



Australian
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**Expectations and Opportunities:
Addressing the priorities and requirements
of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Peoples and communities in
engaging with the Australian tertiary music
education system**

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November 2025

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Jennifer Newsome

November 2025

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the *Ngunnawal* and *Ngambri* Peoples of Canberra and surrounding regions on whose unceded sovereign Lands this research took place.

I would like to especially thank my Principal Supervisor, Professor Christopher Sainsbury, for your expert advice, calm and unfailing support, and generous collegiality and friendship throughout the research, which was greatly appreciated and without which the research would not have taken place; my initial Principal Supervisor, Professor Kim Cunio, then Head of the ANU School of Music, who advocated for and championed the research from the beginning, and for your kind personal support along the way; and my Supervisor Associate Professor Bonnie McConnell for your sage advice, and steady, supportive and kind influence throughout my long PhD journey, and for lending me your house twice! My grateful thanks also to Dr Jos Mulder, who jumped in as Associate Supervisor toward the end of my candidature to provide support to the final phase of the research.

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people who provided their expert advice and generous support in the initial phase of the research: ANU Vice-President (First Nations) Professor Peter Yu, whose encouragement and support was pivotal; and Professor Asmi Wood, Professor Tony Dreise, Professor Ian Anderson, and Associate Professor Bill Fogarty, whose early advice was critical and very much appreciated. My grateful thanks also to Uncle Ossie Cruse and Dr Robyn Ryan; Joe and Lyn Geia; Gabriella Dinallo (Eora Centre – TAFE NSW); and Moogahlin Performing Arts for your generous and invaluable support for the research; and my thanks also to Associate Professor Janet Hunt and Associate Professor Jerry Schwab for your generous, considered, and influential advice on ethics and research design, and to Professor Alice Richardson for your expert advice and generous support with the statistical analyses.

I would like to also acknowledge and especially thank the ANU School of Music First Nations staff at the time of the research, Tor Frømyhr, Will Kepa, Dr Alexander Hunter, and Rhyann Clapham, for your expert contribution and generous support for the research, including as members of the initial PhD Research Project Indigenous Reference Group. My grateful thanks also to the staff of the ANU School of Music whose support for the project was critical, and whose kindness and friendship made all the difference to my experience at the School. A big thank you also to my flatmates during my time in Canberra, whose kind

hospitality and generous support provided much-needed homes away from home throughout my studies, including refuge during Covid 19.

I wish to especially convey my heartfelt thanks to all the First Nations participants in the research, for your generous support and expert contribution, including as members of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group, and as contributors to the Interviews and Survey Questionnaire. Your contribution is at the heart of this research, and your generosity, forbearance and strong support for the research is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated!

And finally, a very special thank you to my family, firstly to my brother-in-law Dave Wellman, for your hospitality, and patient and expert support with Qualtrics and SPSS, and for assisting with the Survey Questionnaire tables; to my daughter Ella for your wise and loving encouragement, support and advice on many critical matters throughout the research, and to my son in law Max Eichhorn for your advice on the results chapter, and to you both, for your meticulous eye for detail in checking the references; to my son Patrick for very kindly providing expert technical advice and support along the way, including design of a bespoke tool for the Survey Questionnaire qualitative data analysis, and to my daughter in law Claudia Prosdocimo for your expert assistance with graphic design; to my sister Eve for your hospitality, invaluable advice, and loving support along the way, including during preparation of the ethics application and throughout the thesis writing process; to my nephew Jim Schots for his invaluable assistance with the submission process, and to my brother Padma for your considered insights, advice, and kind support with the final revisions to the thesis. And a final very special and grateful thanks to the other members of my immediate family, Helen, Sue, Ed, Susannah, and Ian, for believing in me, patiently listening to my endless monologues on the progress of the research, and for your advice and unfailing support, understanding, love, and hospitality.

I would like to also acknowledge the generous support of the Australian National University (ANU) through the ANU Kathleen Woodroffe PhD Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Professional copyediting, in the form of formatting and partial reference editing only, was provided by Charlotte Cottier AE (CC Editing Services) in accordance with the *IPEd guidelines for editing theses*.

This thesis is dedicated to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians of Australia.

Abstract

The thesis describes a nationally focussed Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system. The research responds to long standing historic inequities in which Australian First Nations music, musicians, and music making remain on the periphery of the work of Australian tertiary music institutions, and First Nations musicians continue to encounter systemic barriers to equitable access, participation, and success.

The overarching aims of the research were to contribute to alleviating structural inequalities resulting from a legacy of settler-colonialism in the context of the Australian tertiary music education system by privileging the views and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The main goal of the research was to develop nationally focussed Indigenous-informed empirical evidence, grounded in the insights and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders, as a means for enhancing the engagement of Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and improving outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.

The research comprised a first-time, bespoke, place-based, Indigenous-centred extended co-design case study conducted at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU) from 2022–2025 and employed an Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods methodology embedded in an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design. The research design comprised four integrated components: The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, a series of four Indigenous Focus Group Co-design Workshops, a nationally focussed Survey Questionnaire, and three in-depth Interviews.

The research findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which tertiary music education institutions can address these, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music. For Australian tertiary music education institutions, the findings highlight the essential importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights; align with First Nations cultures and values; support the identified learning

priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; recognise First Nations diversity; and above all, observe Indigenous self-determination as the guiding principle.

The study demonstrates the efficacy of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous-centred co-design in developing evidence-based approaches to enhancing outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. The research contributes data that adds to an understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations Peoples, and provides a set of recommendations for enhancing institutional responsiveness to the rights and interests of Australian First Nations Peoples and communities, and at the ANU School of Music specifically. The findings and recommendations are applicable also in other Australian tertiary music education contexts.

List of Abbreviations

ACPA	Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Service
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AMEB	Australian Music Examinations Board
ANU	Australian National University
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CAPA	Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
CASM	Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICTM	International Council for Traditional Music
NAISDA	National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association
NATSIHEC	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium
NATSIMO	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office
NATSIPA	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association
NCIS	National Centre for Indigenous Studies
NCOSS	NSW Council of Social Service
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NTEU	National Tertiary Education Union
SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SoM	School of Music
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WAAPA	Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
WACOSS	Western Australian Council of Social Service

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	xii
List of Tables	xii
Glossary of Terms	xv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Preamble.....	1
1.2 Nature of the research	2
1.3 Research context	3
1.3.1 Australian First Peoples and colonisation.....	3
1.3.2 Impacts of colonisation on Australian First Nations musicians, music and music making	4
1.3.3 Indigenous self-determination and social justice	5
1.3.4 Translating rights into practice	6
1.4 Research rationale	7
1.4.1 The Behrendt Review	9
1.4.2 The importance and significance of Australian Indigenous music	11
1.4.3 National cultural policy	13
1.5 Impetus and motivation for the research	14
1.5.1 Researcher background and theory–practice position	15
1.6 Research overview	17
1.6.1 Research question	17
1.6.2 Research argument.....	18
1.6.3 Research aims, goals, and objectives.....	19
1.6.4 Research principles and protocols	20
1.6.5 Research paradigm, methodology and methods	21
1.6.6 Research design	22
1.6.7 Research participants	24
1.7 Benefits and beneficiaries	26
1.8 Risks and risk management.....	26
1.9 Overview of sources and literature review.....	26
1.9.1 Gaps in the scholarly literature	27
1.10 Significance of the research	28
1.11 Summary of findings.....	29
1.12 Outline of chapters	31
1.12.1 Chapter 1: Introduction.....	31
1.12.2 Chapter 2: Sources and Literature	31
1.12.3 Chapter 3: The Case Study	31
1.12.4 Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods	32

1.12.5	Chapter 5: Results.....	32
1.12.6	Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion	32
1.12.7	Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations	32
CHAPTER 2: SOURCES AND LITERATURE		33
2.1	Introduction.....	33
2.2	Indigenous rights, self-determination, and social justice	36
2.2.1	Nationally significant statements.....	37
2.3	First Nations national policy environment.....	39
2.3.1	National peak bodies.....	40
2.3.2	Towards a self-determining First Nations higher education body	40
2.4	Engagement of Australian universities with First Nations Peoples and communities	41
2.4.1	Engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities.....	42
2.4.2	Tertiary music institutions and the “whole-of-university” recommendation.....	43
2.4.3	Australian ethnomusicology and Indigenous self-determination.....	45
2.4.4	Higher education and “closing the gap”	46
2.4.5	Culture and “closing the gap”.....	47
2.5	Indigenous music sustainability and Australian tertiary music institutions	49
2.5.1	Australian tertiary music institutions and the “cultural ecosystem”	50
2.5.2	Music diversity and Australian tertiary music institutions	51
2.6	Equity and inclusion in the Australian higher education system	53
2.6.1	The Behrendt Review	54
2.6.2	Underrepresentation and inequity in the Australian higher education system.....	55
2.6.3	Barriers to access and participation in the Australian tertiary music education system ..	59
2.6.4	Assimilation versus integration?.....	62
2.6.5	Indigenous tertiary music education and the “cultural interface”.....	65
2.6.6	Evaluation of equity initiatives	69
2.7	Research paradigm	71
2.8	Decolonisation and First Nations research.....	73
2.8.1	Positionality and power	76
2.9	Indigenous research ethics and protocols.....	84
2.10	Indigenous data availability, sovereignty, governance, and functionality	87
2.10.1	Data availability.....	87
2.10.2	Data sovereignty, governance, and functionality.....	89
2.11	Summary	91
CHAPTER 3: THE CASE STUDY		93
3.1	Sources and literature.....	93
3.1.1	Case study research.....	94
3.1.2	The extended case study methodology	97
3.2	Institutional context.....	101
3.2.1	The Australian National University.....	101
3.2.2	First Nations strategic policy environment	101
3.2.3	ANU Mission.....	102
3.2.4	Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–2026).....	103
3.2.5	ANU Research School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025	103

3.3	ANU School of Music.....	104
3.3.1	ANU School of Music vision and mission	105
3.3.2	ANU School of Music Strategic Plan (2019–2023)	105
3.3.3	ANU School of Music First Nations governance	106
3.3.4	ANU School of Music First Nations student and staff profile.....	107
3.3.5	ANU School of Music First Nations student access.....	108
3.3.6	ANU School of Music programs	108
3.3.7	Indigenous Music Studies.....	108
3.3.8	First Nations Music in Practice Research Hub	109
3.3.9	Engagement with First Nations Peoples and communities.....	109
3.3.10	First Nations spaces and initiatives.....	110
3.4	The Case Study	113
3.4.1	Commencing the research.....	113
3.4.2	Stakeholder Analysis	115
3.4.3	Stakeholder engagement and consultation.....	115
3.4.4	Briefing documents.....	116
3.4.5	Ethics approval	117
3.4.6	Establishing the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.....	118
3.4.7	The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group	120
3.4.8	The “whole-of-School” approach	121
3.4.9	Researcher reflections.....	122
3.5	Summary	123
	CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	126
4.1	Introduction.....	126
4.2	PART 1 – Sources and literature.....	126
4.2.1	Applied research	126
4.2.2	Participatory research	127
4.2.3	Indigenous research methodologies.....	130
4.2.4	Research Methods.....	134
4.2.5	The co-design methodology	136
4.3	PART 2 – Methodology and methods in the research	149
4.3.1	Selecting co-design.....	150
4.3.2	Implementing the co-design methodology	150
4.3.3	Overview of research design, methodology and methods	153
4.3.4	Details of research design, methodology and methods.....	154
4.3.5	Details of the research components	155
4.3.6	Details of the data collection and analysis.....	159
4.3.7	Research phases, sequence of methods, and data types.....	163
4.3.8	Roles and responsibilities of participants	165
4.3.9	Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music	165
4.3.10	Research Results and Recommendations Final Report	165
4.3.11	Addressing challenges in co-design in the research	166
4.3.12	Addressing risks in the research	175
4.4	Summary	177
	CHAPTER 5: RESULTS: THEMES AND TRAJECTORIES.....	180
5.1	Introduction.....	180
5.2	PART 1 – Survey Questionnaire.....	181
5.2.1	Survey demographic statistics	181
5.2.2	Survey opinions frequency statistics.....	194

5.2.3	Survey opinions thematic analysis.....	229
5.3	PART 2 – Interviews.....	239
5.3.1	Interview 1: Summary of main points thematic summary.....	239
5.3.2	Interview 2: Summary of main points thematic summary.....	243
5.3.3	Interview 3: Summary of main points thematic summary.....	246
5.3.4	Summary of Interviews – Main Points	250
5.4	PART 3 – Focus Group Workshops.....	252
5.4.1	Summary: Workshop 1 – main points of discussion	252
5.4.2	Summary: Workshop 2 – main points of discussion	254
5.4.3	Summary: Workshop 3 – main points of discussion	257
5.4.4	Summary: Workshop 4 – main points of discussion (1).....	258
5.4.5	Summary: Workshop 4 – main points of discussion (2).....	260
5.5	Summary of results	261
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE.....		263
6.1	Introduction.....	263
6.2	Summary of findings.....	263
6.3	Findings and discussion	265
6.3.1	Theme 1: Principles and values	265
6.3.2	Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice	277
6.3.3	Theme 3: Facilitating access.....	291
6.3.4	Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning	298
6.4	Summary and conclusions	313
6.5	Limitations of the research.....	315
6.6	Recommendations for future research	316
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		318
7.1	Introduction.....	318
7.2	Implications of the findings	321
7.3	Beneficiaries of the research	322
7.4	Recommendations.....	324
7.5	Potential impact of future research	332
7.6	Research contribution	333
7.7	Conclusion	334
REFERENCES		336
APPENDICES		381
	Appendix A: Research Agreement.....	381
	Appendix B: Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research	398
	Appendix C: Risk Management Strategy.....	408
	Appendix D: Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research Project.....	419
	Appendix E: Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music	423
	Appendix F: Research Results and Recommendations Final Report.....	463
	Appendix G: Benefits of the Research.....	471
	Appendix H: Stakeholder Analysis Framework.....	476

Appendix I: ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group Participant Information Sheet	479
Appendix J: ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group Consent Form.....	484
Appendix K: Focus Group Participant Information Sheet	486
Appendix L: Focus Group Consent Form	491
Appendix M: First Nations Music Survey Questionnaire	493
Appendix N: Survey Questionnaire Participant Information Sheet	529
Appendix O: Survey Questionnaire Consent Form.....	533
Appendix P: Interview Participant Information Sheet	535
Appendix Q: Interview Consent Form	539
Appendix R: Interview Topics and Questions	541
Appendix S: Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis.....	543
Appendix T: Interview 1 – Main Points Thematic Summary	550
Appendix U: Interview 2 – Main Points Thematic Summary.....	555
Appendix V: Interview 3 – Main Points Thematic Summary.....	560
Appendix W: Workshop 1 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion	569
Appendix X: Workshop 2 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion	571
Appendix Y: Workshop 3 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion	578
Appendix Z: Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (1)	581
Appendix AA: Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (2).....	585

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Indigenous Co-design Framework	24
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List of Tables

Table 4.1 Research phases, sequence of methods, and information/data types	163
Table 5.1 Self-described Indigenous status	182
Table 5.2 Participants' gender	182
Table 5.3 Participants' age grouping	183
Table 5.4 Participants' current living location.....	183
Table 5.5 Participants' current state or territory	184
Table 5.6 Participants' location(s) growing up.....	184
Table 5.7 Participants' language(s) spoken	185
Table 5.8 Participants who currently or have ever been a practising musician	185
Table 5.9 How participants learned music.....	186
Table 5.10 Where participants undertook formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons	187
Table 5.11 How participants have been involved in the music profession/industry or the arts more generally.....	188
Table 5.12 Participants with formal music qualification	189
Table 5.13 Type of institution participants received their formal music qualification/s from	189
Table 5.14 Participants who completed a university bridging program into a “mainstream” music degree.....	190
Table 5.15 Participants with formal qualification in multiple areas of the performing arts	191
Table 5.16 Participants with no qualification due to not completing the full program	191
Table 5.17 Participants with a qualification in a field of study other than music.....	192
Table 5.18 Participants currently studying music at an Australian university.....	193
Table 5.19 Participants currently studying in a field other than music at an Australian university	193
Table 5.20 Participants who have taught music in a tertiary music institution	193
Table 5.21 Programs that offer direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations music students.....	195
Table 5.22 Programs for First Nations musicians who do not have a formal music education background.....	195
Table 5.23 Bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” music programs.....	196
Table 5.24 Programs that are inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds.....	196
Table 5.25 Programs that are inclusive of a range of music styles and genres.....	197
Table 5.26 Programs offered in regional and remote locations	197
Table 5.27 Programs that combine on-campus and in-community delivery	198

Table 5.28	Programs that provide support with applications, admissions and orientation.....	198
Table 5.29	Should the ANU School of Music aim to have First Nations graduates from all around the country and many different communities?.....	199
Table 5.30	Should universities have flexible entry requirements that recognise merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience?.....	199
Table 5.31	Bridging programs for First Nations students into “mainstream” music programs.....	201
Table 5.32	Programs that teach Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch	201
Table 5.33	Programs that include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture	202
Table 5.34	Programs that offer performance studies that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres	202
Table 5.35	Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts	203
Table 5.36	Programs specifically for First Nations students	203
Table 5.37	Programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry	204
Table 5.38	A degree program majoring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture	204
Table 5.39	Programs that offer a range of qualifications	205
Table 5.40	Programs that help students to develop their research skills	205
Table 5.41	Programs that include a wide range of music performance styles/genres	206
Table 5.42	Programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre	206
Table 5.43	Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance	207
Table 5.44	Programs that teach sound engineering from scratch	207
Table 5.45	Programs that offer separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students	208
Table 5.46	Programs that offer opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on country”	208
Table 5.47	Programs that offer opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages	209
Table 5.48	Programs taught by First Nations practitioners	209
Table 5.49	Programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners	210
Table 5.50	Programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners.....	210
Table 5.51	Programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts	211
Table 5.52	Programs with identified First Nations spaces	211
Table 5.53	Should the ANU School of Music be leading the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds?.....	212
Table 5.54	Programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians.....	214

Table 5.55 Programs with a focus on creative outcomes (i.e. composition, song writing, music production).....	214
Table 5.56 Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres	215
Table 5.57 Programs that include opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts (i.e. music, dance, theatre, film, music production etc.)	215
Table 5.58 Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments	216
Table 5.59 Programs that include opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language	216
Table 5.60 Programs that include opportunities to be mentored by leading First Nations practitioners	217
Table 5.61 Programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making	217
Table 5.62 “Mainstream” programs that are more inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds	218
Table 5.63 Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians.....	218
Table 5.64 Creative music making projects.....	219
Table 5.65 Working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives	220
Table 5.66 Working with First Nations song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations “traditional” music and culture	220
Table 5.67 Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music	221
Table 5.68 Providing support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia	221
Table 5.69 Developing music initiatives to help “close the gap”	222
Table 5.70 Ways tertiary music institutions can be more accessible for First Nations students	223
Table 5.71 Teaching and learning programs for First Nations musicians	225
Table 5.72 Ways tertiary music institutions can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.....	227
Table 5.73 Research priorities and needs of First Nations people and communities, in descending order.....	228

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander¹: In the thesis the designation *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander* recognises Australia’s Indigenous peoples as two distinct groups comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander* (adjective) has become a widely accepted term when referring to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and related topics (ACT Council of Social Service [ACTCOSS], 2016, p. 2). The term *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* refers to the many Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups within Australia (ACTCOSS, 2016, p. 2).

Ally: The term *ally* (also *allies*) is used in academic contexts to describe a non-Indigenous person who seeks to work together with Indigenous people towards social justice (Kendall, 2013, pp. 171–191.) However, Settler researchers must be considered allies by Indigenous team members and the participating communities rather than self-identifying as such (Hart et al., 2017, p. 340; see also Kendall, 2013, pp. 174–175).

Community: The term *community* (also *communities*) as referred to in the thesis is recognised as “a complex notion incorporating cultural groups, geographic groups or groups sharing common interests”, and which may include “a group or organisation and is also a term used to describe a shared view amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC], 2018b, p. 41). In the thesis the term refers also to an overlapping-intersecting ‘field of action’ in which First Nations Peoples act and interact within and in relation to university-based research and knowledge production spaces.

Co-researcher: The term *co-researcher* (also *co-researchers*) as employed in the thesis refers to “one or more participants (or a particular sub-group of participants) who make/s a significant contribution to the planning, design, implementation or outputs of a research project, including the collection, analysis or interpretation of data” (NHMRC et al., 2023, p. 109).

