigenous research, including professional development for non-Indigenous BEL staff relating to ethical conduct when collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which can draw from extant resources such as the AIATSIS code and other relevant national guidelines; and recommendations for conduct of ethics approval processes for Indigenous research.
- Researcher training activities to support understanding of best practice approaches to working with Indigenous communities, including an understanding of Indigenous knowledges, methodologies, research ethics, Indigenous ownership of Intellectual Property and copyright, and the need for co-design, engagement, collaboration, accountability, and reciprocity when researching with Indigenous communities.
- Mechanisms of support for research involving Indigenous communities, such as internal funding schemes
- Research in relation to the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)* four Priority Reform Areas (PRA), including shared decision-making, community control, institutional accountability, and access to relevant data.

Activities in support of this plan may include:

- Shared decision-making processes with Indigenous communities through meetings and other methods
- Shared decision-making processes with Indigenous academic staff within the BEL Faculty through meetings and other methods
- Consultation with BEL academic staff more broadly via Research or other School committees and/or staff meetings
- Consultation with BEL research professional staff
- Consultation with members of the BEL Low and Negligible Risk Human Ethics Review Panel

## Deliverables

The Working Party provided an interim report to the Associate Dean (Research) on 28 February 2024. Interim outcomes were also presented briefly to the UQ Research Committee on 19 March 2024 by Prof Brendan Hokowhitu, with the Associate Dean (Research) as part of BEL's reporting around the implementation of the UQ Strategy.

The full report with recommendations is to be delivered to the Associate Dean (Research) on the 31 May 2024 for discussion at the Faculty Research Committee Meeting and the Faculty Leadership Team Meeting in mid-2024.

## Key Documents and Sources

The Working Party confirmed the Terms of Reference, with minor adjustment to wording, and considered in their discussions the key aspects of the *UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy (2021-2025)*, and available *Annual Report* updates (2021, 2022) on this strategy's implementation. The following was also undertaken: consultation of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023* and *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*, and with the central UQ Human Ethics team around UQ ethics processes; consultation with the BEL Finance team around compensation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involved in research; and consultation of the Senior Manager, Research Partnerships for BEL concerning overheads when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations.

## Key Issues considered

The BEL-ATSI-WP identified a number of issues and discussed possible solutions across several different areas that impact the UQ Strategy's three strategic imperatives: *Research Excellence and Impact*; *People and Opportunities*; and *Enabling Environment*. Upon this basis, the Working Party have developed a series of draft recommendations, as outlined below.

# 1. Research Excellence and Impact

## Partnering with Communities

### Consultation

The Working Party emphasised the importance of collaboration with communities as part of the research process when partnering with BEL researchers, highlighting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the most knowledgeable in relation to best determining what research will benefit their communities. Accordingly, the Working Party highlighted the need for communities to be central to the research decision-making processes from the outset and the need for consultation and involvement during the research process. This aligns with the UQ Strategy which seeks to “pursue best practice engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities and organisations when partnering with UQ in research and innovation” (*Strategic Imperative 1. Research Excellence and Impact*).

The Working Party proposed that the BEL Faculty must put in place an ongoing mechanism which supports engagement between BEL researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in order to foster involvement in decision-making about the design and conduct of BEL research which involves and seeks to benefit these communities.

**Recommendation 1.1** *An investigation of the most appropriate and effective way for the BEL Faculty and its researchers to engage with community-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, including co-design of projects and community consultation.*

*This recommendation is premised on the notion that Indigenous research must be deemed significant, relevant, and important by at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Working Party proposed several options that should be explored as part of this recommendation, including*

- *the formation of a panel or “jury” of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people similar to the Inala Community Jury for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. This panel might also include representatives from peak bodies (i.e. community-based and state organisations).*
- *a community-led expression of interest process, whereby members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be supported to determine and/or nominate research questions and projects that will benefit their communities and/or Indigenous peoples generally, following which UQ BEL researchers can be engaged in collaborative research relationships.*
- *an expression of interest process for UQ BEL staff, whereby they can identify their skill sets and potential research questions that can then be offered to specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*

*These options may be refined, and other options may also be identified as part of the investigation proposed in this recommendation.*

### Financial Compensation

The Working Party recognised the importance of and potential for barriers to financial compensation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities who contribute to or are involved in BEL research. As stated in the AIATSIS code, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in research, or who may be impacted by research, should stand to benefit from and not be disadvantaged by the research” (p.20). Such benefits can take various forms, including tangible, financial benefit, with the AIATSIS



code recommending that all such payments of financial benefits must be considered by an ethical review panel (Principle 3.1e).

The UQ Strategy recommends the creation of UQ best practice protocols, templates, and guides for benefit-sharing (UQ Recommendation 3.1). The Working Party believes it is essential that the Faculty provides clear guidance on financial compensation, facilitated by a flexible and efficient process.