Country: In the thesis the term *Country* refers to the “Land and Waters to which Indigenous people have a traditional relationship” and which is “inextricably linked to kinship,

¹ In the thesis the terms *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*, *First Nations*, and *Indigenous* recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and nations as sovereign and diverse and are used interchangeably as relevant to the context. Regional language/Country names are also used.

knowledge, beliefs, language and identity” (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS], 2020a, p. 11).

Culture: The term *culture* (also *cultures*) as referred to in the thesis recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as “complex and diverse” and as not consisting of a “single culture or people” (Salmon et al., 2019, p. 24). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander *cultures* may be understood as “connection to Country and community; respect for Elders, kinship and family connections; gender and age roles; identity; language, art, and ceremony; and spirituality and storytelling” (Salmon et al., 2019, p. 24). For Australian First Nations Peoples, *culture* is also understood as encompassing “knowledges held, shared and continually adapted, including language, music, dance, stories, songlines and songspirals, and visual art”, and which are “grounded in the material heritage, practices and knowledges of First Nations peoples” and are “governed by sophisticated systems of knowledge” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 22).

Diverse: The term *diverse* (also *diversity*) as referred to in the thesis recognises two distinct Australian First Nations Peoples – Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – and the differences and diversity that occur between as well as within these two groups. Such differences include but are not limited to “history, knowledge systems, world views, values, beliefs and experiences” and may extend also to “diversity within communities” (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 1), including within “urban Indigenous populations” (Putt, 2013, p. 5). Diversity may also include “family birthright responsibilities and generational differences along with specific religious and spiritual beliefs or socio-economic status” (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 1). In the thesis, the term *diversity* also refers to the diversity of First Nations backgrounds, and musics and music making practices.

First Nations: In the thesis the term *First Nations* refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and nations of people, and their descendants, who have lived in Australia prior to and since colonisation (ACTCOSS, 2016, p. 6). Although the term *First Nations* is a generally accepted one, it is generic and does not adequately describe the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (ACTCOSS, 2016, p. 6). In the thesis the term is employed to draw attention to the continuing sovereign status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as First Peoples, and to the individual regional language groups/Country of the different groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as sovereign nations.

Indigenous: *Indigenous* is a term used extensively in Australia when referring to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and related topics (ACTCOSS, 2016, pp. 2–3). However, although the term *Indigenous* may be used for inclusiveness, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are dissatisfied with the term as being too generic and as detracting from the preferred identity of the individual and/or group of people (ACTCOSS, 2016, pp. 2–3). Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prefer names associated with their regional traditional language group/s or Country, which are numerous and diverse.

Indigenous music: The expression *Indigenous music* as used in the thesis does not infer a distinct or separate genre (Webb & Bracknell, 2021, p. 77) but rather a “set of musical convergences” (p. 78), and which may be distinguished by both its “inclusion of musical or lyrical content derived from Indigenous people” and the “Indigenous status of the artists involved in its production” (Bracknell, 2019a, p. 101).

Music cultures: The expression *music culture(s)* as employed in the thesis refers to “a group of people’s total involvement with music: ideas, behaviour, artifacts and material culture, institutions, and musical product” (Titon, 2009, p. 121).

Music traditions: The expression *music tradition(s)* as employed in the thesis refers to distinctive Indigenous music practices that have their roots in “historical customs, practices and experiences”, which may evolve over time (adapted from Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012, p. 3), and which are “transmitted from generation to generation” (Titon, 2009, p. 125, citing the 2003 UNESCO ICH Convention).

Reconciliation: The term *Reconciliation* as employed in the thesis refers to an Australian socio-political movement (led by the independent not-for-profit organisation *Reconciliation Australia*) which promotes “building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.).

Settler: The term *settler* as used in the thesis is a term used in scholarly research, which includes expressions such as “white settler”, “settler colonialism”, and “white settler colonialism”, and refers to outsiders who come to land inhabited by Indigenous peoples and “claim it as their own new home” (L. Smith et al., 2019, p. xii). This often encompasses negative connotations of colonial power and privilege, and displacement, impost on, and cost

to First Nations people. In the Australian context the term may however be construed as reductive in failing to distinguish between colonising ‘settlers’, who bring their own normative world view and laws with the intention of supplanting those of the existing Indigenous population (and who then become an Anglo-European descended sociopolitical majority), and ‘immigrants’ who subsequently join and are incorporated into the newer state/society.

Stakeholder: The term *stakeholder* (also *stakeholders*) as used in the thesis refers to “a person or party that has relevant knowledge of, can influence, or is affected by the proposed service” (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 5).

Stolen Generations: The term *Stolen Generations* refers to the generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families and communities across Australia since colonisation, as a consequence of numerous government laws, policies and practices (AIATSIS, 2023). See also, Healing Foundation (n.d).

Chapter 1: Introduction

*Culturally and historically, the people that do all the talking – they need to listen.
And the people who have done all the listening – they need to have that platform
to talk.*

(Rhyen Clapham-Muruwari, composer, percussionist and rapper, ABC Classic, 2019)

1.1 Preamble

On National Sorry Day 2021,¹ the Sydney Peace Prize was awarded to the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.² The *Uluru Statement* had been presented as ‘a gift’ to the Australian people on Sorry Day in 2017 following an extensive, nation-wide deliberative process by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and made two recommendations, a constitutionally recognised Indigenous voice to parliament, and a *Makarrata* process to investigate truth-telling and treaty-making.³ At the core of the document was an appeal by Australian First Nations Peoples for recognition, justice, and self-determination.

Australian First Nations leaders had been calling for an Indigenous voice to parliament for decades, however it was not until 30th October 2019 that then Minister for Indigenous Australians, Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, announced a nation-wide ‘Indigenous Voice’ co-design process to “provide advice to the Parliament on national issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020a, p.7). However, at the time of writing neither the ‘Indigenous Voice’ nor the *Makarrata* process had been implemented.⁴

Subsequent to the gifting of the *Uluru Statement*, in 2022, the communities of the Torres Strait Islands released the *Masig Statement, Malungu Yangu Wakay* ‘Voice from the

¹ National Sorry Day is an annual Australian event which has been held on the 26th of May since 1998 to commemorate the anniversary of the landmark *Bringing them Home* report, and to remember the grief, suffering, and injustice experienced by the Stolen Generations, those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families as a result of government assimilation policy.

² See Indigenous.gov.au. (n.d.); The *Uluru Statement* (n.d.).

³ *Makarrata* is a Yolngu language expression meaning “coming together after a struggle” (*Uluru Statement from the Heart* (n.d.). See also, Pearson (2017).

⁴ On 14 October 2023, the Australian people voted no in a referendum proposing to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament and Government in the Australian Constitution.

Deep'.⁵ This went a step further, asserting the “right to self-determination” and “autonomy or self-government in matters relating to our internal and local affairs” and the right “to freely pursue our economic, social, and cultural development” (Torres Strait Island Regional Council, n.d.).

This thesis recognises the sovereign right of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to self-determination as the First Peoples of Australia and describes a research study which privileges the voices of Australian First Nations people in seeking to ameliorate long-standing historic inequities in the Australian tertiary music education system.

1.2 Nature of the research

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander song still teeters on the fringe of Australian music institutions despite the position of Indigenous music makers at the centre of international representations of Australian culture. ... Recent calls to decolonise music education and decentre the study of Western classical music ring hollow in the Australian context, because despite glossy pictures and stated aspirations, there's a big gap at the heart of our music institutions. Addressing this gap requires not just greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples and their musics, but also advocacy for Indigenous self-determination as core business. (Bracknell, 2022)

The research responds to the gap identified by Bracknell (2022) through an investigation which is based in and advocates for Indigenous self-determination as an ethical, pragmatic, and practical means for progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system. The research comprised a first time Indigenous centred co-design case study conducted at the Australian National University (ANU) School of Music from 2022–2025.⁶ ANU is situated on the unceded lands of the *Ngunnawal* and *Ngambri* Peoples, the original inhabitants who have lived in the Country that is now the Canberra region for over 20,000 years, and who today “continue to live and travel through the Canberra region, preserving their culture by maintaining connections to land and through artistic expression” (National Museum Australia, n.d.).

The research comprised a nationally focussed Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

⁵ The Torres Strait Island region of Australia consists of eighteen islands and two northern peninsula communities at the northern most tip of Australia (Torres Strait Regional Authority, n.d.).

⁶ ANU is located in Canberra, the Australian national capital and seat of Federal Government.

and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and development of a set of formal recommendations to inform the strategic direction of the ANU School of Music. The research seeks to progress a transformative institutional change agenda,⁷ and contribute to the responsiveness of the School to the rights and interests of diverse Australian First Nations Peoples and communities.

The research was situated within an Indigenous rights and social justice framework that sought to respond to long-standing calls by Australian First Nations leaders and communities for ground-up and genuine partnership approaches to Indigenous self-determination in addressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples, including in higher education (Department of Education, 2024, pp. 237, 246, 284). The research employed an Indigenous-informed, Indigenous-centred co-design methodology which centred the agency, participation, and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research. The methodological approach sought to provide a means for progressing Indigenous-informed strategic developments aimed at addressing entrenched systemic and structural inequality.

The research was aligned with the vision and role of the ANU, as Australia's national university (ANU, n.d.-a), with the aim of promoting national leadership by the ANU School of Music in addressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.

1.3 Research context

1.3.1 Australian First Peoples and colonisation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first people of Australia (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS], 2024), and are recognised as having the longest continuing, living cultures in the world (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-a; Department of Education, 2023b, p. 35).⁸ As a consequence of colonisation,⁹ Australia's First Nations Peoples have experienced serious

⁷ See Newsome (2022); Sainsbury et al. (2022); Sainsbury & Newsome (2023).

⁸ There are varying estimates as to how long Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived on the Australian continent, however, current research reveals that it is likely for more than 60,000 years (AIATSIS, 2024); and the Torres Strait Islands were settled about 10,000 years ago (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2020, p. 1.3). According to the latest census (2021) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people constitute 3.2% of the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

⁹ Colonisation in Australia is understood as commencing with the arrival of the First Fleet in Botany Bay and the establishment of a British penal colony at Sydney Cove (now Sydney Harbour) in 1788 (Parliament of New South Wales, n.d.).

long-term losses and harms,¹⁰ including ongoing inequities and disparities across multiple social, economic and cultural arenas, resulting in too many experiencing “entrenched disadvantage, political exclusion, intergenerational trauma, and ongoing institutional racism” (Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 2). These impacts have had serious consequences for Australian First Nations musicians, music and music making.

1.3.2 Impacts of colonisation on Australian First Nations musicians, music and music making

Australia’s unique forms of Indigenous artistic and cultural expression are rooted in “thousands of years of heritage and continuing practice” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2019, p.1). Processes of colonisation and assimilation, together with rapid globalisation, have however had devastating impacts on Australian Indigenous music and music-making and therefore on the ongoing vitality of Indigenous performance traditions (Bracknell, 2015; Bracknell, 2019a; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020; Corn, 2009; Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance, 2002; Marett, 2010). The Australia/New Zealand Regional Committee of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) *Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance* (ICTM, 2011) estimates that at least 98% of pre-colonisation Indigenous Australian musical traditions have been lost, in what has been described as a form of “cultural genocide” (Schippers, 2022).¹¹ Loss of Indigenous languages through colonisation and assimilation policies has also had profound impacts (Yu, 2019),¹² including disruption to the continuity of many First Nations music traditions.¹³

Australian Indigenous music and performative cultures today comprise diverse, vibrant living traditions (Bracknell, 2019a; Webb & Bracknell, 2021) encompassing a wide variety of “regionally, linguistically and functionally diverse vocal music idioms” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 72) and a broad range of contemporary and popular music genres and styles.¹⁴ This music is expressive of the diverse affiliations and lived experiences,

¹⁰ This includes through dispossession of land, displacement, violence and atrocities, massacres, introduced diseases, loss of traditional culture and languages, deprivation of way of life, abduction, forced labour and stolen wages, segregation, travel restrictions, forced removal of children, assimilation policies, incarceration, institutional racism, and denial of basic human rights. See SCRGSP (2020).

¹¹ The *Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance* was officially endorsed by the ICTM in 2011.

¹² Of the estimated 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken at the time of colonisation, between 123 and 159 First Nations languages are still in use, and most First Nations languages within Australia are under threat, with only twelve traditional languages, and two recent languages considered strong (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 28). See also, Commonwealth of Australia (2020b).

¹³ This recognises that language underpins “all forms of cultural expression, including art, music, dance, law and spirituality” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 28).

¹⁴ This includes “traditional” music, country, folk, blues, rock, reggae, jazz, soul, funk, metal, rap, hip hop, art/classical, and fusion styles. See also, Sunderland et al. (2023).

perspectives and creative interests of First Peoples, presenting a challenge to “dominant colonial discourses on cultural loss and assimilation” (Bracknell, 2019a, p.121).¹⁵

1.3.3 Indigenous self-determination and social justice

The Australian Constitution has no bill of rights or equality guarantee. There is no formal recognition of First Nations languages. There was no founding treaty. And Australia’s First Nations have no dedicated voice in Australia’s political and institutional arrangements. (Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, 2017, p. 22).

The research responds to the absence of a bill of rights and equality guarantee for First Nations people in the Australian Constitution; and to the lack of a founding treaty, formal recognition of First Nations languages, and a “dedicated voice for First Nations people in Australia’s political and institutional arrangements” (Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, 2017) through a study which prioritises First Nations rights, including to self-determination, in the context of the Australian tertiary music education system.

Self-determination is a “fundamental right of all peoples” which is recognised by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to which Australia is a party (Yu, 2022).¹⁶ Support for UNDRIP by the Australian Government has however not made it law (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 12).¹⁷ Unlike Native American Peoples and Indigenous Peoples of countries with similar colonial histories, such as New Zealand and Canada, the rights of Australian First Nations Peoples have not been recognised through treaty and Australian First Nations people are still a long way from gaining the full range of rights, including to self-determination, as articulated in UNDRIP.

Realisation of the right of Australian First Nations Peoples to self-determination and therefore a “genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them” (Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 2) may arguably be regarded as one of the most pressing legal, moral, and practical concerns of our time.¹⁸ Efforts to progress First Nations self-determination

¹⁵ See also, Webb & Bracknell (2021).

¹⁶ UNDRIP Article 3 declares that: “Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination” and “By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations, 2007, p. 8).

¹⁷ UNDRIP limits self-determination to “that which the state concerned will allow or enable” and as such constitutes a “weak remedy” (Watson, 2015, p. 4).

¹⁸ Self-determination may be understood as “an outcome as much as it is a process of negotiation”, which is about “determining, through legitimate dialogues with the nation state, how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to pursue their own political, cultural, social and economic interests, while retaining the right to participate fully in Australian life” (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021, p. 4).

may be considered a policy prerogative across all domains of Australian public life, including in Australian higher education (Department of Education, 2024, pp. 237, 246, 284).

It has been argued that “there is a big gap at the heart of our music institutions” and that addressing this gap requires “not just greater inclusion of Indigenous people and their musics” but “advocacy for Indigenous self-determination as core business” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 70). The research supports this position in seeking to progress the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹⁹

1.3.4 Translating rights into practice

The adoption of the Declaration is one thing. Now we face the challenge of real implementation. By implementation, I mean making both the intent and spirit of the Declaration real to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Declaration is comprehensive and as you go through this document you will see the 46 articles provide guidance for every aspect of our lives. It is only when we can see these articles being translated from abstract concepts to practical improvements in our lives that the spirit and intent of the Declaration will be realised. (Mick Gooda,²⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 4)

The research supports implementation of the Declaration (UNDRIP) and its translation “from abstract concepts to practical improvements” (Mick Gooda, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 4) through an emphasis on Indigenous rights, including the right to self-determination. Meaning and interpretation of Indigenous self-determination is however a contested arena in which there is no real consensus as to the exact nature and extent of that right (Mörkenstam, 2015, pp. 634–635). In the Australian context where First Nations Peoples have neither legally recognised treaty-based nor enshrined constitutional rights, the right to Indigenous self-determination is therefore positioned in the research as proceeding from an *as if* sovereign position (Mörkenstam, 2015, p. 635). This position challenges the traditional nation-state-centred understanding of political rights and democracy and recognises Indigenous Peoples as having “standing equal to nation-states”, and where the right to self-determination must be interpreted “procedurally rather than substantially” (Mörkenstam, 2015, p. 634). In the research the *as if* sovereign position is interpreted procedurally through a deliberate privileging

¹⁹ The research focusses specifically on university-based tertiary music education institutions.

²⁰ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission (2009–2016).

of the “voices” of diverse First Nations Peoples over and above the voices of others, by design.²¹

The *as if* sovereign position infers a “levelling” of the “balance of power” between Indigenous Peoples and nation-states, and construes Indigenous self-determination in relational terms (Mörkenstam, 2015, p. 641).²² This implies constraint on the rights of existing nation-states and the need to set these into “more cooperatively regulated relationships” (Mörkenstam, 2015, p. 641, referencing Young, 2005,²³ p. 52). Leading First Nations human rights expert Professor Mick Dodson has argued however that achievement of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples within the nation state requires “first, that those in power have the capacity to recognise our right to determine our own futures and next, that they are not afraid to do so” (Dodson, 1996, p.13).

In Australian research Indigenous self-determination is recognised as fundamental to ethical conduct in research, affirming the “distinct political status of Indigenous peoples” and their right to “set priorities, make decisions, and freely pursue their own development on their own terms” (AIATSIS, 2020a, p.12.). Universities Australia, the peak body for Australian universities, in launching its first Indigenous Strategy (2017–2020), responded to UNDRIP,²⁴ acknowledging that “universities have responsibilities to Australia’s Indigenous people” (Universities Australia, n.d.-a., p.10) and a “strong moral obligation to social justice and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (p.16). These responsibilities should therefore be reflected by “working in partnership with Indigenous communities” (Universities Australia, n.d.-a, p.10) and by giving “voice to Indigenous people in decision-making that affects Indigenous communities” (p.11), with the common objective of “translating declared rights into practice” and ensuring that Australian universities are “vehicles for social, cultural and economic development of, with and by Australia’s diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities” (p.16).

1.4 Research rationale

Recognising, supporting and listening to the voices of First Nations people is an essential task for our contemporary higher education system. ... engaging with these voices and perspectives on a deeper level will not only increase the numbers

²¹ It has been argued that inclusive processes such as co-design provide a means for “sharing sovereignty” without being seen as overturning the “absolute sovereignty” of the Australian people (Dillon, 2021, p. 24).

²² Indigenous sovereignty may also be approached as “agency” (Nicoll, 2004, p. 21).

²³ In the source this is referenced as Young (2007).

²⁴ Articles 14, 15, 31 (Universities Australia, n.d.-a, p.16).

of First Nations students entering the system, but also ensure the value of First Nations knowledge is recognised and incorporated into all institutional operations. (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 98)

Recognising, supporting, and listening to the voices of First Nations people (Department of Education, 2023b) may be understood as essential to implementing Indigenous rights, including to Indigenous self-determination. The research responded to an identified need to progress the rights and interests of diverse First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system and to do so based in principles of Indigenous self-determination and social justice (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020; Newsome, 2008; Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024). This recognises the important role that tertiary music education institutions can play in “closing the gap” and improving the life circumstances of First Nations people,²⁵ and responds to the importance of support by tertiary music education institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music making.

The research was underpinned by two interrelated rationales. The first confirms the critical role of tertiary education in eliminating the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (Bandias et al., 2014; Behrendt et al., 2012; Bradley et al., 2008; Department of Education, 2023b; Gore et al., 2017; Pechenkina et al., 2011). This was highlighted in the 2012 Behrendt Review,²⁶ the findings and recommendations of which have significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions in progressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples. The second recognises the unique status and significance of First Nations music and performative cultures and their central importance for First Nations Peoples and communities. The research responds to the need for support by Australian tertiary music education institutions for First Nations musicians, music, and music making, commensurate with their unique status, significance and importance (Australia Council for the Arts, 2007; Bracknell, 2015; Bracknell & Barwick 2020; Ellis, 1985; Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance, 2002²⁷; Statement on Indigenous Australian Music and Dance, 2011; Steering

²⁵ See Chapter 2 (2.4.4, 2.4.5).

²⁶ Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. ix, 3–5). See also, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council (2015a); Grant-Smith & Irmer (2022); SCRGSP (2020).

²⁷ The *Garma Statement* argued that preservation of Indigenous Australian performance traditions was “one of the highest priorities for Indigenous people” and requested “governments, universities, industry bodies and other institutions to acknowledge and respond to this urgent need” (Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance, 2002).

Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2020; Wafer & Turpin, 2017).

1.4.1 The Behrendt Review

Higher education and the opportunities it affords can transform the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The transformative power of higher education underpins the prosperity of our nation and is of particular importance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where overcoming socio-economic disadvantage will only be achieved if members of those communities are given the capacity to assist in finding the solutions to seemingly intractable problems. (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. vii.)

The 2012 Behrendt Review highlighted the critical role of higher education in “improving the socio-economic position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and their communities” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 3), and in addressing disadvantage by “empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain access to the opportunities and life benefits that higher education affords” (p. 5). It also called for research that would address Closing the Gap related priorities (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 94).²⁸ The Behrendt Review built on the 2008 Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008),²⁹ and examined how improving higher education outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would “contribute to nation building and reduce Indigenous disadvantage” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. ix).³⁰ This was the first national review to address “the full scope of the provision of Indigenous higher education across Australia” (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 19), and at the time of writing remains the most comprehensive national review of Australian Indigenous higher education.

A key finding of the Behrendt Review was that the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education was “significantly below parity with the population as a whole” (Department of Education, 2025c). The Review had proposed a future in which it would be “unremarkable for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to aspire to university” and presented a vision where “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world

²⁸ Closing the Gap is an Australian government national strategy launched in 2008. See Closing the Gap (2020).

²⁹ The Behrendt Review was commissioned by the Australian government following a recommendation of the Bradley Review (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 19). See Recommendation 30 (Bradley et al., 2008, p. 159).

³⁰ Other relevant government related reports at the time included the *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities* (Universities Australia, 2011); and the 2011 *National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy* (Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2011).

views and perspectives are valued and contribute to Australia's knowledge base” (Department of Education, 2025c). The need for change was confirmed again over a decade later with the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (2023) reporting that First Nations people remained underrepresented (Department of Education, 2023b, pp. 9, 26, 35, 61).³¹ These findings highlight the need for ongoing efforts to progress First Nations participation, success, and self-determination in higher education (Department of Education, 2023b, pp. 35–36).

The Behrendt Review made several suggestions and recommendations relevant to addressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. These included the recommendation that universities adopt a “whole-of-university” approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success so that “faculties and mainstream support services [would] have primary responsibility for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, backed up by Indigenous Education Units” [Recommendation 10] (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xix)³²; and the suggestion that “a collaborative approach be developed involving universities, governments, professional bodies, the business sector and communities working together to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through higher education” (p. 3). Of special importance to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was also the suggestion that there be a “greater focus on data and evidence that specifically identify the critical factors influencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success in higher education” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xv).³³ The research sought to contribute to this, with a focus on the tertiary music education system.

Despite wide acceptance of the Behrendt Review across the Australian higher education sector (Ross & Akerman, 2012), to date there has been no nationally focussed research investigating how the recommendations and suggestions of the review might be applied effectively to improving outcomes for First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system, including with respect to the need for further work on the “quality and relevance of data collected” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xv). The research sought to respond to these gaps.

The research responded to the Behrendt Review “whole-of-university” recommendation (Recommendation 10) through a place-based case study conducted at the

³¹ In 2021 First Nations students comprised 2% of the domestic undergraduate student population despite constituting 3.8% of the total Australian population (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 61).

³² This was identified as one of the two most crucial aspects of the review (Liddle, 2016, p. 56).

³³ Another important finding of the Behrendt Review was the need for “systemic change in university culture, governance and leadership practices” (Smith et al., 2017a, p. 20).

ANU School of Music, which sought to progress the recommendation through a locally tailored “whole-of-School” effort aimed at transformative change aligned with institutional Indigenous policy.³⁴ This responded to the proposal that a “collaborative approach be developed” (Behrendt, 2012, p. 3), and to the opportunity to harness the “reach, resources (and) discipline specific knowledge” of the School in “supporting the academic success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students” (p. xii).

In responding to the critical role of higher education in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as identified in the Behrendt Review, the research sought to address the need for “more equitable relationships between Indigenous music-makers and institutions” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 77), more genuine and meaningful “engagement” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 72; Hunt, 2013 pp. 1–3), and the need for increased support by Australian tertiary music institutions for Australian First Nations musicians, music, and music making (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 70, 79).

1.4.2 The importance and significance of Australian Indigenous music

Indigenous music is an important part of Indigenous culture. Music is about expressing cultural belonging. It is part of ceremony, storytelling, celebration, mourning, coming together and telling of events in Indigenous people’s lives, both past and present. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2007, p. 4)

We celebrate our connection to this land through music. Music is the means by which we may know the world and give meaning to everything in it. Music is central to our identity and central to the fabric of society. Music is a map to our identity, its power and purpose are infinite. (Cheetham Fraillon, quoted in Blake, 2023)

Music is not what I do, it is who I am. My songs may be contemporary but they are more than 40,000 years old. They come from my ancestors and my people ... and they tell our stories. (Kutcha Edwards, Songlines Aboriginal Music, 2023)

Australian First Nations music and performative cultures comprise diverse, living cultural traditions of unique national and international importance and significance, and in particular, for First Nations people (Australia Council for the Arts, 2007; Barwick, 2000; Barwick et al., 1995; Cheetham Fraillon, 2023; Edwards, 2023; Ellis, 1985; Sunderland et al.,

³⁴ See Australian National University (2021); Australian National University (2024b); Australian National University (2022); Australian National University School of Music (n.d.-b).

2023; Wafer & Turpin, 2017). These traditions play a central role in the preservation, sustenance, and transmission of the distinct and collective cosmologies, ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and give expressive voice to the diverse lived realities, experience, world views, histories, stories, values, and perspectives of Australia's First Nations Peoples.³⁵ They are also celebrated for their "rich contribution to the world's culture" and to Australia's "diverse contemporary culture and national identity" (Australia Council for the Arts, n.d. p. 11), and play a unique role in the sharing of discrete Australian First Nations culture and identity.³⁶ Despite this, Australian tertiary music institutions remain "predominantly grounded in European classical traditions" and continue to position Indigenous Peoples and musics on the "fringe" (Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick 2020, p. 71).

Australia has a long history of research about First Nations Peoples, who have been described as "the most researched people in the world" (Fredericks, 2008, pp. 2–3).³⁷ For over two hundred years, academic researchers in fields including anthropology, history, geography, ethnography, linguistics, choreology, musicology, and ethnomusicology, have collected, analysed, stored, and disseminating a vast and in-depth body of interpretive material about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musics and performative cultures.³⁸ This research has made an important contribution to increased understanding and appreciation of the diversity, richness, and significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expressive cultures.

Historically however, most of this research has been conducted by non-Indigenous people (Fredericks, 2008; Newsome, 2008). This has drawn researchers, and in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, into a compromised and compromising world of academic discovery, discourse, and dissemination in which we are yet to "untangle our practice from the social, cultural, and political inequities and implications of colonialism" (Treloyn, 2016a, p. 34),³⁹ and where research risks "passively reinforcing the systemic colonial violence" (Treloyn, 2016b). Australian First Nation's academic leaders, researchers, and educators have therefore been engaged in a wide range of proactive efforts to change this dynamic (Asmar & Page, 2017; Department of Education, 2023b, p. 35), employing strategic

³⁵ Barwick & Marett (2003); Bracknell (2015, 2022); Lui & York (2003); Marett (2005, 2010); Stubington & Marika-Munungirij (2007).

³⁶ An example was the 2000 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, which was watched by 3.7 billion people across the globe, and who witnessed a spectacular celebration of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rich and diverse cultures. See Ernie Dingo Pty Ltd (2015).

³⁷ See also, Rigney (1999, p. 109); Universities Australia (2011, p. 95).

³⁸ See Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Barwick (2000); Koch (1987, 1992); Magowan & Neuenfeldt (2005); Newsome (2008); Wild (2003).

³⁹ See also, Nakata (2006); Bracknell (2015).

initiatives, including creative practice, Indigenous-led and Indigenous-centred projects/programs, and “new units in Australian Indigenous music traditions and cultures” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 76, citing Burslem 2019, p. 114). Examples at the ANU School of Music include the *Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers* initiative (Sainsbury, 2019; Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024) and the *Contemporary Australian Indigenous Music Studies* course offered by the School.

Despite these developments, scholarly research in the field of Australian Indigenous music and culture has “scarcely influenced the core business of Australia’s music institutions” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 71) and is yet to translate into a consolidated sector-wide strategic effort to progress structural and systemic reform and respond more comprehensively to the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities. It is towards ameliorating these long-standing challenges that the research is directed.

1.4.3 National cultural policy

In 2023 the Australian Government launched a new five-year national cultural policy acknowledging First Nations self-determination as a human right for First Nations peoples and declaring the commitment of the Government to “work in partnership with First Nations peoples to maintain, revive and celebrate Australia’s First Nations cultures and languages” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 1). This recognised “the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia’s arts and culture” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 18) and declared that First Nations arts and culture should be “First Nations led” (p. 19), and that First Nations programs must be designed “by and with First Nations peoples and organisations” (p. 22). Importantly, the policy acknowledged the role of higher education in providing “professional training for a career in the cultural and creative sector”, highlighting the importance of access to courses, as well as pathways into the industry, in supporting “career choices in the arts” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023, p. 60). The research aligns with these national cultural policy goals in seeking to progress the cultural and educational rights, priorities, and aspirations of Australian First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system.

1.5 Impetus and motivation for the research

The burden of responsibility to promote social justice should fall more heavily on those who benefit most from their complicity than on those who are non-beneficiaries. (Pease, 2021, p. 261 referencing Young, 2011)⁴⁰

This may mean resisting, even “rattling the cage” if necessary, in advocating for and maintaining pressure around the need for deeper change within institutions in the struggle for the development of more inclusive institutional cultures that are properly responsive to Indigenous stakeholder needs and expectations. (Newsome, 2014)

Recognition of a responsibility to respond to the social justice imperative (Pease, 2021) and the need for deeper change within tertiary music education institutions (Newsome, 2014) constituted the principal motivation for undertaking the research. The decision to undertake the research reflects a long-standing personal commitment to supporting Indigenous self-determination, rights, and interests in the Australian tertiary music education system. As an academic researcher and “privileged insider” I have benefited from engagement with tertiary music education institutions for most of my student and working life. My personal motivation for undertaking the research was to make a contribution to opening up more space for the realisation of Indigenous rights, self-determination, and social justice in the Australian tertiary music education system, in the hope that this will lead to improved outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities.⁴¹ Previous work at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide had highlighted the need to address structural and systemic factors contributing to First Nations exclusion and underrepresentation, and inhibition of the voice and agency of First Nations Peoples in Australian tertiary music education institutions. The research sought to address these challenges through an Indigenous-centred investigation that privileged and amplified diverse First Nations voices in identifying ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions could address the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities more effectively. I was encouraged in this by the First Nations people with whom I initially consulted about the research, and most of all by the encouragement and support of my Principal Supervisor Professor Christopher Sainsbury without whom the research would not have taken place.

⁴⁰ See also, Young (2011, pp. 21–22, 24).

⁴¹ See Newsome (2008, p. 35).

1.5.1 Researcher background and theory–practice position

I am a mature-aged, university-educated, middle class, cisgender, able-bodied, white settler Anglo-European Australian woman, born in New Zealand to Queensland born, third generation migrant parents of Anglo-European descent. I lived as a very young child in Alice Springs on Arrernte Country and later in Adelaide on Kaurna Country, then in Canberra on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country for my teenage years, subsequently returning to Adelaide for my tertiary music studies (specialising in flute performance) at the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide. I have also lived in California and studied in Italy. Most recently I have been studying and lecturing at the ANU School of Music.⁴²

For much of my academic working life I was fortunate to hold a full-time tenured academic position at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide. Through this work I had an opportunity to learn about matters of significance to Australian First Nations Peoples, and to First Nations musicians, culture owners, and tertiary music students, in particular. The experience and the knowledge I gained from this informed my work, and public presentation and scholarly publication on matters concerned with expression of the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in Australian tertiary music education and research. This in turn contributed to advancement of my academic career. The privileged nature of this work likely played a significant role in my acceptance into the PhD program on the topic of this research. I was always humbled by the encouragement and support of the First Nations staff at CASM and again now by the First Nations staff at the ANU School of Music.

My “theory-practice position” in the research is an Indigenous-informed, transformative-rectifactory one, informed by Indigenous perspectives and knowledges,⁴³ and which recognises the rights of First Nations Peoples to primacy of voice, agency and control in determining responses and futures in colonial contexts.⁴⁴ In the research, this position was applied through a commitment to progressing a transformative institutional change agenda, based in supporting structural and systemic change, restoration of authority, and reparative

⁴² I have been teaching musicology courses on a sessional basis.

⁴³ This position is informed by Indigenous voices and methodologies concerned with redress, righting of deep historical wrongs, and remedy of asymmetric relations of power (Amighetti & Nuti, 2015; Australian National University, 2024b; Collste, 2010, 2016; Mörkenstam, 2015; Puch-Bouwman, 2014). Puch-Bouwman describes “approaches that [non-Indigenous] researchers may adopt in relation to colonial issues in their research work, which in turn affect their practices” (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 409); and proposes a “rectifactory theory-practice position” which advocates for “resistance, trans-generational justice and reparation by non-Indigenous researchers in Indigenous-related research” (p. 408), and which suggests that non-Indigenous people can enact forms of “epistemological resistance” and “apply rectifactory measures in their work” (p. 416).

⁴⁴ This is reflective of an anti-colonial “living in Indigenous sovereignty” position (Carlson, 2016, pp. 1–3).

justice and the righting of past wrongs.⁴⁵ This approach may be understood as supporting intervention, with a view to employing a proactive process of dismantling “structural inequalities” to make institutions more inclusive (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, pp. 1, 47). Above all, the position affirms the essential role of Indigenous self-determination in rectifying “injustices and their continuing effects” (Mörkenstam, 2015, p. 636).

As a non-Indigenous person, involvement in Indigenous matters research means to consciously enter a complex and contested space,⁴⁶ which in the context of intercultural research collaboration has been described as a “discomfort zone” (Somerville & Perkins, 2003, pp. 261–264), and which is recognised as an ongoing “site of struggle” (McGloin, 2009, p. 41), including for Indigenous scholars.⁴⁷ Such challenges demand grappling with the entrenched and entangled nature of colonial legacy, and the inherently challenging, contentious, and ultimately conditional and contingent nature of that involvement.⁴⁸

My involvement in the research demanded recognition of privileged, personal, and situational positioning. This meant commitment to an ongoing process of critical reflection and self-reflexivity; interrogation of personal motives, motivations, and intentions; and critical reflection on the ways in which my world view, values, preconceptions, assumptions, and sense of personal identity might potentially impact my thinking, decisions and actions in the research.⁴⁹ Privileged positioning in the research necessitated also taking into account ethical principles in research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (AIATSIS, 2020a), including the potential impacts of unequal power relations (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC] et al., 2023, pp. 70–71). A multilayered approach to reflexivity was important, giving consideration to both inter-personal and collective relational dynamics in the research design and collaborative processes of the research, inclusive of the possibility for post-research impacts and effects.⁵⁰ A key task in the

⁴⁵ See also, Newsome (2022); Sainsbury et al. (2022).

⁴⁶ The expression *Indigenous matters research* was suggested by my supervisor Professor Christopher Sainsbury as an expression that avoids negative connotation whilst also inferring that Indigenous research *matters*.

⁴⁷ Barney & Proud (2014, pp. 89, 94); Bracknell (2015, pp. 201–202); Hart et al. (2017, p. 334); McGloin (2009, pp. 38–40).

⁴⁸ This recognises that theory-practice positions drawn on by non-Indigenous researchers have mostly “recreated colonial residues and relations” and therefore constitute “higher level symptoms and strategies for dealing with the “still-colonial” condition in Indigenous-related research (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 410). See also, Barney (2014b, pp. 3–5); Barney (2016, p. 112); Barney & Proud (2014, p. 94); Nakata (2007, pp. 214–217); Olsen (2018, pp. 209–210); Pease (2021, pp. 225–243); Treloyn & Charles (2014, pp. 184–186).

⁴⁹ See also, Guide to Applying the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020, p. 5); Kovach (2021, p. 12); McCartan et al. (2022, pp. 9–10, 267); Mertens (2016, p. 103); Muhammad et al. (2015); Puch-Bouwman (2014, pp. 409–410); Smith (1999, pp. 176–178); Te Rau Ora Webinars (2017); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021, p. 1); Tuck and Yang (2012, pp. 3–4).

⁵⁰ AIATSIS (2020, pp. 21–22); Nicholls (2009); Smith (2021, p. xiv); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021, p. 6).

research was determining the roles and responsibilities of participants, including my own. This meant problematising notions of ‘collaboration’, ‘partnership’, and ‘co-research’ with a view to exposing power inequalities and the possibility of colonial privilege, including in the context of integration of purpose and process in pursuing mutually supported goals within the institutional context.⁵¹

Problematisation extended to interrogating my role in the research as Principal Researcher,⁵² including in considering ways of counteracting the “double-privilege” of the non-Indigenous researcher, where the researcher is both white and the leader of the research (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, pp. 414, 416).⁵³ My approach to this was informed by scholarly sources, stakeholder feedback, and guidance from my PhD supervisors throughout the research. Further discussion on scholarly sources related to power and privilege and the involvement of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous research contexts is provided in Chapter 2: Sources and Literature. The roles and responsibilities of participants and management of unequal power relations in the research are described in Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Methods.⁵⁴

1.6 Research overview

1.6.1 Research question

*So, the first thing is to bring Indigenous people to the School and say, what do you and your communities think is necessary? And then we start on that process. And I think that’s the foundation stone.*⁵⁵ (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022c)

Central to the addressing the research question was the participation and contribution of First Nations stakeholders from the outset (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022c). The overarching research question is concerned with how Australian tertiary music education institutions can enhance engagement with and address the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples

⁵¹ See Barney (2012, 2014a, 2016); Dudgeon et al. (2020); Hart et al. (2017); hooks & Scapp (2010); Hunt & Bauman (2022); Kendall (2013); Kovach (2009, 2021); Mertens (2007); Muhammad et al. (2015); Olsen (2018); Pease (2021); Pechenkina & Lui (2018); Porter & Arabena (2018); Puch-Bouwman (2014); Young (2011).

⁵² This was a requirement of the PhD.

⁵³ This meant being willing to change my role or discontinue the research if this were important to First Nations stakeholders/participants.

⁵⁴ These are also addressed in key research documents: Research Agreement (Appendix A); Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research (Appendix B); Risk Management Strategy (Appendix C); Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research Project (Appendix D).

⁵⁵ The quote is from Professor Kim Cunio who was then Head of the ANU School of Music (2019–2023) and at that time my Principal Supervisor.

and communities more effectively. In simple terms the research asks what tertiary music education institutions should be doing for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities? In addressing this question, the research asked two key interconnected questions: 1. What are the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system? 2. How can Australian tertiary music education institutions address the identified priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities more effectively?⁵⁶ In addressing these key questions, the research considered a critical third auxiliary question concerned with identifying and developing a suitable methodological approach for the research, one which would be underpinned by Indigenous self-determination and could be adapted to the place-based community-institution contexts and circumstances of the research at the ANU School of Music (see 1.6.5).⁵⁷

1.6.2 Research argument

Central to addressing the research questions was recognition of the entrenched and entangled nature of an ongoing colonial legacy in the Australian tertiary music education system, and the importance of addressing this in a way that would bring about meaningful change and tangible benefits for First Nations people,⁵⁸ both in the short and longer terms, and in ways that were acceptable to First Nations stakeholders. This included recognition of the need for restoration of authority in addressing the ongoing effects of colonial legacy, through Indigenous self-determination.

The research is based in the premise that Indigenous self-determination provides an ethical, pragmatic, and practical means for progressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the colonial legacy contexts of the Australian tertiary music education system.⁵⁹ This recognises that responsiveness to the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples needs to be evidence-based and centre Indigenous agency and solutions (Department of Education, 2023b; Behrendt et al., 2012; J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017).⁶⁰ A

⁵⁶ This included through a focus on the ANU School of Music.

⁵⁷ The bespoke approach developed for the research is described in Chapter 3: The Case Study and Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods. See also, *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B).

⁵⁸ In the research this included addressing the need to facilitate parity with non-Indigenous students with respect to closing the gap in educational outcomes (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. xvii, 94-102), and considering ways in which this might be achieved. (See Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations)

⁵⁹ This included in providing a means for recalibration of conventional approaches to decision-making, with the aim of transforming the social, cultural, and structural status-quo within the institution to bring about impactful change.

⁶⁰ It also recognises that what counts as evidence should “privilege Indigenous voices, intellectualism, sovereignties, strengths and aspirations” (Shay et al., 2023, p. 74).

participatory research methodology which centred the agency, participation, and voices of First Nations People provided a means for achieving this (Kovach, 2009; Mertens, 2007; L. Smith, 2021; Walter, 2010).