***Recommendation 1.2*** *Develop clear policy and procedural documentation, including consideration of finance processes and rates, to facilitate financial compensation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities and groups involved in and/or contributing to BEL research.*

*In actioning this Recommendation, the Working Party suggests considering approaches currently in use in other areas of UQ (e.g., the Faculty of Medicine).*

### Overheads

The Working Party also supports engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research partners through the implementation of UQ Recommendation 3.5.4 regarding the promotion of opportunities for “reduced indirect costs for Indigenous not-for-profit and community. In an effort to streamline implementation, the Working Party agreed it may be useful for BEL to seek approval for a standard lower indirect cost rate to be applied with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations, without the need to seek approval for a reduced rate in each instance when applying for funding for relevant projects.

***Recommendation 1.3*** *To consider seeking a request for a blanket indirect cost reduction in funding from Indigenous not-for-profit and community organisations partnering with BEL researchers.*

## 2. People and Opportunities

### Indigenous Leadership and Staff Support

#### Faculty Leadership and Professional Staff

The Working Party recognised that upholding the five core values of the UQ Strategy in BEL could be facilitated by Indigenous leadership and professional support in the Faculty. These roles would be dedicated to enhancing Indigenous research in relation to the empowerment of Indigenous staff and students, and meaningful collaboration with communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research leadership and professional support in the BEL Faculty would be an important step in validating and sustaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and research by educating staff across the Faculty and, in particular, advocacy and edification with senior leaders. It could also facilitate ongoing guidance for the Faculty on cultural matters and the formation of a cross-Faculty academic discipline in Indigenous studies.

The Working Party also noted that dedicated professional staff support would be invaluable for undertaking new initiatives across the Faculty that could enhance and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, in line with the UQ Strategy. This could also reduce the burden of such initiatives upon the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff.

**Recommendation 2.1.** *The identification and appointment of a senior leadership role within the BEL Faculty that is an identified position and encompasses a significant focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and support.*

**Recommendation 2.2.** *The identification and appointment of a professional staff role within the BEL Faculty focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and support across the Faculty.*

### Internal Research Funding

In alignment with the UQ Strategy's intent to foster "research...opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers" (under *People and Opportunities*) as well as facilitating Indigenous-led research through engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Working Party proposes the Faculty provide internal funding for small scale research projects. This funding can provide BEL's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers with targeted opportunities to undertake preliminary research that can inform and enhance subsequent significant external funding applications, leading to a longer-term pipeline of funding to undertake research and capacity building in relation to the management of large, funded projects.

The internal research funding can also support the development of stronger, longer-term engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through small-scale research, in the lead-up to more significant externally funded projects that may be of significant benefit to those communities and in areas relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more broadly. This will complement any UQ internal grant funding (Recommendation 1.2.2), when available, which is aimed at research-related community engagement activities.

**Recommendation 2.3** *The development of an annual Faculty-level funding research grant scheme to provide seed funding (12 months duration) for research projects led by an Indigenous academic staff member and/or involving partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, undertaking preliminary or pilot research that is expected to lead to an application for major competitive grant funding (e.g., ARC) or an equivalent source of research funding.*

### Indigenous academic staff recruitment and support

#### Achieving Parity

The Working Party highlighted the need for increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff recruitment in BEL, recognising the importance of meeting population parity targets and the significant value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff in developing partnerships with communities for research. The Working Party also noted the importance of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students as a mechanism for achieving academic staff parity (see *Indigenous HDR Recruitment and Support*, below). The Working Party confirmed the importance of UQ Recommendations 2.5.1 and 2.6 in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research teams.

**Recommendation 2.4** *Continue to actively engage with and seek to implement mechanisms and strategies to progress towards population parity targets for BEL academic staff and students.*

## Service roles and activities

The Working Party also noted the potential impact of additional service roles and duties associated with initiatives and activities on the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, where an area of the University is specifically seeking the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The importance of recognising such roles in the workload of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff was emphasised. It was also suggested that additional support for or outsourcing of work related to initiatives and activities requiring involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would help alleviate workload and cultural obligations on Indigenous staff, by reducing the need for or level of their involvement.

**Recommendation 2.5** *Facilitate the recognition of service undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff within workload planning and performance reviews, whilst ensuring adequate capacity to undertake research to the extent expected within their position, and to reduce overall employee burnout.*

**Recommendation 2.6** *Explore and consider mechanisms to reduce additional service workload on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff associated with initiatives and projects related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters or requiring the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including seeking capacity elsewhere in the organisation or externally (e.g., consultants).*

*The Working Party proposed this could be supported through operational budgetary allocation and planning, as well as clear guidance and due consideration of service expectations within the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.*

## Indigenous HDR recruitment and support

### Facilitating recruitment

The Working Party identified a number of key issues that may impact successful recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students, including lack of supervisory capacity of existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff, a lack of a supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students, and a lack of familiarity with or access to the areas of research in the BEL Faculty.