The approach to the research was predicated on mitigation of presumption as an essential starting point in developing effective responses to the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples in Australian tertiary music education institutions (Mertens, 2016; Nakata, 2013), and was grounded in First Nations perspectives and decision making as a means for generating fresh understandings and evidence-based approaches to the development of new strategy (Shay et al., 2023, pp. 83–84; Larkin, 2011, pp. 6–8).⁶¹

The bespoke Indigenous-centred co-design methodology developed for the research sought to ground the enquiry in First Nations lived realities, firstly by identifying the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and then on the basis of this evidence, developing recommendations for addressing these in the specific institutional setting.⁶² Indigenous self-determination underpinned three main aspects: principles (‘what matters’), research design (‘how to’), and results (‘what should be done’). The research did not extend to implementation of the recommendations (‘doing it’) or evaluation of outcomes (‘seeing if it worked’),⁶³ as these were deemed to be beyond the scope of a PhD study.⁶⁴

1.6.3 Research aims, goals, and objectives

The overarching aims of the research were to contribute to alleviating structural inequalities resulting from a legacy of settler-colonialism in the context of Australian tertiary music education system, by privileging the views and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The main goal of the research was to develop nationally focussed Indigenous-informed empirical evidence, grounded in the insights and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations Peoples, as a means for enhancing the engagement of

⁶¹ This recognises that diagnostic assumptions about “the root causes of issues” or “the nature of a problem” can lead to assumptions about interventions to address the problem (Mertens, 2016, p. 102). There is a need therefore to interrogate “underlying assumptions” and “frames of reference” (Nakata, 2013, p. 292) given that it is not easy to discern what “frameworks, forms of analysis, and practices support Indigenous interests and what don’t” (p. 301), and that these may fail to engage with “the complexity of the contemporary space” in which First Nations people find themselves (p. 289).

⁶² Co-design, with its emphasis on collaborative stakeholder participation and a vision of “a desired end” rather than simply looking at what is wrong, provided a methodological foundation for achieving this (Burkett, 2012 p. 6).

⁶³ These constitute the delivery (testing solutions) phases of co-design (Design Council, 2024).

⁶⁴ They may however be considered essential components in co-design (Blomkamp, 2018; Design Council, 2024; Schwab, 2021; WACOSS, 2016).

Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and improving outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. xv, 5, 51, 83, 154; Gore et al., 2017a, pp. 338–339; Shay et al., 2023). The specific goals were twofold: 1. To develop an evidence-based understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and 2. To develop a set of nationally focussed First Nations informed recommendations for strategies to address the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system, and at the ANU School of Music specifically. The objectives of the research were to: 1. Identify the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and the ANU School of Music specifically, and 2. Develop a set of Indigenous-informed recommendations to inform the engagement of the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and improve outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in and through the work of the ANU School of Music.

1.6.4 Research principles and protocols

What is crystal clear is that self-determination is still the aspiration and the principle that Aboriginal and Aboriginal organisations live their lives by. (Hon. MP Linda Burney, 2018)

Self-determination, as the aspiration of First Nations people (Hon. MP Linda Burney, 2018), was adopted as the underpinning principle for the research. The research was based in Indigenous rights, including to self-determination and social justice, and centred the agency, participation, and voices of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research. This aligns with the argument that “future reform and system level changes must be driven by the expertise and lived experience of First Nations people and reflect a self-determined approach” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 247).

The principal concerns were to implement “best practice” ethical conduct in research involving First Nations people and to adhere to Indigenous protocols, including those specific to the place-based and overlapping institutional and First Nations community contexts of the research at the ANU School of Music. This included recognition of and respect for the diverse and shared values, cultures, and protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

and communities throughout the research. Details about the research principles and protocols are outlined in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A) and *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document (Appendix B) and are also integrated throughout the thesis.

1.6.5 Research paradigm, methodology and methods

The research was situated within a transformative applied paradigm,⁶⁵ and the research methodology was based in an Indigenous-centred participatory-action theoretical framework,⁶⁶ informed by a critical perspectives approach.⁶⁷

The research comprised a place-based, extended case study conducted at the ANU School of Music and employed an Indigenous-centred advanced mixed-methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design.⁶⁸ The Indigenous-centred co-design framework sought to facilitate Indigenous self-determination by privileging and amplifying the voices of diverse experientially informed First Nations people in addressing the research questions and the aims, goals, and objectives of the research, and in determining the findings and recommendations of the research.⁶⁹

The co-design framework comprised a bespoke place-based, Indigenous-informed adaptation of co-design in which Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods components were integrated within a framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design.⁷⁰ The Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design framework provided a means for ensuring participation, contribution, and control in the research by First Nations stakeholders as co-researchers throughout the research, including in the conceptualization, design and conduct of the research, interpretation of results, and

⁶⁵ Chilisa & Kawulich (2012); Kovach (2009); Mertens (2007); Schensul et al. (2014); Sheehy (1992); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021); Trotter et al. (2014).

⁶⁶ Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Dudgeon et al. (2020); Guijt & Mayne (2019); Kendall et al. (2011); Mertens (2007); Mooney-Somers & Mahor (2009); Putt (2013); Sardo (2017); Smith (1999, 2021); Beng (2016); Trotter et al. (2014); Vaughan & Jacquez (2020).

⁶⁷ Chilisa (2005); Chilisa et al. (2017); Hart et al. (2017); hooks (2010); Kendall (2013); Kovach (2009, 2021); Locke & Prentice (2016); Moreton-Robinson (2004); Nicholls (2009); Pease (2021); Pechenkina & Lui (2018); Porter & Arabena (2018); Rigney (1999); Smith (1999, 2021); Trotter et al. (2014); Tuck & Yang (2012).

⁶⁸ Co-design was selected due to its capacity to facilitate Indigenous self-determination and its track record in other Indigenous research and development contexts where co-design has become a preferred participatory methodology for addressing the interests of Australian First Nations Peoples in public policy and programs. Examples include National Indigenous Australians Agency (2021); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); and University of Sydney (2020). See also, *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B).

⁶⁹ This sought to provide a counteractive strategy to historical exclusion and power inequities in the institutional contexts of the research.

⁷⁰ The bespoke framework design recognised relational, place-based, and community-institution contexts in responding effectively to stakeholder interests in the particular location and conditions (Dreise, 2018; Raciti et al., 2017), and comprised a multifaceted, inclusive approach incorporating Indigenous governance and informed First Nations decision making throughout the research.

communication of findings. This approach sought to decentre existing power relations and ensure that a diversity of views and perspectives and decision-making by experientially informed First Nations stakeholders would go to the heart of the investigation.⁷¹ It also provided a means by which a diverse mix of differentially positioned and variously situated stakeholders could be brought together in a process-driven, dialogic, solutions-oriented effort.⁷²

The Indigenous-centred advanced mixed-methods approach provided the means for incorporating multiple perspectives inclusive of a breadth, depth, and diversity of views of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds, locations, and communities, and for enhancing the validity of results through triangulation of methods.⁷³ In combination, the Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design framework and participatory mixed-methods approach provided a means for contribution to the research by a diversity of experientially informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders,⁷⁴ and for facilitating Indigenous self-determination, governance, ownership, and control in the research.⁷⁵

1.6.6 Research design

The research design comprised four integrated components, each of which contributed in a different but complementary way to the role of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders in contributing to and influencing the results of the research. In combination the components served to ground the project in First Nations realities and provided a means for First Nations agency and governance in the research. The four integrated components comprised: 1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group 2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops 3. Survey Questionnaire 4. Interviews.

⁷¹ This contrasts with the usual institutional ‘top-to-bottom neo-colonial systems of validation’ (Araújo, 2008, p. 14), premised on the proposition that “bottom-up” participatory approaches can “promote multi-vocality” and “create a safe and inclusive research environment that addresses community needs” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 173).

⁷² This provided a means for ensuring that “... the means is the end and [that] the conduct of the research is embedded in the process of introducing or generating change” (Trotter et al., 2014, p. 663).

⁷³ Anticipated developments included targeted access pathways, equity and inclusion initiatives, specialised units of study, outreach programs, and community and industry engaged initiatives.

⁷⁴ This recognises the importance of broad representation inclusive of ‘outside voices’ consistent with the national scope of the project and the mission of the university; and the importance of Indigenous agency and diverse voices in unpacking the “complex web between policy/practice/research” (Shay et al., 2023, p. 82).

⁷⁵ This sought to ensure Indigenous data sovereignty, functionality, and governance in the research (Schnarch, 2004; Walter, 2010; Walter, 2016; Drew et al., 2015, 2016; Kukutai & Taylor, 2016a; Smith et al., 2018; Wilks et al., 2018), and to facilitate post-project implementation and evaluation of outcomes (Smith et al., 2018; Burkett, 2012; Blomkamp, 2018).

The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group was established to provide First Nations governance, guidance, and oversight in the research and as an ongoing body for the ANU School of Music.⁷⁶ The three mixed-methods components comprised a series of four Indigenous Co-design Focus Group workshops,⁷⁷ a nationally focused Survey Questionnaire,⁷⁸ and three in-depth interviews. These constituted the data collection components which provided the results for development of the findings and the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music. Integration of the three methods was facilitated using a Thematic Framework working document, which provided a common guide (or “thread”) to which the Focus Group Workshop participants could refer in considering the key research questions.⁷⁹ The four components may be represented as shown in Figure 1.1. The diagram illustrates the overarching governance role of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group in the research and the interrelationship between the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop and Survey Questionnaire and Interview components.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ This included in taking carriage of and facilitating implementation of the set of recommendations and contributing to monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the research over time.

⁷⁷ These involved contribution by experientially informed First Nations co-researchers.

⁷⁸ This was co-designed together with the Focus Group co-researchers.

⁷⁹ This was drafted in the early startup phase of the research following the inaugural meeting of the PhD Project Indigenous Working Group (comprising the First Nations staff in the School of Music) and was then considered and contributed to by the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop participants during the research. The themes informed the lines of questioning for and thematic analyses of the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components, and development of the set of recommendations for the School of Music.

⁸⁰ The integrated mixed-methods approach was adapted from Creswell (2013). See Chapter 4 (4.2.4).

Figure 1.1

Indigenous Co-design Framework



1.6.7 Research participants

The primary participants in the research were experientially informed First Nations participants, as the key stakeholders and intended main beneficiaries of the research, together with myself as the principal researcher.⁸¹ The First Nations staff of the School of Music participated in the project as co-researchers.⁸² The non-Indigenous staff of the School were also involved, supporting a “whole-of-School” approach.⁸³

The research participants comprised:

1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (9 participants)⁸⁴
2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops (x4) (6 participants)⁸⁵
3. Survey Questionnaire (38 participants)
4. Interviews (3 participants)

The research collected data contributed by forty-five experientially informed First Nations stakeholders: Focus Group Workshops (4 participants); Survey Questionnaire (38 participants); Interviews (3 participants).

⁸¹ This was a requirement of the PhD candidature.

⁸² This included through participation in an initial PhD Project Indigenous Working Group and then as members of the formally constituted ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.

⁸³ See Chapter 3 (3.4.8).

⁸⁴ This reduced to eight when one member was unable to continue.

⁸⁵ This reduced to four when two members were unable to continue.

Roles of research participants

My role as principal researcher was a multi-faceted one encompassing: background research; stakeholder consultations/communications; preparation of the ethics application; project design; authoring of briefing documents and conduct of briefings; authoring of drafts/final confirmed versions of key research documents⁸⁶; planning and coordination of the participatory components,⁸⁷ including constitution of the Reference Group,⁸⁸ and the Focus Group; creation and distribution of the Survey Questionnaire⁸⁹; conduct of the interviews; data collection/analyses; authoring of drafts/final confirmed version of the *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* (Appendix E)⁹⁰; authoring of the *Research Results and Recommendations Final Report* (Appendix F) and the PhD thesis; and dissemination of the research results.⁹¹

Roles of the participants in the four components of the research were as follows:

1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group: First Nations stakeholder co-researchers – review/confirmation of key documents and oversight, guidance, and support in the research.
2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops: First Nations stakeholder co-researchers – review/confirmation of key documents; consideration/response to the key research questions; consideration of lines of questioning for the Survey Questionnaire and Interviews; contribution to development/analysis of the Survey Questionnaire; contribution to/confirmation of the formal set of recommendations to the ANU School of Music.
3. Survey Questionnaire: First Nations stakeholder participants – consideration/response to the key research questions.
4. Interviews: Indigenous stakeholder participants – consideration/response to the key research questions; review/confirmation of summaries of interview.

⁸⁶ These were confirmed by the co-research participants.

⁸⁷ This included convening/facilitating meetings/workshops and creating drafts/final confirmed minutes/summaries of meetings and interviews.

⁸⁸ This included authoring of drafts/final versions of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which were then reviewed and confirmed by the members of the Reference Group.

⁸⁹ This included in collaboration with the Focus Group co-researchers.

⁹⁰ This was reviewed and confirmed by the Focus Group co-researchers.

⁹¹ First Nations oversight, guidance, and support in the research was provided by Professor Christopher Sainsbury (ANU School of Music Indigenous Convenor and PhD Principal Supervisor), the PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group, and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (chaired by Professor Sainsbury).

1.7 Benefits and beneficiaries

All participants in the research were involved in considering ways to address the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system more effectively. The primary intended beneficiaries of the research were Australian First Nations people as the key stakeholders. Anticipated benefits included direct and indirect, and short-and long-term benefits for the research participants and for First Nations people and communities more broadly. Secondary intended beneficiaries were the ANU School of Music, Australian tertiary music education institutions, and potentially the Australian performing arts sectors and industry and community more broadly. The immediate outcome of the research was the formal set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music, which aimed to progress outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in and through the work of the School into the future. Details about the benefits of the research are articulated in the *Benefits of the Research* document (Appendix G).

1.8 Risks and risk management

Potential risks to participants in the research were identified as a standard condition of formal ethics approval for the research. Risks were identified for all research components and included: psychological/emotional distress, economic loss, and risk of third-party identification. Every effort was made in the design and implementation of the research to minimise risks to participants. Details about risks and their minimisation, mitigation and management are articulated in the *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C).

1.9 Overview of sources and literature review

The literature review encompassed a wide range of topics relevant to addressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system. This comprised a large body of sources, including scholarly literature, international declarations, national statements, policy and review documents, and protocol and research guidelines. Reviewed topics encompassed: Indigenous rights, self-determination and social justice; national and institutional policy frameworks; engagement of Australian universities and tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities; higher education and “closing the gap”; First Nations culture and “closing the gap”; Indigenous music sustainability and music diversity in the Australian tertiary music education system; First Nations underrepresentation and equity and inclusion in

the Australian tertiary music education system; First Nations access, participation, and success in the Australian tertiary music education system; research principles, paradigms, methodologies, and methods; Indigenous research methodologies and decolonisation in research; positionality and power in research; Indigenous research ethics and protocols; Indigenous data availability, sovereignty, governance, and functionality; place-based and case study research⁹²; and the co-design methodology.⁹³

1.9.1 Gaps in the scholarly literature

The literature review was conducted in the context of a rapidly evolving Australian First Nations policy and research environment. In view of the large and ever-increasing quantity of literature relevant to the topic of the research and the importance of currency and relevance in the specific contexts of the research, the scope of the review was restricted, though not exclusively to Australian sources inclusive of and subsequent to the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012). Wherever possible there was a focus on sources inclusive of First Nations voices and perspectives. The research responds to the following gaps in the scholarly literature.

The literature review revealed a large body of scholarly literature concerned with equity and inclusion and engagement of Australian higher education with First Nations Peoples and communities, and on research methodologies and methods, including Indigenous research and research methodologies. However, the review revealed a paucity of scholarly literature concerned with addressing the rights of diverse First Nations Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system specifically. Although Indigenous self-determination is recognised as being key to improving outcomes for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system (Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 78), there is a notable lack of literature concerned with articulation and implementation of Indigenous self-determination and social justice strategy in the Australian tertiary music education system. There is also a lack of scholarly literature addressing implications of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Closing the Gap, 2020) for Australian tertiary music education institutions. The review also revealed a paucity of scholarly literature addressing First Nations underrepresentation, equity and inclusion (access, participation, and success) in the Australian tertiary music education system; and an absence of literature on the need for monitoring and evaluation of Indigenous engagement and equity policy, practice, and impact for First Nations Peoples in Australian tertiary music education institutions.

⁹² See Chapter 3 (3.1).

⁹³ See Chapter 4 (4.2).

The review confirmed the absence of nationally focussed Indigenous-informed research identifying and addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with Australian tertiary music institutions specifically.⁹⁴ This included a lack of scholarly literature on research paradigms, case study research,⁹⁵ and on co-design research addressing First Nations underrepresentation, exclusion, and inequities in the Australian tertiary music education system.⁹⁶ There was also a gap in the scholarly literature concerned with implications of the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012) for the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions. This included in recognising the critical and empowering role of higher education in improving the socio-economic position and life circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 3–5)⁹⁷; implementation of the “whole-of-university” recommendation (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xix)⁹⁸; and the need for further work to be done on the “quality and relevance of data collected” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xv).

The main literature review is provided in Chapter 2: Sources and Literature. The literature review specific to the case-study is provided in Chapter 3: The Case Study; and the literature review specific to the research methodologies and methods is provided in Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods.

1.10 Significance of the research

No matter what aspect of education we're looking at, we must retain the integrity of our cultural heritage. In my view it is a fundamental human right that Indigenous peoples be guaranteed an education, which respects and strengthens our cultural heritage. A right and not a privilege. (Dodson, 1994, p. 2)

The research aims to contribute to alleviating structural inequalities resulting from a legacy of settler-colonialism in the context of the Australian tertiary music education system, and to do so by privileging the views and perspectives of experientially informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The research seeks to contribute nationally focussed

⁹⁴ This is despite the strong presence and successes of First Nations musicians and music making in the Australian music profession/industry.

⁹⁵ See Newsome (2008, 2016), which provide case studies related to the work of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM).

⁹⁶ There was also a paucity of scholarly literature on research methodologies addressing underrepresentation, exclusion, and inequities for First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system.

⁹⁷ This is relevant also to “closing the gap” (See Closing the Gap-Information Repository, n.d.).

⁹⁸ There is also limited literature on “whole-of-university” approaches more generally (Buckskin et al., 2017, p. 31).

Indigenous-informed empirical data and recommendations useful to enhancing the engagement of Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse First Nations Peoples and communities and in responding to the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities more effectively. More specifically, the research seeks to contribute to identifying and addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and to enhancing outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in and through the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions, with a focus on the ANU School of Music.

An education system which respects human rights is one which respects and strengthens First Nations cultural heritage (Dodson, 1994). This first-time bespoke Indigenous-centred study seeks to contribute to knowledge on approaches to Indigenous-centred co-design, and to demonstrate the efficacy of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous-centred co-design in developing evidence-based approaches to addressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. The study seeks to also draw attention to the role and responsibilities of Australian tertiary music education institutions in responding to the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities, including with respect to the imperatives of “closing the gap” and supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making.

Anticipated outcomes include an Indigenous-informed, evidence-based understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and targeted strategies for enhancing institutional responsiveness to the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities, including in and through the work of the ANU School of Music. The findings and recommendations of the research may also be applicable in other Australian tertiary music education contexts.

1.11 Summary of findings

The research findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions can address these, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music.

The research confirms the fundamental importance of support for First Nations rights, encompassing educational and cultural rights, and the essential role of Indigenous self-determination in progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. This means involving First Nations people in decision making in all aspects and at every level of the institution, together with proactive equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and antiracism policies and strategies. Recognition of the vital role and special contribution of First Nations people in the work of tertiary music education institutions is also essential, as are strategies to increase First Nations staffing and support First Nations staff. Targeted investment, funding, and resourcing are critical.

The research found that tertiary music institutions need to be welcoming, culturally affirming, and “culturally safe” places for all First Nations people. Recognition and respect for First Nations Peoples, protocols, cultures, knowledges, and practices were considered essential. This means implementing culturally inclusive and responsive policies and practices that make space for First Nations voices, are inclusive of First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and expressing, and which embrace diversity. Connection with Country, culture, and community, and culturally rich, safe, and affirming First Nations “spaces and places” for gathering, learning, and making music are also essential.

The research found that facilitating access for First Nations musicians to tertiary music institutions was a high priority, and that First Nations students should have access to all available programs as well as to dedicated cultural programs with a focus on First Nations learning priorities and needs. It was considered essential too that study programs take into full account the cultural heritage, musical and educational backgrounds, and knowledges, skills, and achievements of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity. Institutions need to also be proactive in facilitating the participation and success of First Nations students, including through targeted programs and tailored holistic approaches to student support. Research and research training should be based in Indigenous self-determination and support First Nations priorities.

For Australian tertiary music education institutions, the research findings highlight the critical importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights; align with First Nations cultures and values; support the learning priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; recognise First Nations diversity; and above all, observe Indigenous self-determination as the guiding principle.

1.12 Outline of chapters

1.12.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an outline of the research project, including the nature of the research and its contexts; rationale, argument, principles and protocols; questions, aims, goals and objectives; paradigm, design, methodology and methods; and research findings and significance. The chapter also provides an overview of sources and the literature review, including identified gaps in the literature; impetus for the research; researcher background and positionality; participants and their roles in the research; and anticipated benefits and identified risks in the research.

1.12.2 Chapter 2: Sources and Literature

Chapter 2 provides a review of a wide range of sources on key topics relevant to addressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. Sources comprised international declarations and national statements, scholarly literature, policy and review documents, and protocol and research guidelines. These contributed to an understanding of the contexts of research; validation of the need for the research; confirmation of the research goals, aims, and objectives; confirmation of the research principles and protocols; clarification of the research rationale and argument; formulation of the research questions and the research paradigm, design, methodology and methods; clarification of researcher positionality and the roles of research participants; and development of the research ethics protocols and data controls for the research. Sources specific to the case study are discussed in Chapter 3: The Case Study, and sources specific to development and implementation of the research methodology and methods are discussed in Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods.

1.12.3 Chapter 3: The Case Study

Chapter 3 provides a review of the key literature and sources that informed the approach to the case study, and details of the institutional contexts and circumstances of the case study and its implementation at the ANU School of Music School. The chapter includes an overview of stakeholder engagement, ethics approval, establishment of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, the “whole-of-School” approach, and researcher reflections on the conditions and processes of the research.

1.12.4 Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

Chapter 4 is in two parts. Part 1 provides a review of key scholarly literature and sources relevant to the research methodology and methods, and which informed the methodological approach to research. These encompass sources on applied, participatory, and participatory action research; Indigenous research methodologies; research methods; and the co-design methodology. Part 2 provides details of the bespoke co-design framework, methodology, and methods, and their implementation in the research.

1.12.5 Chapter 5: Results

Chapter 5 presents the results of the three research methods. These comprise the quantitative and qualitative results of the Survey Questionnaire, which are presented as tables with annotations and a Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis Summary; and the qualitative results of the three Interviews and four Focus Group Workshop discussions, which are presented as main point summaries of discussion.

1.12.6 Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion

Chapter 6 provides an integrated summary and discussion of the findings of the research with a focus on insights offered by a synthesis of the three methods (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group Workshops). This shows the way in which the results of the three methods complement one another to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding. In combination, the quantitative results shed light on statistical patterns and trends, while the qualitative findings provide deeper insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of participants. The chapter also outlines the limitations of the research and proposes recommendations for future research.

1.12.7 Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the research project, including the topic and its importance; gaps in the scholarly literature addressed by the research; research principles, premise, and rationale; research aims, goals, design, methodology, and methods; research questions; research findings and implications; beneficiaries of the research; research recommendations; potential impact of future research; research contribution; and final concluding comments.

Chapter 2: Sources and Literature

Indigenous peoples view education as a foundational right that should simultaneously serve and sustain culture and minimize socio-economic disparity.

(Kovach, 2021, p. 257)

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.9), the literature review encompassed a wide range of topics and a large body of sources relevant to addressing the rights and interests of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

For Indigenous people, education is a fundamental right which should not only contribute to addressing “socio-economic disparity” but also contribute to supporting and sustaining culture (Kovach, 2021, p. 257). The literature review found that international human rights charters and conventions, including UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007), are considered critical to assertion of First Nations rights in Australian tertiary education, and particularly with respect to progressing Indigenous self-determination (Bowery et al., 2022; Hogarth, 2018a; Larkin, 2011). Also important are national statements which articulate educational and cultural rights, including *The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’s Rights in Education Uluru* (WIPCE International Council, 1999). However, although Indigenous self-determination in Australian tertiary education has been highlighted in recent sources (Department of Education, 2023b, 2024; NATSIHEC, 2023), there is still a national policy vacuum with respect to articulation of Indigenous rights in the Australian tertiary music education system.

There is a significant body of scholarly work on the engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities in education and research, including sources which affirm the importance of Indigenous self-determination.¹ However, while Australian universities may articulate their commitment to engagement in institutional strategic policy documents, there is an absence of scholarly research evaluating the efficacy

¹ Barney (2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2023); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bracknell (2019a); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Corn (2013); Mackinlay & Barney (2017); Sainsbury (2019); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Treloyn (2016a).

and impact of these commitments in improving access and outcomes for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system, highlighting the need for evaluative research and evidence-based approaches (J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017).

Higher education outcomes are recognised as fundamental to Closing the Gap (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 36). The literature review revealed however that First Nations people continue to encounter significant access and participation barriers to equitable participation in Australian higher education, and the system remains inequitable, with First Nations outcomes continuing to lag behind for key indicators. There is little scholarly literature addressing the implications of this for Australian tertiary music institutions, and also a paucity of literature addressing equity and inclusion for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system more generally, drawing attention to the commitments of institutions to achieving equity for First Nations people, as an “overdue and urgent national priority” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 2). There is however a very significant body of broader literature on equity and inclusion for First Nations people in the Australian higher education system, which highlights structural inequalities,² and the need for a greater focus on “the efficacy of equity programs and initiatives” (Naylor et al., 2013, p. 7). Notably, the review revealed a lack of publicly available national data on the participation and success of First Nations tertiary music students, and on First Nations staffing in Australian tertiary music education institutions.

Multiple sources highlight the connection between music and culture and health and well-being for First Nations people, and, also, the need for support for cultural sustainability, including by tertiary music education institutions (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020; Marett, 2004; Schippers & Grant, 2016). There is also a substantial body of literature on First Nations music and music making in tertiary music education contexts, with several sources highlighting the importance of music diversity in the Australian tertiary music education system. What is little addressed however is the underrepresentation of the diversity of First Nations musicians, musics, and music making practices within tertiary music education institutions, with “greater inclusion of Indigenous people and their musics” recommended (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 70, 75-76). There is also a substantial body of scholarly literature on inclusion of Indigenous music in teaching and learning in Australian tertiary music education institutions, where a kind of “double identity” has been observed in Indigenous studies, comprised of education for Indigenous students on the one hand, and education about First Nations cultures and histories for all students (Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall, 2003) on the other. Differences and

² Behrendt et al. (2012); Frawley et al. (2015); J. Smith et al. (2018); Liddle (2016); Naylor et al. (2013); Naylor & Misfud (2019).

tensions in the teaching of Australian Indigenous studies and in Indigenous education have also received considerable attention, including with reference to Cultural Interface Theory (Nakata, 2007).

The literature review revealed a lack of scholarly literature on research paradigms relevant to addressing exclusion and underrepresentation of First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system. The broader literature however describes a transformative emancipatory paradigm (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012) which aligns with the aims and goals of the research. There is also significant literature on decolonisation in research, including critical discourse on researcher positionality and which addresses the responsibilities and roles of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous matters research. A range of possible researcher theory-practice positions are described, including the ‘rectifactory’ position, which aligns with the aims of the research (Collste, 2010, 2016; Puch-Bouwman, 2014). Approaches relevant to the research include the ‘anti-colonial’ position (Hart et al. 2017), a ‘relational ethos’ (Kovach, 2021); a ‘being in Indigenous sovereignty’ position (Carey, 2008; Nicoll, 2004); and the ‘activist’ approach (Hale, 2006). Irrespective, it is important to recognise that our efforts as non-Indigenous people, take place in a “continuing colonial paradigm” (Porter & Arabena, 2018), highlighting the importance of critical reflection, including on ‘whiteness’, power and privilege, and where researcher self-reflexivity is essential. The literature review also revealed invaluable discourse on, and definitions of Indigenous-led research, which informed the research methodology.

Indigenous research ethics and protocols were a particular focus of the literature review, the findings of which informed key aspects of the research design and methodology. Of central importance were formal guidelines (AIATSIS, 2020a; NHMRC, 2018a) and the understanding that researchers need to “critically examine their research practices” (L. Smith, 2021, p. 261). Approaches specifically relevant to the research included alignment with an “Indigenous conceptual framework” (Kovach, 2021), a foundation in relational ethics (Kovach, 2021; Porter & Arabena, 2018; Wilson, 2004), and adherence to the four principles of “ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP)” as an expression of Indigenous self-determination in research (Schnarch, 2004, p. 80). Sources also confirmed Indigenous data control as important to the exercise of “individual and collective rights to self-determination” in research (Global Indigenous Data Alliance, 2019), and multiple sources highlighted the importance of quality data; Indigenous data sovereignty, availability, governance, and functionality; and appropriate approaches to analysis and interpretation of data; each of which emphasised Indigenous rights in research.

Sources relevant to the case study are reviewed in Chapter 3: The Case Study, and sources relevant to the research methodology and methods are reviewed in Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods.

2.2 Indigenous rights, self-determination, and social justice

We need to be more assertive. The international human rights charters and conventions articulate our rights in education. We need to base our actions in these texts. We need to privilege the agency afforded to us in these texts. Our children and our future are dependent on it. (Hogarth, 2018a, p. 114)

The research was informed by key international declarations and conventions and nationally significant statements, which validated Indigenous rights to self-determination and social justice as the underpinning principles for the research.

Key international sources comprised the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP)³; *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948); UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003/2006); *The Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005); and the *UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education* (1960). Key nationally significant statements comprised the *Barunga Statement* (1988); *The Redfern Statement* (2016); *Uluru Statement from the Heart* (2017); *Masig Statement* (2022); and *The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education* (WIPCE International Council, 1999).

International human rights charters and conventions which articulate Indigenous rights in education provide a basis for assertion of such rights (Hogarth, 2018a), which need to be advanced through transformative change based in recognition that the “Indigenous voice needs to be heard” (p. 112). In the research Indigenous rights are construed as a cascade of rights flowing from UNDRIP through to government, universities, and thus to tertiary music education institutions. These rights constitute a “minimum standard” (United Nations, 2007, p. 23 [Article 43]), which is to be pursued in a “spirit of partnership and mutual respect” (p. 7) and interpreted in accordance with principles of “justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith” (p. 29 [Article 46.3]). Of the 46 articles of UNDRIP, 15 are of special relevance to the research,⁴ and Article 3 is definitive:

³ This is cited also in Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. 118, 146).

⁴ Articles: 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 31, 34, 38, 39, 40.

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. (United Nations, 2007, p. 8)

In the absence of major recognition and reform UNDRIP provides a “minimum standards” guide as to how to proceed, with many of the provisions potentially relevant to university activities (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 56) and providing an instrument for “building a racially inclusive academy” (Larkin, 2011, pp. 12–13). Suggested ways to achieve this include supporting Indigenous self-determination; addressing underrepresentation and the institutional and structural factors that work to exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including by challenging dominant epistemologies, pedagogies, and ways of knowing; avoiding assumptions about and valuing the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; providing a culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment; employing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including in leadership positions; and addressing prejudice, discrimination and racism (Larkin, 2011).

UNDRIP [Article 3] declares the right of Indigenous Peoples to “self-determination” and to “freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations, 2007, p. 8). Tertiary music institutions have obligations and responsibilities pursuant to UNDRIP, which include in progressing Indigenous self-determination; supporting the cultural and educational rights and aspirations of First Nations musicians; and in “empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 5) and “improving their socio-economic position” (p. 3).

2.2.1 Nationally significant statements

Recent national appeals by Australian First Nations Peoples for recognition, justice, and self-determination include the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* (The Uluru Statement, n.d.) and the *Masig Statement* (Torres Strait Island Regional Council (n.d.).⁵ Peak body, Universities Australia, while circumspect in its response to the *Uluru Statement*, acknowledges that “true partnerships between universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities both within and outside universities” are essential and that these should “give voice to Indigenous people in decision making that affects them” (Universities Australia, 2023a).⁶ Notably, the ANU declared unreserved support for enshrining an

⁵ See Chapter 1 (1.1).

⁶ The higher education sector has more recently been recognised as a site of opportunity to “realise the partnership articulated in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*” (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 36).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Constitution as called for in the *Uluru Statement*, recognising its alignment with the University's national mission (Giggacher, 2023). However, despite the national significance of both statements, the literature review revealed an absence of scholarly literature addressing their implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions.

The *Barunga Statement* (2008) called not only for self-determination but for a national system of land rights, compensation, an end to discrimination, respect for Aboriginal identity, and the granting of social, economic and cultural rights (Glynn-McDonald, 2022a). The *Statement* also called on the Australian Government and people to “recognise our rights” (AIATSIS, 2022) and on the Commonwealth Parliament to negotiate a Treaty that recognised prior ownership, continued occupation and sovereignty and affirmation of human rights and freedom (AIATSIS, 2022b).⁷ Of special relevance to the research was also the call for recognition of the “right to be educated in our own languages and in our own culture and history” (AIATSIS, 2022).

The *Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education* (WIPCE International Council, 1999) made the case for Indigenous self-determination and rights specifically in education, as articulated in international human rights instruments,⁸ including the legally binding UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960).⁹ This outlined fundamental principles considered essential to “achieving reform and transformation of education for Indigenous peoples” (WIPCE International Council, 1999), and confirmed the “inherent right to self-determination” and to make “informed choices and decisions” and create “appropriate structures for the transmission of culture, knowledge and wisdom” (WIPCE International Council, 1999, Article 3.5). However, it also noted the limits of human rights instruments in recognising and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including with respect to “equal access to education systems” (WIPCE International Council, 1999).

Even where rights are recognised however, the rights of Indigenous people to access education are often interpreted as meaning that “Indigenous peoples only want access to non-Indigenous education”, in a presumption that “the core of Indigenous cultural values,

⁷ The call for a Treaty was the subject of the song “Treaty” by internationally acclaimed First Nations band Yothu Yindi. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf-jHCdafZY>

⁸ This recognised the “basic human rights of all peoples, amongst which is the right to education” (The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous People’s Rights in Education, 1999, Article 1.1).

⁹ This considers discrimination in education to be a violation of rights, as enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), and “promotes equality of opportunity and treatment for all in education” (UNESCO, 1960).

standards and wisdom is abandoned or withering away” (WIPCE International Council, 1999, Article 1.3.2). This assumes that Indigenous students would be willing to “abandon their cultural heritage for the coloniser’s way of life” (Hogarth, 2018b, p. 310, referencing Dodson, 1996), one in which “Western values are privileged and Indigenous axiologies are de-valued” (p. 311).

The philosophies embodied in *The Coolangatta Statement* provide a useful basis for assessing the nature and performance of the Australian higher education system with respect to Indigenous education (McConville, 2006, p. 194), suggesting the need for transformational steps towards educational institutions that are “more culturally responsive and responsible to the rights of Indigenous Australians” (p. 204).¹⁰ It has been recommended that the Australian Government therefore “recognise the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples” as espoused in both UNDRIP and *The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education* (J. Smith et al., 2008, p. 8). Peak body, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) has also urged a commitment by higher education providers to social responsibility through “empowerment and self-determination” of the peoples on whose Country they are founded (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 1).¹¹

2.3 First Nations national policy environment

The research took place in the context of national policies relevant to articulation of the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the tertiary music education system, including the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020), the *National Cultural Policy* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015, 2015).¹² The literature review revealed the absence of both a National Tertiary Music Education Policy and a National Indigenous Tertiary Music Education Policy, highlighting the policy vacuum within which Australian tertiary music education institutions continue to operate in the First Nations space.

¹⁰ This includes incorporating “Indigenous terms of reference and values as articulated by Indigenous peoples” by universities, in all areas of their activity (McConville, 2006, p. 194).

¹¹ NATSIHEC also developed *The Batchelor Statement* which urges higher education providers to move forward together to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and knowledges are at “the core: the heart of our education system” (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC), 2023, p. 1).

¹² The Australian Government Department of Education is the policy lead in Australian higher education (Department of Education, 2025a).

2.3.1 *National peak bodies*

The literature review identified five national peak bodies relevant to the policy contexts of the research: Universities Australia (2025); NATSIHEC (n.d.); Reconciliation Australia (n.d.); National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA, n.d.-a), and Creative Australia (2024).¹³ However, the review revealed the absence of a national peak body promoting and championing the rights of Australian First Nations artists and cultural custodians and supporting the First Nations arts and cultures sectors (Australia Council for the Arts, 2022).¹⁴ There is however a peak body for First Nations music creators, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office (NATSIMO), which supports the “growth and development of songwriters & composers” and advocates for a “thriving, self-determined Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander music industry” (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office, n.d.). Currently however there is no policy framework directly linking NATSIMO with the work of tertiary music education institutions.¹⁵

2.3.2 *Towards a self-determining First Nations higher education body*

The 2016 *Redfern Statement* argues for self-determination as the key to “closing the gap” for First Peoples (Reconciliation Australia, 2016a, p. 5) and provides a “blueprint” for addressing disadvantage and inequality (Korff, 2020). The *Statement* calls on the Federal Government to establish a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body to “promote and engage in education policy for Australia’s First Peoples” and to “support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities” across all levels of the education system, including higher education (Reconciliation Australia, 2016b, p. 7). In 2019 the Australian Government established NIAA, with the declared purpose of working “in genuine partnership to enable the self-determination and aspirations of First Nations communities” and to “lead and influence change across government to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say in decisions that influence them” (NIAA, n.d.-a). This included by providing expert policy leadership and advice to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education outcomes (NIAA, n.d.-b).

¹³ Creative Australia was formerly known as the Australia Council for the Arts.

¹⁴ The 2022 *Bringing it Forward* report found that 88% of 95 First Nations survey respondents were in favour of establishing a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority (Australia Council for the Arts, 2022, p. 28).

¹⁵ The Australian Music Centre (2023) *First Nations Cultural Policy for Represented Artists* (2023) does however provide guidance to composers with respect to protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ cultural and intellectual property rights (p. 2). This policy does not distinguish between the ideas of Indigenous and non-Indigenous composers and applies to all works catalogued with the AMC.

In 2023 consideration was given to creating a new First Nations Higher Education Council to “give voice to the needs, aspirations and know-how of community” in improving Closing the Gap outcomes (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 36). This was supported by NATSIHEC as a means for ensuring First Nations self-determination in higher education (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 1). However, at the time of writing the new Council had not yet been established, therefore there is still no national Indigenous higher education body operating at arms-length from government that can provide Indigenous-led strategic direction, inclusive of tertiary music education.¹⁶

2.4 Engagement of Australian universities with First Nations Peoples and communities

Australian universities articulate their commitment to engagement with First Nations Peoples and communities in institutional strategic policy documents that assume institution-wide implementation. At the ANU at the time of writing these comprised the *ANU by 2025 | Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025*,¹⁷ and the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026*.¹⁸ These plans are implemented at the College and School levels in the form of localised strategic plans, which for the ANU School of Music comprised the *Research School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025*,¹⁹ and the *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan 2019–2023*.²⁰ These sources are discussed in Chapter 3: The Case Study.

Peak body Universities Australia notes the declared importance by universities of building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but that the degree to which these relationships are meaningfully developed varies, with further work required by some member universities to meet a standard that would be considered “robust, respectful and collaborative” (Universities Australia, 2021, p. 12).²¹ The argument has been made that if there are to be improvements in Indigenous community engagement in the higher

¹⁶ The Australian Universities Accord Final Report (2024) also proposed creation of a First Nations Council to “ensure self-determination for First Nations peoples” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 7) and recommended that the Australian Government commission a First Nations-led review of higher education, with the terms of reference addressing national system level changes which included moving towards “a self-determined approach to funding and policy settings” (p. 34).

¹⁷ Australian National University (2021).

¹⁸ Australian National University (2024b).

¹⁹ Australian National University (2022).

²⁰ Australian National University School of Music (n.d.-b).

²¹ Community engagement by universities is supported by Engagement Australia, an inclusive alliance of universities whose main objective is to “lead and facilitate the development of best practice university-community engagement in Australia” (Engagement Australia, n.d.), and which publishes *Transform: The Journal of Engaged Scholarship*.

education sector this should include “redefining community engagement from Indigenous standpoints” (J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017, p. 42) and applying decolonising theories (p. 33), which could see a shift away from a Eurocentric worldview to a paradigm “more closely aligned to Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies” (p. 40). Attention has also been drawn to the importance of more meaningful “research engagement” with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including in “build[ing] lasting relationships and benefits” (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 63).