The Working Party discussed a number of initiatives which might address these issues, including consultation with Elders and communities around the development of topics, provision of access to coursework to support HDR students, outreach activities, staff mentoring, collaborating with other units to provide support, scholarships and pathway positions that involve concurrent paid teaching time, bridging and pathway programs for Indigenous undergraduate students from across the University to support development of necessary subject expertise in Business, Economics and Law areas, and flexibility about subject requirements to allow multidisciplinary PhDs for Indigenous students from other areas of the University. Cultivating a pipeline of students from the undergraduate level was also emphasised as being a key consideration, with mentoring and outreach identified as significant areas to consider. This aligns with UQ Recommendation 2.1.1 and 2.1.3 – BEL Faculty activities in these areas will complement those undertaken at the UQ level while allowing for a focus on BEL disciplines.

**Recommendation 2.7** *Seek new sources of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students, including philanthropic and industry, for stipends, top-up scholarships and additional funding to enhance the PhD experience.*

**Recommendation 2.8** *Explore and facilitate outreach activities to help familiarise prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with areas of BEL research and study (e.g., explainers).*

**Recommendation 2.9** *Provide support for the mentoring of Undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are considering undertaking higher degree research.*

### Facilitating retention

The Working Party also recognised the importance of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students once enrolled to ensure retention and capability building. The Working Party noted the role of the UQ Graduate School in providing central support to the HDR student experience and recognised current activity in this area could be further enhanced. Support for Yarning circles and ceremonies for HDR students was also discussed (see below).

**Recommendation 2.10** *Advocate for the enhancement of and engage with University-level support for Indigenous HDR students with the UQ Graduate School.*

### Indigenous Physical and Ceremonial Spaces

The Working Party noted the absence of a dedicated physical Yarning space on the UQ St Lucia campus, comparable to what has been established at other major university campuses within Australia. Such a space is an essential component for providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students, including HDR students, in the University environment, and aligns with the UQ Strategy's focus on enhancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR experience and provision of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research networks (UQ Recommendation 1.5). It can also enhance the profile of the University with potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research partners.

The space can be used for knowledge exchange to enhance collaboration between researchers, cultural celebration, and recognition to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students, and activities related to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research partners and the conduct of research. The space could additionally be used to welcome students, including HDR students, at the beginning of their degree and to celebrate at graduation, inviting family and community to be more involved in the students' achievements.

**Recommendation 2.11** *Advocate for the establishment of a Yarning space on the UQ St Lucia campus.*

**Recommendation 2.12** *Organise a traditional welcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including HDR students, during O week each year and also hold another ceremony during Graduations.*

### 3. Enabling Environments

#### Ethics

##### Ethics Approval Processes

The Working Party concurred with the UQ Strategy's identification of educating UQ Ethics committee members about the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*. Concerns were raised within the Working Party about delayed timelines for applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, as well as appropriate assessment of such applications. The Working Party confirmed the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023* and UQ processes dictate that all applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be considered by a Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC).

While recognising the UQ HREC operates outside the Faculty, the Working Party considered the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as HREC members to be of paramount importance in assessing applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This aligns with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*. The Working Party sought advice from the central UQ Human Ethics team about current processes in the assessment of applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Working Party also proposed it would be a good measure that researchers who intend to submit ethics applications for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are required by UQ to complete the new UQ online training module, *Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Program*.

**Recommendation 3.1.** *Monitor any issues experienced with ethics approval processes and provide feedback to the UQ Human Research Ethics section around such processes and related policies for ethics applications involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

##### Enhancing capability in research ethics

Concern was also raised by the Working Party about the level of understanding of the *AIATSIS Code* by BEL researchers who plan to or are conducting research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Working Party agreed that additional capability building was needed, and a level of competence should be expected of researchers intending to undertake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.

**Recommendation 3.2** *Promote and encourage all BEL researchers who are intending to undertake research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to complete the new UQ online training module, Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Program.*

#### Cultural Competency

The Working Party also discussed the need to support greater cultural competency amongst BEL staff and recognised the importance of the Faculty offering the Black Card Cultural Capability program to staff. However, the Working Party proposed that a mechanism to extend such training would be of value to BEL researchers, such as cultural mentoring sessions and/or additional training. If a panel or jury is established

as part of Recommendation 1.1, the Working Party suggested members of the panel may be ideal candidates to provide support for this activity.

**Recommendation 3.3** *Explore additional mechanisms to provide cultural capability training and mentoring to BEL staff and HDR students.*



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