However, despite policy-based commitments and the growth in engagement activity in Australian universities, the literature review revealed a paucity of scholarly research concerned with the efficacy and impact of Indigenous engagement policies and practice in the work of tertiary music education institutions. This confirms the need for quality research and data in making firm evidence-based recommendations about “what works best and why and in what circumstances” (J. Smith, Larkin, et al. 2017, p. 39, referencing Frawley et al., 2015). Comprehensive and rigorous program evaluations and collaborative research approaches are needed to grow a stronger evidence base (J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017, p. 39; Andersen, 2008), and steps also need to be taken to improve the “quality and quantum” of Indigenous community engagement work (J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017, p. 42).

2.4.1 Engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities

Engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities is a rapidly expanding arena in which a variety of approaches have evolved to suit the locations and circumstances of institutions. Approaches include Indigenous employment strategies and appointments²²; targeted recruitment strategies; specialised access provisions and bridging/pathway programs; student support strategies; new courses and teaching and learning initiatives²³; community outreach programs; research projects; and a wide range of collaborative project initiatives. The literature review revealed a substantial body of scholarly literature describing engagement by tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities in research and education.²⁴ Examples include the Ngarra-

²² This includes visiting lecturer and artist in residence programs.

²³ Examples include the Stories of Place compulsory course offered through the Victorian College of the Arts (McPherson & Onus, 2024) and the PhD program in Indigenous Knowledge offered through the University of Melbourne.

²⁴ See Barney (2014a); Bartleet, Carfoot, et al. (2016); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bartleet (2023); Bendrups et al. (2013); Corn (2013); Creative Australia (2025); Mackinlay (2010); McPherson & Onus (2024);

burria First Peoples Composers Program (Sainsbury, 2019) and the Space to Create intensive and residency for First Nations creatives (Creative Australia, 2025), hosted by the ANU School of Music; the Winanjjikari Service Learning Program, a community engaged partnership between the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Griffith University) and Barkly Regional Arts and Winanjjikari Music Centre in Tennant Creek, which acts as a medium for intercultural connection and relationship building (Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot, 2016); insights into how intercultural arts collaborations occur in practice between non-Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people, and ways in which performers and researchers negotiate the benefits and difficulties of collaboration (Barney, 2016); and the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performers in Australia, a long-term collaborative, intercultural project aimed at protecting and sustaining Australia's highly endangered Indigenous traditions of creative expression through music, dance, and ceremonial performance (Corn, 2013). There is a paucity of scholarly literature however, addressing the broader issue of institutional engagement, including evaluation of the efficacy of engagement policies and practices in improving access and outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system.

2.4.2 Tertiary music institutions and the “whole-of-university” recommendation

The Behrendt Review recommended a “whole-of-university” approach to improving outcomes for First Nations People in universities, whereby “faculties and mainstream services [would] have primary responsibility for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, backed up by Indigenous Education Units (Behrendt Review, 2012, p. xix). This aimed to see a broader take up of responsibility by Faculties and Schools, which could include more significant and active roles in integrating structured supports for Indigenous students within their specific learning and teaching settings (J. Smith, Trinidad, & Larkin, 2017, p. 19). NATSIHEC has advised however that in implementing the “whole-of-university” approach, institutions should work with all stakeholders and gain a community perspective on its impacts on Indigenous staff, students, and community members (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 35).

On the face of it the “whole-of-university” recommendation promised to be a progressive development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education, one which could potentially deliver better outcomes for First Nations students and staff (National Tertiary Education Union [NTEU], 2013, p. 14). However, it has been argued that shifting

Treloyn (2016a, 2016b); Sainsbury (2019); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Wafer (2017); Wafer & Turpin (2017).

responsibilities or mainstreaming Indigenous support services would be unlikely to close educational gaps if there were not enough detailed understanding about “what meeting that responsibility entails in practice” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 10). The NTEU also raised concerns about potential impacts on the role of Indigenous Education Units (NTEU, 2013).

Indigenous Education Units are recognised as performing an essential role in facilitating engagement between institutions and First Nations Peoples and communities in Australian universities, and as being critical to the access, participation, and success of First Nations students (Behrendt, 2015; Kinnane et al., 2014; Rochecouste et al., 2017; Page et al., 2017; Wilks et al., 2020).²⁵ Research has determined that Indigenous centres/units in universities are also key to “building a sense of community and belonging for Indigenous students”, and that faculties need to collaborate further with Indigenous centres in supporting Indigenous students to complete their degrees (Fredericks et al., 2022, p. 1).

It has been argued however that the “enclave model” of Indigenous support was grounded in a “welfare support paradigm” which was “hegemonic” and “assimilative in intent”, and whose philosophical and ideological underpinnings represented “a fundamental failing of Indigenous tertiary education” (Arbon, 2008, p. 62). Indigenous centres have also been seen as embodying “paradoxical effects” in offering formal spaces for developing Indigenous community within the university while simultaneously functioning as enclaves where Indigenous members are “bound off from the rest of the university”, representative of a “fraught ambivalence” (Bunda et al., 2012, p. 947). The potential has been recognised however for “innovative programs combined with integrated support structures”, grounded in evidence of “what works” and “aligned with the needs, requirements and aspirations of Indigenous students and community” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 2).

The literature review revealed an absence of scholarly literature and research based evidence on the implications and effectiveness of the “whole-of-university approach” for tertiary music education institutions; on the relationship between Indigenous Education Units and tertiary music institutions in supporting First Nations music students; and also in addressing concerns about “mainstreaming” and the need for an understanding about what is required in closing educational gaps (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 10).

²⁵ These centres offer bridging programs, tutors, computer laboratories, study spaces, counselling, and a safety net and refuge (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2088).

2.4.3 *Australian ethnomusicology and Indigenous self-determination*

Historically, the engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with First Nations Peoples and communities has primarily been through ethnomusicological research.²⁶ However, in spite of repeated efforts by ethnomusicologists and Aboriginal people and others, Australian musicology has not yet “reckoned with its role in the power structures of settler colonialism in which it is embedded” (Harris, 2020, p. 19).²⁷ The literature review revealed a strong trend in Australian ethnomusicology however towards community-engaged, participatory, collaborative, and dialogic research methodologies which position Indigenous participants as co-researcher partners and privilege Indigenous knowledges and the agency and authority of Indigenous musicians and culture bearers.²⁸

UNDRIP is referenced in highlighting the rights of Indigenous peoples to determine “how they will be researched and to participate in that research” (Treloyn, 2016a, p. 27), however “inequities in access to education and resources” are identified as one of the complicating factors in achieving Indigenous self-determination and equitable representation of Indigenous perspectives in ethnomusicological research (p. 33). There are “practical steps” that might be taken however by music researchers and ethnomusicologists, together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to promote “Indigenous Australian musical self-determination and sovereignty” in research (Mackinlay & Barney, 2017, p. 184). The argument has also been made that “given the history of denigration, ignorance and appropriation towards Indigenous musics”, advocacy for Indigenous self-determination must be “the central mandate” of Australian music institutions (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 78).²⁹ Given that most ethnomusicological research in Australia has emanated from and continues to be supported by the academy, this mandate provides an ethical way forward. However, although the importance of Indigenous self-determination is acknowledged within Australian ethnomusicological discourse, the literature review revealed a lack of scholarly literature on practical measures to progress Indigenous self-determination in improving outcomes of benefit for First Nations People in the Australian tertiary music education system.

²⁶ Bracknell & Barwick (2020, pp. 73–75); Dillon & Chapman (2005, p. 190); Newsome (2008); Treloyn (2016b); Wafer (2017); Wafer & Turpin (2017).

²⁷ This includes with respect to First Nations membership in the Musicological Society of Australia (MSA) (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 74–75).

²⁸ See Barney (2014a, 2014b, 2023); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bendrups et al. (2013); Bracknell (2019a); Mackinlay (2010); Treloyn (2016a, 2016b).

²⁹ See also, Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

2.4.4 Higher education and “closing the gap”

Improving mainstream institutions is an identified outcome of the 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which included a higher education target for the first time (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 27).³⁰ The 2023 Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (2023) also confirmed higher education outcomes as “fundamental to Closing the Gap” (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 36),³¹ advising that this would require an urgent commitment to improving access and outcomes (p. 31), and highlighting the role of Australia’s educators, researchers, and institutions in ensuring that First Nations people have “a greater say in the decisions that affect them” (p. 36). NIAA has also confirmed the urgent need to address Closing the Gap higher education targets (NIAA, 2023, p. 3).

Education is identified as a key component of the United Nation’s Human Development Index (HDI) (United Nations, 2023) and is recognised as a key determinant for health, well-being, access to economic resources, life expectancy and income per capita (Biddle, 2010, pp. i, 1).³² The Closing the Gap strategy aims to overcome the “entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians” (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 3), and recognises “shared decision-making” between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments as essential to achieving this objective (p. 3).³³ This is underpinned by the belief that “when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved” (Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 2). Leading First Nations researcher Professor Steve Larkin has called for a sustained commitment by institutions to closing the gap, and a social, political and moral commitment to achieving equity as a priority, including “material investment commensurate with need” (Danenberg, 2023, p. 25).³⁴ Closing the gap between Indigenous and other students is recognised as overdue, and an urgent national priority, with a need to consider the breadth and depth of the complex variables and contributing factors affecting

³⁰ This aims to improve the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate 111 and above) to 70% by 2031 (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 27), noting that in 2021 the national percentage was 47% (Closing the Gap Information Repository, n.d.).

³¹ See also, Department of Education (2024, p. 11)

³² Education is also recognised as playing “a major role in achieving better economic outcomes” and is considered “one of the main strategies for addressing Indigenous disadvantage in Australia” (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 3).

³³ Shared decision-making means that “self-determination is supported and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience is understood and respected” (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 6).

³⁴ See also, Newsome (2016, p. 137).

Indigenous higher education outcomes, which it is noted can distract from clarity of focus in the student support area (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 2).

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) advises also that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have access to and the capability to use “locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development” (National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2020, pp. 3–4). This supports the call for a “greater focus on data and evidence” as identified in the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xv), and also for “better quality evidence on what works” (Clapham, 2011, p. 46).³⁵ The literature review revealed however, an absence of scholarly literature addressing the implications of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) for Australia tertiary music education institutions.

2.4.5 Culture and “closing the gap”

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) recognises strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as fundamental to improved life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (p. 4). There is a growing body of evidence that culture is central to the health, well-being, and identity of First Nations Peoples,³⁶ and participation in arts and culture is recognised as also supporting outcomes across the Closing the Gap framework (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, p. 13.). However, First Nations arts and culture remain “peripheral to the Closing the Gap Agenda”, and there is an identified need to prioritise culture across the Closing the Gap performance framework (Productivity Commission, 2024, p. 76, quoting Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC, sub. p. 9).

Multiple scholarly sources have highlighted the connection between music and culture and health and well-being for Australian First Nations People and communities.³⁷ What is known is that Australian First Nations cultures manifest and maintain “a multitude of connections between health, wellbeing, music, arts and community cohesion” and multiple studies have shown the broad benefits that music participation can bring for First Nations Peoples (Sunderland et al., 2023, p. 3). The 2010 Song Cycles report argued that Indigenous arts practices and culture make an “essential contribution to Indigenous people’s social health, wellbeing, education and identity” (Song Cycles, 2010, p. 2); and it has also been argued that

³⁵ See Chapter 1 (1.4) Research rationale.

³⁶ Bourke et al. (2018, p. 21); Colquhoun & Dockery (2012, pp. 25–26); Mayi Kuwayu (n.d); Commonwealth of Australia (2023, p. 22); Salmon et al. (2019, p. 32); Verbunt et al. (2021, pp. 6–7); Ware (2014, p. 18).

³⁷ Corn (2013, p. 271); Grant (2014a); Haebich (2011, pp. 1–2); Mackinlay (2010, p. 107); Marett (2010, pp. 254–55); Salmon et al. (2019); Scarfe et al. (2024); Sunderland et al. (2023); Treloyn & Martin (2014); Ware (2014, p. 18); Yu (2019).

strong expression of culture (including music) carries “substantial future societal, economic, and ecological benefits” (Grant, 2022, p. 116). Participation in music, particularly in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music groups, has also been found to have many health-promoting benefits, including “empowerment and renewal”, “sense of holistic healing”, and “building of strengths that already exist in the community” (Salmon et al., 2019, p. 27). The case has also been made for participation in arts programs in improving First Nations health and well-being outcomes (Ware, 2014, pp. 1, 18), and for productive links between these and educational opportunities (pp. 2, 4, 8, 16).

Language, song and dance, particularly as part of ceremonies, are recognised as promoting “cultural learning” and “the transmission of cultural knowledge”, and as important also “for the healing process” (Salmon et al., 2019, p. 27). Indeed, First Nations musicians themselves see musical activity as actively shaping “all known domains of cultural health determinants”, including also some associated political and social determinants (Sunderland et al., 2023, p. 1). There is also a recognised role for music in “claiming political voice and agency”, which is tied to known social health determinants such as “self-determination, sovereignty and human rights” (Sunderland et al., 2023, pp. 8–9). The special role that can be played by place-based arts programs in advancing social equity and addressing social disadvantage has also been recognised, including in working with communities to “define and share their own values and aspirations”, and by building awareness and skills that could “translate into structural change” (Heard et al., 2023, p. 567).

Peak body, Creative Australia has advocated for targeted investment in First Nations arts, and cultural expression and cultural maintenance outcomes, as a strategic priority area (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, p. 11) and for culturally based First Nations-led solutions (pp. 23–24).³⁸ It is recognised that such measures can provide an enormous opportunity to “heal the damage of interruption of culture as a cause of disadvantage and intergenerational effects of colonisation and the forced removal of the Stolen Generations”, and which can be achieved by “listening to First Nations peoples and by valuing culture” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, p. 30). Creative Australia recommends investment in First Nations arts, culture and cultural maintenance outcomes within the Closing the Gap framework to “increase opportunities for First Nations people to directly engage in arts and cultural activity, and cultural maintenance and renewal” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018,

³⁸ Creative Australia, formerly known as the Australia Council for the Arts, is the Australian Government’s principal arts investment and advisory body (Creative Australia, 2024).

p. 19). This is in line with a holistic cultural determinants approach to First Nations health and well-being (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, pp. 5, 28).³⁹

2.5 Indigenous music sustainability and Australian tertiary music institutions

The Behrendt Review also recognised the need for “protection of Indigenous culture and knowledge” (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. xxiii, 104, 130). The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, n.d.) is the key international instrument promoting the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, which includes oral traditions and expressions [Article 2a] and the performing arts [Article 2b]. The Convention has been recognised as being “one of the most significant UNESCO mechanisms related to music sustainability” (Grant, 2016, p. 26) and has been taken up by Australian music researchers in arguing for support for endangered Australian Indigenous music and dance traditions (Bendrups et al., 2013; Grant, 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Marett, 2010; Schippers, 2016, 2022; Treloyn & Emberly, 2013). Article 14 of the Convention is of special relevance to the research in calling for “specific educational and training programmes” [14(a) (ii)] to ensure “recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society” [14 (a)] (UNESCO n.d.). The Australian government is yet to sign up to the Convention; however, this Article (14) suggests an important role for Australian tertiary music education institutions in upholding the intangible cultural heritage interests of First Nations Peoples.

Australian Indigenous music and dance traditions are among the “oldest and most endangered in the world” (Statement on Indigenous Australian Music and Dance, 2011). The rapid and prolonged endangerment of the unique languages and performance traditions following colonisation has been described as “but one result of the denial of Indigenous sovereignty” in which the cultural expressions of First Nations Peoples have been “pushed to the margins of the national story” (Webb & Bracknell, 2021, p. 72). Advocacy and efforts to protect and sustain First Nations performative traditions have become a focus in Australian ethnomusicological research (Treloyn, 2016a), exemplified in the Statement on Indigenous Australian Music and Dance 2011 (2011), and reiterated in the Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Performance (2022),⁴⁰ which called for the recording and repatriation

³⁹ The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) has also made a strong case for increased investment in First Nations arts and culture as essential to Closing the Gap and First Nations health and well-being, consistent with UNDRIP (Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC), 2023).

⁴⁰ This established the rationale and scope for the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia (NRPIPA). See also, Marett et al. (2006); Corn (2013); Wafer & Turpin (2017).

of songs to be supported by universities (Garma Statement on Indigenous Australian Music and Dance, 2002).

It has been argued that music training institutions are failing in their responsibilities “in a key area of what should be a national concern”, with a call for tertiary institutions to “re-evaluate their priorities” and respond to the underrepresentation of researchers working in the field of Indigenous music research within the academy, especially in the field of traditional Indigenous music (Marett, 2004, p. 23). Leading First Nations researcher Professor Clint Bracknell has argued too that Indigenous researchers, especially as practitioners, tradition bearers, and stewards of musical traditions, can contribute to increasing the diversity of music research and to local music sustainability agendas, and are “vital in cases of substantially under-researched and endangered music” (Bracknell, 2015, p. 212).

2.5.1 Australian tertiary music institutions and the “cultural ecosystem”

Leading Australian music researchers Professor Clint Bracknell and Professor Emeritus Linda Barwick have called for a critique of “who and what” Australian music institutions and scholarship are sustaining (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 79), drawing attention to the responsibilities of tertiary music institutions in determining what music and musical practices are worth conserving (p. 71).⁴¹ This points to an important role for music institutions in supporting endangered Australian Indigenous performance traditions, and to the powerful position of academics in advocating for Indigenous music (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 71–72). The profound implications of “what” is to be sustained and the importance of a “supportive environment” has also been highlighted (Schippers, 2016, p. 8), based in the proposition that the past, present, and future of musical practices should be regarded as part of a “complex and often delicate ecosystem” (p. 9).⁴² Systems of learning music, including those that are institutionally organised, also play a key role (Schippers & Grant, 2016, p. 335). This suggests that institutional support for First Nations musicians and music making communities has the potential to contribute to the sustainability of First Nations musics and music making as dynamic living practices.⁴³ It has been argued however that institutionalised education can potentially lead to “ossification”, or an artificial “new life” for music practices, which can be

⁴¹ Attention has been drawn also to the “cultural value” of music education institutions (Roennfeldt, 2011, p. 232), and to the conservatorium as a “cultural resource” (p. 240) and “cultural player” (p. 239).

⁴² See also, Schippers & Bendrup (2015, pp. 13–15); Schippers & Grant (2016, p. 333); Schippers (2022).

⁴³ It cannot be assumed however that formal music education is *the* answer to issues of sustainability with respect to transmission processes (Schippers & Grant, 2016, p. 335).

“devoid of links to community or to creative lifelines infusing new ideas and practices” (Shippers, 2016, p. 8).⁴⁴

Music sustainability may be regarded as connected with human rights and future justice (Grant, 2022, pp. 114, 117–120), and music education institutions are affirmed as a key locus for advancing the dual concerns of music sustainability (by embracing a wide diversity of music expressions, especially less dominant ones) and social justice (by instilling values of social responsibility and global citizenship)” (p. 118, referencing Hanley, 2013).⁴⁵ Indigenous self-determination and music sustainability are inextricably interconnected, and consideration of future justice and human rights concerns alongside music and cultural sustainability may hold far-reaching implications for developing ways to promote “the causes of human rights and future justice through culture” (Grant, 2022, p. 120). We are reminded too that “persons sustain music and music sustains people” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 79, citing Titon, 2009, p. 122), and that “musical traditions will persist only if people continue them” (Bracknell, 2019b).

It has been argued that “where the ecomusicological gaze is focused on the sustainability of music cultures” it is imperative to also consider “the sustainability of the musicians who produce this culture” (Bendrup et al., 2013, p. 153). Indeed, music is usually “most valued by the people to whom it belongs” (Bracknell, 2015, p. 199), who, as “insiders”, may be more willing to “investigate, consolidate, and enliven music” that may otherwise escape the attention of researchers “outside” the community concerned (Bracknell, 2015, p. 211). Such perspectives suggest the need to position First Nations musicians at the heart of the music sustainability agenda in progressing transformative change *by* and *for* First Nations musicians, including within the music academy.

2.5.2 Music diversity and Australian tertiary music institutions

Support for music diversity may be considered of special significance to articulating the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Australian tertiary music institutions were founded in Anglo-European “classical” traditions but now embrace a broader range of music genres and styles (including jazz, popular, and commercial musics), however only a handful of the most dominant genres are

⁴⁴ However, even if not linked to community or older practices, new music practices, in addition to older practices, support diversity and are nonetheless valid (C. Sainsbury, personal communication, December 14, 2024).

⁴⁵ This may be considered consistent with a transformative-rectifactory theory-practice position and the goal of reparative justice in considering the “social implications for future generations of choices of present generations” (Grant, 2022, p. 114).

typically represented in formal music education programs (Grant, 2022, p. 118). The diverse musics and music making practices of First Nations Peoples are notably underrepresented (Babcock, 2000; Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020; Newsome, 2004, 2008).

Music diversity in the Australian tertiary music education system has received considerable scholarly attention (Harrison, 2005; Joseph, 2005; NACTMUS, 2007; Schippers, 2007, 2010). There is also a substantial body of scholarly literature on First Nations music and music making in tertiary music education contexts.⁴⁶ Examples include approaches to teaching Warlpiri knowledge in an undergraduate tertiary music education course at the ANU School of Music (Corn & Patrick, 2015); processes and outcomes of ‘indigenising’ a tertiary music curriculum at the Queensland University of Technology (Dillon & Chapman, 2005); outline of tertiary music programs for First Nations music students offered through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide (Newsome, 1999, 2008, 2016); and approaches to the respectful inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music in a tertiary pre-service course for music educators at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (The University of Sydney), 2016-2018 (Webb & Bracknell, 2021). What has been little addressed however is the underrepresentation of the diversity of First Nations musicians, musics, and music making practices within the core business of tertiary music education institutions.⁴⁷

Leading First Nations researcher Professor Clint Bracknell has challenged prescriptive definitions of Indigenous Australian music (Bracknell, 2019a, p. 100), drawing attention to diversity and processes of dynamic change where, either alongside or in the absence of older musical traditions “many Indigenous musicians have adapted popular music genres such as folk, country and rock to suit their own agenda” (p. 102).⁴⁸ This accords with theories of Indigenous cosmopolitanism which eschew “binaries of authenticity and traditionalism” and vindicate the “pushing of boundaries of creative expression” by Indigenous performers into “innovative transnational forms” (Haebich, 2011, p. 4). Such perspectives speak to an “Indigenous heterogeneity” which has arisen out of Aboriginal people’s responses to settler

⁴⁶ Babcock (2000); Barney & Mackinlay (2010); Bartleet et al. (2014); Bartleet, Carfoot, et al. (2016); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Corn (2009); Corn & Patrick (2014); Corn & Patrick (2015); Costigan & Neuenfeldt (2002); Dillon & Chapman (2005); Dunbar-Hall (2002); Ellis (1985); Locke et al. (2007); Locke & Prentice (2016); Mackinlay (2005); Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall (2002); Newsome (1999, 2008, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Schippers (2007); Webb & Bracknell (2021).

⁴⁷ Links between First Nations stylistic diversity and barriers to access and inclusion in the Australian tertiary music education system are noted (Newsome, 1999).

⁴⁸ Examples of educational responses to this diversity include the study kits/resources and units on Indigenous Australian music developed by the Department of Education (DoE), and the Musica Viva Australia In Schools program which includes tours of Indigenous musicians into schools, performing in a range of music styles.

colonial efforts at elimination (Harris, 2020, p. 4, referencing Rowse, 2014), indicative of an inventive and a remarkable resilience with which Australian musicology is yet to reckon (p. 20).

Music is not “just a mere reflection of society, but in “dynamic relation to it” (Cimardi, 2019, p. 2205), which, in the context of discussion about Indigenous music and music diversity in tertiary music institutions, foregrounds the interrelationship between the music academy and the broader arts community, which can be “both symbiotic and ambivalent” (Roennfeldt, 2011, p. 231). Leading Australian music researchers Professor Clint Bracknell and Professor Emeritus Linda Barwick have noted the wide diversity of Indigenous musics (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 72), advocating for more inclusive engagement with Indigenous music-making within music institutions (p. 76), which are well positioned to contribute to music diversity through support for First Nations musicians, music, and music making (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020; Drummond, 2005; Newsome, 1999, 2008).⁴⁹

The 2005 UNESCO *Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* articulates respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,⁵⁰ including freedom of expression [Article 2.1],⁵¹ and equal dignity and respect for all cultures, inclusive of the cultures of Indigenous peoples [Article 2.3] (UNESCO, 2005). The *Convention* advises signatory nations to adopt measures to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory [Article 6.1], and to create an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to “create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions”, paying due attention to the “special circumstances and needs” of various social groups, including Indigenous peoples [Articles 7&7.1a] (UNESCO, 2005). Notably, Article 10.c declares that parties shall “encourage creativity and strengthen capacities by setting up educational, training and exchange programs in the field of cultural industries” (UNESCO, 2005), which has implications for Australian tertiary music institutions with respect to supporting cultural diversity through support for First Nations music, musicians, and music making.

2.6 Equity and inclusion in the Australian higher education system

Over the last 30 years, Indigenous peoples throughout the world have argued that they have been denied equity in non-Indigenous education systems which has

⁴⁹ This in turn can contribute also to supporting the diversity of First Nations musics.

⁵⁰ Australia became a signatory to the Convention in 2009.

⁵¹ This is also enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

failed to provide educational services that nurture the whole Indigenous person inclusive of scholarship, culture and spirituality. (WIPCE International Council, 1999)

Education is vital to the future empowerment, self-determination and advancement of Indigenous peoples and communities ... Unfortunately education in Australia still demonstrates colonial imposition of Western educative frameworks onto Indigenous people. (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. i)

All members and groups in society should have access to high-quality learning opportunities aligned with their aspirations and which allow them to fulfil their potential, and these should be inclusive of the “diverse learning and support needs of all groups and communities” (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 7). This means recognising the vital role of educational equity for Indigenous peoples (Buckskin et al., 2018; WICPCE International Council, 1999). Exclusion is institutional in nature and rests in the “dominant epistemology” which pervades all aspects of Australian higher education institutions, including “pedagogical approaches, the structure and governance of institutions, staffing and research”, and which serves to “devalue Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodologies and ways of knowing” (Larkin, 2011, p. 8).⁵² Indigenous education is core business however, not an equity issue (Andersen et al., 2008, p. 1), and the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students therefore requires a whole of university commitment, both practically and philosophically (p. 3).

2.6.1 The Behrendt Review

The findings of the 2012 Behrendt Review remain relevant to the work of tertiary music institutions, over a decade later. Despite the wide acceptance of the Review, the literature review revealed an absence of scholarly literature addressing the implications of the Behrendt Review for tertiary music education institutions. The Behrendt Review called for parity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff in the higher education sector (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xvii), and for inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait knowledges and perspectives in curricula and teaching practices (pp. 94–102). This is supported also by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (ATSHEAC), which has advised that universities need to recognise Indigenous knowledge and value Indigenous

⁵² Achieving widespread recognition and valuing of Indigenous knowledge systems requires Indigenous people and communities to be recognised as equal/genuine partners also across the research system (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 4).

peoples, cultures and scholarship (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council, 2015b, p. 3).⁵³

References to music in the Behrendt Review appear in Section 12 addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 196–205).⁵⁴ This section provided insights into critical success factors, which included recognition of diverse knowledge domains; a focus on regeneration and transition of Indigenous knowledges; appointment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as academics and cultural leaders; and engagement with communities, professions and industry (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 196). Key challenges in curricula and pedagogy included the need to meet the learning needs of a diverse student demographic; development of curriculum encompassing both discipline and Indigenous specific content; recruitment of specialist academic and general student support staff; accessing Indigenous content experts and knowledge owners; and securing sufficient funding for institutional costs over and above basic operations, including investing in workforce growth (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 196).

2.6.2 Underrepresentation and inequity in the Australian higher education system

Improving Indigenous educational attainment has long been recognised as a way to improve the prospects of First Nations people (Hunter & Schwab, 2003, p. 84). For many First Nations people tertiary education is a pathway to realising personal and professional aspirations, and yet participation and retention rates remain low (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2080).⁵⁵ In 2020 the Australian Government Productivity Commission reported that outcomes for First Nations people in Australian higher education continued to lag significantly behind for key indicators (SCRGSP, 2020). This was confirmed in the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (2023) which reported that First Nations people continued to be underrepresented across the sector (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 35) and that the system remained inequitable, with First Nations participation “around 40% below population parity” (p. 32).⁵⁶ NIAA has also reported that although First Nations Australians comprise 3.8% of the population, they represent less than 1.5% of higher education students, and that

⁵³ An example of this is recognition also of the additional cultural load of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the staff member’s workload allocation (Australian National University, 2023a, 52.6).

⁵⁴ I contributed to the Behrendt Review and to this section in my role as Coordinator of Academic Programs at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM).

⁵⁵ Similarities in occupational aspiration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can however exist at the same time as significant differences in educational aspirations (Gore et al., 2017b, p. 180).

⁵⁶ It has been argued that underrepresentation sits at the very heart of inequity in Australian higher education (Page et al., 2017, p. 32); and, also, that racism, discrimination and marginalisation are contributors to low outcomes (NATSIPA & CAPA, 2023, p. 22).

many universities have a First Nations workforce of under 2%, with an average staffing level of 1.42% (NIAA, 2023, p. 3).⁵⁷ The higher education system needs to better engage also with First Nations people from regional and remote areas, who remained underrepresented (NIAA, 2023, p. 6). It is important therefore that institutions embrace these students' attributes and strengths and work in and with their communities to facilitate their participation and success (Wilks et al., 2020, p. 25).⁵⁸

NIAA reports that in 2023 the most popular field of study for First Nations students nationally was Society and Culture (32%) (NIAA, 2023, p. 2). Analysis of publicly available Australian Government higher education statistics shows that in 2021 (the most currently available), Indigenous students comprised 1.65% of all Bachelor level Creative Arts students (i.e. not including non-award courses) (Department of Education, n.d.). There is a lack of publicly available data however on participation rates for First Nations students in music and the performing arts specifically. Research based on data released only to universities reports the equity access rate for Indigenous students in music and the performing arts as 1.2% (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 38).⁵⁹ Clearer information regarding equity participation is therefore needed at the narrow or detailed field of education level in order to better understand the extent of under-representation (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 8). What is known is that First Nations students' field of study is often linked with the presence of First Nations staff/academics in that area (Andersen et al., 2008; Liddle, 2016; NIAA, 2023, p. 6),⁶⁰ a recognised benefit of which is development of curricula or pedagogy better suited to the provision of education to the Indigenous population (Biddle, 2010, p. 29).⁶¹

National data indicates that Indigenous students typically take longer to graduate, with a 50% nine-year bachelor degree completion rate for Indigenous students (Universities Australia, 2023b, p. 5), significantly below the 74 % for non-Indigenous students (Universities Australia, 2020, p. 24).⁶² It is recognised however that First Nations students may be challenged by multiple issues in realising their ambitions through tertiary education (RocheCouste et al., 2017, p. 2080). These include factors such as socio-economic status,

⁵⁷ Targets for Indigenous outcomes usually use population parity as a benchmark; however, these are generally two to three years out of date, which means that annual parity targets are lower than the actual population (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 4).

⁵⁸ Relatively low school achievement has been identified as the primary reason for regional underrepresentation in universities (Burnheim & Harvey, 2016, p. 143). See also, Arbon (2008).

⁵⁹ This is based on commencing bachelor level cohort statistics 2014–2019 (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 36).

⁶⁰ This is because the presence of First Nations staff also makes the field more visible and accessible (C. Sainsbury, personal communication, December 14, 2024).

⁶¹ Indigenous leadership is also needed across the sector, which requires attracting, retaining and nurturing Indigenous staff (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 4).

⁶² This is for the 2013 cohort.

language, literacy, culture, identity, financial and family responsibilities and/or work issues, and racism (Rochecouste et al., 2017, pp. 2080–2082),⁶³ and also difficulties associated with being separated from “country” and family and community support networks and settling into the unfamiliar higher education environment (p. 2081). The 2010 Song Cycles report also noted that for First Nations musicians, participation could be affected by multiple factors, including “economic disadvantage, social marginalisation, health problems and geographical isolation” (Song Cycles, 2010, p. 42).

Evidence points however to long standing underachievement not of Indigenous Australians, but of institutions (Page et al., 2017, p. 32), where a contributing factor to lower outcomes for First Nations students may be also institutional cultures and the organisational structures of universities themselves (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 47). First Nations changemakers in higher education are still battling a system that does not understand the importance of Indigenous knowledge “from a foundation of self-determination” (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 1). NATSIHEC, in its response to the 2023 Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, found also that even with the current increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and leadership in higher education, education environments are still being challenged by a “lack of broader engagement across the governance mechanisms in universities” (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 2; University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2). It has been noted too that while some university programs work well at a local level, those led from the “top down” were not as effective as they could have been if there were more scope for adaption to differing circumstances (Behrendt, 2015).

Recognition of diversity within the First Nations student population includes avoiding “stereotyping” (Rochecouste et al., 2017, pp. 2085, 2093). This diversity reflects the range of entry pathways open to enrollees, including students who have completed Year 12, those who have attended TAFE,⁶⁴ and those returning to study after employment (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2085). There are many students who are also the first in their family to attend university, and these and other students may need support, including assistance in terms of tutoring, literacy, finances, and managing family and community obligations (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2085). Research has found that removing or mitigating structural barriers is also likely to reap benefits in terms of retention, success and a positive student experience, and

⁶³ Another factor is also lower levels of literacy and numeracy at university entry (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 4).

⁶⁴ TAFE (Technical and Further Education) is a state government-run system in Australia that provides a wide range of vocational education and training predominantly focused on skills for the workplace.

particularly for students from equity backgrounds (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 3).⁶⁵ Strategies to boost overall rates of participation by Indigenous students need to also include retaining those that are already enrolled (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 2).

The research sought to contribute to a “whole-of-School” approach in supporting the transformative change process within the ANU School of Music. This recognises existing First Nations internal and external stakeholders, networks, and relationships as also integral to the work of the School and to future productive outcomes in the First Nations space. Such a model of leadership can provide “cultural safety” to Indigenous People in universities (Miller, 2011, p. 4). However, leading First Nations researcher Professor Martin Nakata cautions against a generalised application of the concept of “cultural safety”, arguing that it can promote “victimhood rather than Indigenous agency and resilience” (Nakata, 2013, p. 296).⁶⁶

The literature review revealed a large body of scholarly literature addressing First Nations underrepresentation and inequity in the Australian higher education system, however there is a paucity of literature addressing the tertiary music education system specifically.⁶⁷ The argument has been made that there is a “big gap at the heart of our music institutions” and that addressing this gap requires “not just greater inclusion of Indigenous people and their musics” but also “advocacy for Indigenous self-determination as core business” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 70). The student ‘access’ gap has been explained as representing the gap between community or school experience/outcomes and the entry demands of universities, which may be viewed as an “exclusionary barrier” that can be lowered by institutions “in the interests of social justice” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 3). Leading First Nations researcher Professor Ian Anderson advises that to reach higher education targets universities will need to overcome the educational and social barriers facing Indigenous students and, also, build long-term relationships with schools and Indigenous communities (Anderson, 2020). A deeper understanding of Indigenous pathways and transitions into higher education has also been identified as important in facilitating Indigenous participation and retention in higher education (Frawley et al., 2015, p. 8), and once students are admitted to a degree program it is important to also consider the educational implications of the ‘access’ gap in designing support strategies (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 3).

⁶⁵ See also, Bennett et al. (2015) which provides an overview of a range of effective equity initiatives in Australian higher education and advises that sustained effort is required to support development of equity initiatives for Indigenous students (p. 7).

⁶⁶ The term “cultural security” may be preferred, with “security” inferring a level of systemic and policy action support (Wilks et al., 2020, p. 27).

⁶⁷ Newsome (1999, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

Research into the transitioning of First Nations students into higher education identifies best practice action and policies to improve Indigenous participation and achievement and provides a framework for transforming “the old paradigm of assumed Indigenous deficit” to “enhancing Indigenous excellence and opportunity by working with people’s assets and strengths” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 8). More equitable approaches to admission have also been proposed (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 3), together with the need to unpack the concept of “successful participation” (p. 4),⁶⁸ and integrate both qualitative and quantitative indicators (p. 5).

2.6.3 Barriers to access and participation in the Australian tertiary music education system

Historically, Australian tertiary music education institutions have focussed primarily on addressing the educational aspirations and cultural priorities of a mainly Anglo-European population, based in Euro-centric cultural values, knowledges, and practices, and Western epistemological systems and pedagogies. First Nations people have often therefore encountered significant access and participation barriers to equitable participation in tertiary music education, teaching, and research.⁶⁹ The literature review revealed a paucity of scholarly research addressing these long-standing historic inequities.

Prerequisites for programs of study constitute a significant barrier to equitable participation by First Nations musicians in tertiary music education. These are largely standardised and are usually based on a prior music education background (instrumental/vocal skills within prescribed music styles); a knowledge of Western music theory and notation; secondary school achievement (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR])⁷⁰; a reasonably high level of English literacy; and a performance audition and/or portfolio (again usually within prescribed styles).⁷¹ Selection is competitive, especially for leading tertiary music institutions. Recent research reports that just 8.8% of Indigenous students had an ATAR

⁶⁸ This notes that students might learn and benefit from doing university study but exit before gaining a qualification (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 4).

⁶⁹ Newsome (1999).

⁷⁰ ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) is used by universities to select students and indicates a student’s position relative to all other students in their age group (Universities Admissions Centre, 2023). ATAR barriers are a concern as they are correlated more closely with SES (socioeconomic status) than success at university (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 9). Enrolment patterns for students with higher ATARs are more likely to reflect course choices without an ATAR constraint (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 2), which has implications with respect to addressing access barriers to tertiary music education. It is important to note also that completion of secondary school (Year 12) makes it easier to gain admission to university (Biddle, 2010, p. 11).

⁷¹ Typically, at least six years of weekly tuition is needed to attain competency to successfully audition for performance degrees (Australian National University School of Music, 2023, p. 17).

above 90 (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 31), which is considered a high ATAR and the threshold for entry to most Australian higher education programs (p. 2), and especially the elite ones.⁷² Irrespective of aspiration, talent, creativity and proficiency, many, if not most First Nations musicians would not meet these prerequisite entrance requirements.

Australian domestic music studies continue to position Indigenous people and music on the “fringe” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 71). Since colonisation, Indigenous Australians have at various times been “denied the right to maintain their own knowledge systems” and prevented by racism, marginalisation and disadvantage from “gaining the economic and social mobility available to non-Indigenous Australians through the education system” (McConville, 2006, p. 191). Universities may also be viewed as “non-Indigenous spaces where the traditional knowledge and cultural practices of students from a non-Western background are not valued” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 101, quoting submission no. 73, Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2011, p. 12).

Australian tertiary music education curricula remain biased towards Western genres and styles of music (Western art music, jazz, popular, commercial music styles), with significantly less focus on Indigenous musics and music making. (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 70, 75; Newsome, 2008, p. 33). Without a “dramatic cultural shift”, tertiary music institutions will continue to “essentialize, gloss over and ultimately repel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and musics” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 75). There are also still very few opportunities across the sector for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to study “the complexities of their own regional performance traditions” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 76), and it is currently not possible in Australia for First Nations students (or any other students) to undertake an undergraduate study program majoring in Indigenous musics, coordinated by First Nation’s People (p. 77).⁷³ It is worth noting however that some Indigenous students may want to study popular/rock/contemporary styles of music, even without Indigenous content, but may wish to include First Nations music in their concerts and analyses.

The 2010 Song Cycles Report positions universities as a part of a “music value chain” (Song Cycles, 2010, p. 11) and, also, highlights the importance of education and training for

⁷² The minimum entry requirement for the ANU School of Music in 2024 was an ATAR of 80 (Australian National University, 2024a).

⁷³ Until 2016, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide offered an integrated suite of formal qualifications centred around Australian Indigenous musics and music making; and had also developed a First Nations music degree, co-developed with First Nations musicians/educators, which was approved by the university but not implemented, for reasons not made public.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians (pp. 42–46). More recently, the Australia Council for the Arts 2020 *Survey of First Nations music artists* identified professional development, education and training opportunities, more networking opportunities, and recognition by the mainstream music industry as areas of particular need (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020, p. 11).⁷⁴ This underscores the importance of an Australian tertiary music education system that is inclusive of the musical interests and aspirations of First Nations musicians. Attention has been drawn however to a lack of “institutional flexibility” (Schippers, 2007, p. 2), where issues of diverse practice may reveal “profound differences in underlying belief systems”, challenging “preconceptions about learning and teaching music” (p. 5) and pointing to the need for a “coherent, inclusive approach to cultural diversity in contemporary music education (p. 2).

Disregard of Aboriginal culture in academic institutions has been described as a form of “epistemological racism” which can alienate Indigenous students and impact their ability to succeed academically (Wilks et al., 2020, p. 34). It is recognised also that teaching practices “dominated by non-Indigenous approaches to teaching and learning” could contribute to First Nations student perceptions that they were not welcome at universities (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 101), and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching and learning strategies is therefore recommended within universities (pp. 96–102). However, presentation of Aboriginal content employing “western academic discourses and paradigms” often fails to capture “understandings of Indigenous issues as students or the Indigenous community experience them” (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2082, referencing Nakata et al., 2008). Attention has been drawn also to the “de-contextualised cherry-picking of Indigenous knowledge concepts” (Nakata, 2013, p. 295) and to “re-generated Indigenous knowledge practice” (p. 296), which, at its worst, “disrespects, distorts, and misrepresents” (p. 297). Similarly, Indigenous music, if treated and taught in the same way as western music, can result in colonialist distortions of traditional culture (Babcock, 2000; Corn, 2018; Dillon & Chapman, 2005, p. 192).

Building opportunities for inclusion of First Nations knowledges and perspectives in the curriculum benefits First Nations students and researchers and has the potential to make a significant contribution to closing the gap and economic growth. (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 94). NIAA argues that a “culturally appropriate, holistic, community supported strengths-based

⁷⁴ The 2008 Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan also recognised music as an art form that had the power to “draw young Indigenous Australians into education and training programs” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, p. 1).

approach” is needed, including initiatives that engage First Nations people through culturally appropriate support, to address barriers and create pathways that enable education and meaningful employment outcomes (NIAA, 2023, p. 6).⁷⁵ The Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (2023) argues also that engaging with First Nations voices and perspectives “on a deeper level” can ensure the value of First Nations knowledge is recognised and incorporated into institutional operations and that there are increased numbers of First Nations students entering the system (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 98).

First Nations students and staff need to feel “culturally safe” in the higher education system, which means ensuring that First Nations people are in an “inherently safe and respectful environment”, and where the organisation is “culturally competent” (NIAA, 2023, p. 4; Behrendt, 2015). However, each community and situation is different, therefore a “one size fits all” approach will not work, meaning that institutions need to make efforts to understand First Nations communities and value their knowledge (NIAA, 2023, p. 4; Raciti et al., 2023, p. 208).

2.6.4 Assimilation versus integration?

There is something of a tension around construing equity initiatives in higher education as a way of providing access to an education intended to make them more competitive in the ‘mainstream’, and the aspirations of Indigenous peoples to become self-determining through ‘getting a fair share’ of the educational dollar for their own educational purposes and outcomes. (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 3)

The Australian Government 2021 *Higher Education Standards Framework* stipulates that specific consideration be given to “the recruitment, admission, participation and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Australian Government, 2021, 2.2.2). It has been argued however that Anglo-centric notions of equity have focussed on providing Indigenous Peoples “equity to access of what other Australians were entitled to”, with education being a key tool and site for policy interventions based on “assimilating Indigenous peoples” (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 1).⁷⁶ This draws attention to the aspirations of Indigenous peoples to become self-determining through fair access to financial resourcing to meet their own educational objectives (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 3). It is now time to move from “inclusion

⁷⁵ It is important to recognise that the student body is not a homogenous entity, and, also, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are “more likely to be challenged by the prospect of entering a new environment, financial obstacles, and distance” (Larkin, 2011, p. 5). See Chapter 6 (6.3.3) Theme 3: Facilitating access.

⁷⁶ See also, Arbon (2008, pp. 57–61).

approaches” to self-determination and development of mechanisms whereby “Indigenous peoples have a direct role in decision making and governance” (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 130).

The dominant paradigm for addressing structural inequalities in Australian universities has been the so-called “cultural capital” approach (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 47),⁷⁷ potential downsides of which have been problematisation of equity students, establishment of deficit models, and assimilationist discourses (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 47; also Bunda et al., 2012).⁷⁸ The argument has been made that this has resulted in only limited benefits in terms of student outcomes, and that a focus on internal structural inequalities has the advantage of placing the locus of responsibility with institutions rather than students, which institutions are then better able to address (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 47).⁷⁹ With a deficit model, students are expected to change to suit the system rather than the system accommodating the backgrounds of students through genuine social inclusion (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 12).⁸⁰ By contrast, a strengths-based model assumes that students have resources that can be mobilised to enable flourishing, in the belief that capitalising on strengths will be more likely to lead to success (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 12). However, the processes of enculturation within “the system” remain the same for both models (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 12).

There is a need however to avoid “simplistic” views on the acquiring of “non-Indigenous cultural competency” which may be incorrectly viewed as assimilative (Kinnane et al., 2014, pp. 124–125). Nonetheless, it is not enough for universities to focus on “attrition” and “retention” as an excuse to intensify efforts at cultural assimilation, but rather, the very nature and purpose of higher education for First Nations people should be reconsidered (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 14). From “abandoned initiatives” to “reinventing the wheel time and time again” the Indigenous experience in Australian universities has been fraught, and if the sector wishes to engage more Indigenous people it will need to do more (Liddle, 2016, p. 54).⁸¹

⁷⁷ This invokes Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) which has been widely applied as a theoretical lens to explain differences in outcomes for students from various backgrounds (Habel et al., 2016, p. 11; Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 10).

⁷⁸ The deficit model assumes that student inequity is rooted in the perceived deficiencies of individuals rather than the “entrenched structures of social inequality” (University of Newcastle, 2023, p. 9). See also, University of Melbourne (2023, p. 2).

⁷⁹ See also, Larkin (2011).

⁸⁰ If students enter and then withdraw before completion, they are branded by the university as “a ‘dropout’ -a failure” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1999, p. 7), whereas “so-called ‘dropout rates and failures’ of Indigenous peoples within non-Indigenous educational systems must be viewed for what they really are-rejection rates” (The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education, 1999, Article 1.3.1).

⁸¹ See also, Bennett et al. (2015).

Acting upon a version of reality that is not “congruent with the reality of intended beneficiaries” results in solutions that are not culturally responsive and therefore “do not accomplish the stated goals” (Mertens, 2016, p. 104).⁸² There is an evident need for creation of a university environment that “privileges Aboriginal values, principles, knowledges and perspectives” (Perry & Holt, 2018, p. 343), and which moves beyond “Western hegemonic control and approaches of mainstreaming” (Perry & Holt, 2018, p. 345). Attention has also been drawn to concerns about a “mainstreaming agenda” in implementation of the Behrendt Review “whole-of-university” recommendation by universities (Buckskin et al., 2018, pp. 33–36).⁸³ To move forward, universities must revisit their ideas of “cultural embedding” and the “whole-of-university approach” in order to ensure that these are not paternalistic or ‘mainstreaming’ but are about turning the entire university into a “collaborative and supportive environment” (Liddle, 2016, p. 57).⁸⁴

First Nations students should not have to leave their “cultural predispositions” at the door (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 6; Larkin, 2011, p. 9).⁸⁵ A critique of affirmative practices in Australian universities is that they are based in a “compensatory logic” that fails to problematise “the structural selectivity of cultural and epistemological codes” embedded in “whitestream” curricula and pedagogies (Bunda, 2012, p. 942). A critical theory perspective would argue for praxis governed by *phronesis*, where action is underpinned by an ethical dimension focused on inclusivity, empowerment, agency, and pragmatic benefits to students (Regelski, 2020).⁸⁶ Such an approach would seek “good results” to address specific “needs”, and the unique demands of these “needs” would then determine the criteria for what is “right” (Regelski, 2003, 2020). This means interrogating “standard practice” (Regelski, 2020, pp. 40, 42) and “ideological influences” (pp. 8, 38, 42) and developing a more informed understanding of these “needs” (pp. 42, 47).

Indigenous and decolonising theory also provides a means for developing a better understanding of the “dialectic of colonizer-colonised” and the role of education in transforming colonialism “at deep levels of knowledge, pedagogy, the shaping of minds and

⁸² The transformative ontological assumption here is that there are different versions of reality and that these are created from different social positionalities and degrees of power (Mertens, 2016, p. 104).

⁸³ See also, Perry & Holt (2018).

⁸⁴ Any decisions that relate to higher education should therefore include “meaningful consultation and discussion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” (NATSIPA & CAPA, 2023, p. 4).

⁸⁵ Rather than asking how students need to change to fit into the institution, we should be asking “what institutions are doing to become inclusive to all students, staff, and the wider community”, thereby shifting the onus from students to all actors within the institution (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 7). See also, Newsome (2016, p. 128).

⁸⁶ See also, Bates (2016, pp. 1–2).

discourses” (L. Smith et al., 2019, p. 6). Achieving equitable participation does not depend therefore upon simply minimising barriers to access, but in ensuring that education programs are inclusive and respond to First Nations priorities and aspirations, and that access requirements reflect these criteria.

Universities have an opportunity to revisit the Behrendt “whole-of-university” approach to ensure that every area of the university is an environment that is inclusive and supports First Nations people (Liddle, 2016, p. 66). This would recognise rather than reinforce traditional means of entry and provide strong culturally inclusive content and meaningful engagement of First Nations community in governance and everyday activities (Liddle, 2016, p. 66). Above all, universities need to break down structural racism and understand that success will lie not in First Nations people “blending into the mainstream” but in ensuring that First Nations cultures and knowledge systems are embraced and celebrated (Liddle, 2016, p. 66). This does not mean however that First Nations students will necessarily want to only study their own history and culture, but that universities should be leading the way in preparing students for better employment opportunities across a broader range of work choices through access to appropriate training (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2093; Oliver et al., 2013, p. 8).

2.6.5 Indigenous tertiary music education and the “cultural interface”

I think the main thing is that if we’re evaluating a particular set of realities then we have to understand that there’s different ways of seeing that and understanding it. It’s not that one is right or wrong. ... It’s that complementarity across different knowledge systems. ... To get a third space where we’ve got a new epistemology or a new knowledge that comes from drawing these together. (Larkin, in J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 65)

Leading First Nations researcher Professor Steve Larkin has proposed a “third space”, a new epistemology that brings together different realities and is complementary across knowledge systems (Larkin, in J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 65). In Australian tertiary music education, inclusion of Indigenous musics and knowledges currently comprises Indigenous music courses with a focus on the study of Indigenous music in context,⁸⁷ and courses with embedded Indigenous topics and/or activities. The literature review revealed an absence of

⁸⁷ An example is the Contemporary Australian Indigenous Music Studies course offered at the ANU School of Music (Australian National University, 2024c).

scholarly literature on the implications and impacts of either model for First Nations music students. There is however a substantial body of scholarly literature addressing inclusion of Indigenous musics in teaching and learning more generally.⁸⁸

It is beyond the scope of this review to provide a comprehensive detailed account of this literature. Illustrative examples include those outlined in 2.4.1 (Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot, 2016) and 2.5.2 (Corn & Patrick, 2015; Dillon & Chapman, 2005; Newsome, 1999, 2008, 2016; Webb & Bracknell, 2021). Other instructive examples include Ellis's seminal book *Aboriginal Music: Education for Living* (1985) which explores "traditional" Indigenous and Western music education approaches and provides insights into the communicative potential of music cross-culturally and in music education; a description of bringing *Yanyuwa* women's performance traditions and pedagogy into a tertiary Indigenous Studies program (Mackinlay, 2005); an approach to collaborative curriculum design and teaching which introduces undergraduate and postgraduate students to Australian Indigenous epistemologies pivoting on "knowing through doing" (Corn & Patrick, 2014, pp. 148–149); insights into an innovative approach to research education for First Nations tertiary music students (Turner, 1999); and an innovative partnership model for teaching and mentoring First Nations musicians at the ANU School of Music (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024).

One criticism of inclusionary programmes however is that they may be "celebratory rather than interrogatory" (Costigan & Neuenfeldt, 2002, p. 48, citing Crowley, 1999, p. 104), and can reinforce cultural stereotypes while doing little to challenge dominant practices (p. 48, citing McConaghy, 2000). It has been suggested that music education could be defined as *cultural studies* (Dunbar-Hall, 2005, p. 33), where the focus of investigation is on "uneven power relationships between different cultures" and "analysis of the processes through which these relationships can be identified, analyzed and circumvented" (p. 34). A cultural studies approach to the music curriculum would thus require teachers to be aware of the "social and political roles of music in various cultures" (Locke & Prentice, 2017, p. 143).

In the Australian music education system, a kind of "double identity" has been observed in Indigenous Studies, comprised of "education of Indigenous students" and "education of all students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories"

⁸⁸ Bartleet et al. (2014); Bartleet, Carfoot, et al. (2016); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bennett et al. (2016); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Corn & Patrick (2014); Corn & Patrick (2015); Ellis (1985); Costigan & Neuenfeldt (2002); Dillon & Chapman (2005); Mackinlay (2005); Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall (2003); Newsome (1999, 2008, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Turner (1999).

on the other (Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall, 2003, p. 29).⁸⁹ In either context however, teaching of Indigenous musics is not neutral and requires teaching the historical, social and political contexts in which musics exist, raising debates over the “efficacy of the pedagogic act”, and uncovering the “dialectic and musical tensions that surround it” (Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall, 2003, p. 39). There are differences and tensions that have been noted in the teaching of Australian Indigenous studies and in Indigenous education (Ma Rhea & Russell, 2012, p. 22), which are different but related areas (p. 23) and frequently “collapsed or used interchangeably”, with a need to problematise pedagogical approaches (p. 18).⁹⁰ The case has been made too that while Indigenous Studies in the academy will always be study about Indigenous people, for Indigenous people, it must be shaped “to ensure it is also study and enquiry *for us*” (Nakata, 2006, p. 273).

Attention has been drawn to marginalisation, exploitation, governance and control in the teaching of Indigenous Studies in universities, highlighting the involvement of Indigenous Peoples as a central commitment (Fredericks, 2009, pp. 1–2). Reflecting on efforts to achieve an alignment between the goals of Indigenous self-determination, Indigenous studies programs and decolonising theory, questions have also been raised about “approaches to Indigenous studies in Australian higher education”, challenging “the scholarship recruited for this”, and “its advocated role in the education of all students” (Nakata, 2017, p. 1).⁹¹ A useful critical theoretical lens for interrogating the teaching of Indigenous knowledges is Cultural Interface Theory (Nakata, 2007, pp. 195–212), which can provide a “discipline-based rationale for working beyond the Indigenous-western binary” (Carey & Prince, 2014, p. 270).⁹² However, for many Indigenous students and lecturers the “Indigenous epistemological basis of knowledge construction and the ways of ‘doing’ knowledge” are not completely unfamiliar (Nakata, 2007, p. 219) and Indigenous students and academics are all also “grounded in Western disciplines” (p. 220). An appreciation of this reality could usefully inform more inclusive teaching and learning practices in the Australian tertiary music education system.

⁸⁹ Indigenous studies and Indigenous student education may be seen as separate but aligned areas (Page et al., 2017, pp. 32–33), however when Indigenous Studies is discussed from within Indigenous concerns, it is invariably not separated from what it means for the education of Indigenous students, and which for Indigenous academics involves a commitment to Indigenous people first and foremost (Nakata, 2006, pp. 266, 268).

⁹⁰ This means considering how Indigenous content should be taught, who should teach it, and for what purpose (Ma Rhea & Russell, 2012, p. 19).

⁹¹ It has been argued too that it is not Indigenous people or academics, but the ontological world of Western knowledge systems, the disciplines, that “mediate meaning” and “interpret the Indigenous world to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students” (Nakata, 2004, p. 12).

⁹² This could also be usefully applied in teaching Indigenous music and culture.

In these “complex or contested terrains” of overlapping knowledge systems, different understandings often “conflict, contradict, produce incoherence and make it difficult to ‘make sense’ of these contradictions” (Nakata, 2007, p. 197). Too often what passes for anti-colonial/decolonising scholarship constitutes “simplistic reversals of the hierarchialised positioning of apparently discrete and unified ‘Indigenous knowledges’ versus ‘western knowledges’; as Nakata and colleagues argue, the ‘complex grounds of this “Indigenous-western” contest make it a difficult task to resolve what is colonial and what is Indigenous ...” (Carey & Prince, 2015, p. 272, quoting Nakata, 2004, p. 121). More attention needs to be paid therefore to challenges in the “difficult middle ground”, the “cultural interface”, in progressing life-enhancing outcomes for Indigenous People (Nakata, 2013, p. 302).⁹³

Attention has been drawn also to ways in which racism and the devaluing of Indigenous People is perpetuated by non-Indigenous academics who have control of Indigenous studies and can demonstrate “an understanding of ‘book knowledge’” (Fredericks, 2009, p. 3, referencing hooks, 1994, p. 16). Nakata’s work provides non-Indigenous teachers of Indigenous studies with a framework for understanding their role, potential, and limitations within the power relations that comprise the “cultural interface” (McGloin, 2009, p. 36) as a “site of struggle” which produces the “capacity for change” (p. 41). Efforts to decolonise Indigenous knowledge production in the academy have however developed a practice of skipping over the “complex entanglements that constitute the myriad layers of the interface between Western and Indigenous meanings”, emphasising “the divergences between these meanings”, with not enough attention paid to the significance of “the convergences of these traditions” (Nakata, 2017, p. 6).⁹⁴

There needs to be caution therefore with respect to reconstruction and application of Indigenous knowledge meanings without sufficient understanding of the “immense difficulties of working with epistemological and ontological differences” and the complications of two hundred years of “engagement between Indigenous and Western meanings” (Nakata, 2017, p. 5).⁹⁵ There are tensions also around how Indigenous Knowledge is defined, taught and assessed, and how graduate attributes are determined, with universities needing to go beyond “either/or”

⁹³ Conceptual “binarisms” have also been challenged (Holcombe, 2005, p. 230), recognising the “third space” (after Bhabha, 1988) as the “cultural interface” or “in-between” space where inter-cultural translation and negotiation occur (p. 226). See also, Olsen (2018) on hybridity and the place “in between” in questioning binary positions (p. 210).

⁹⁴ See also, Mackinlay & Barney (2014) which discusses involvement of non-Indigenous scholars in Indigenous Australian Studies, including in relation to critical pedagogy, critical race theory and decolonisation as praxis.

⁹⁵ This demands clarity about purposes and limits in including Indigenous knowledges in Indigenous Studies courses (Nakata, 2006, pp. 270–271).

thinking to “both/and” possibilities (Frawley, 2017, p. 77, citing Gidley et al., 2010) to facilitate productive and creative interaction for Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduates across cultural boundaries, and meaningful and constructive engagement with each other and the academy (p. 77).

The epistemology of Indigenous cultures has historically been excluded within the Australian university system, which has created a paradoxical situation whereby knowledge *about* First Nations People is embraced by academic discourse, highlighting the importance of understanding how Indigenous epistemologies have been occluded (Babcock, 2000, p. 48).⁹⁶ Diminution of Indigenous knowledge on *its own terms* means that there has been little investigation into how Indigenous worldviews may be incorporated into music performance departments as an “equally legitimate domain of knowledge” (Babcock, 2000, p. 46). This underlines the “systemic lens of alterity” through which the academy has typically engaged with Australian Indigenous expressive forms, which has typified them as conduits for cultural, spiritual and political ideas and values, but rarely intellectual ones (Corn, 2018, p. 161).

First Nations students usually constitute the minority in classes about Indigenous music and knowledges in Australian universities. Exceptions to this include programs or courses specifically for First Nations music and performing arts students, such as those offered by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide and at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) at Edith Cowan University.⁹⁷ In these contexts it is possible to tailor programs to the learning aspirations and requirements of First Nations students, which may encompass multiple intersecting cultural worlds and knowledge systems and also incorporate critical approaches in teaching and learning (Newsome, 1999, 2016; Turner, 1999).

2.6.6 Evaluation of equity initiatives

Measurement and evaluation of equity initiatives in Indigenous higher education contexts is critical to an understanding of what is working, what is not, and what needs to change. The literature review revealed an absence of scholarly literature on evaluation of equity initiatives for First Nations Peoples in Australian tertiary music education. A key challenge is to move beyond basic process and impact evaluation approaches to more “rigorous, comprehensive and nuanced understandings of what Indigenous higher education trajectories look like, the inherent complexities they bring, how they can best be navigated,

⁹⁶ See also, Mackinlay & Barney (2014, p. 59).

⁹⁷ See also, Bracknell & Barwick (2020).

and the tangible outcomes Indigenous specific programs can achieve” (Frawley et al., 2015, p. 10). There is an urgent need also for more robust and comprehensive evaluation of existing programs and policies, at national, state and local levels, which should be mirrored by high-quality action-oriented research to “develop strategies that make a difference” (Frawley et al., 2017, p. 276).

Equity initiatives are typically highly interdependent and nested within wider university policies and programs (Naylor et al., 2013, p. 36). A Critical Interventions Framework designed to advance equity in Australian higher education (Naylor et al., 2013) identifies characteristics and foci of initiatives and strategies that are most effective, and how activities and resources can be best targeted to generate positive outcomes (p. 5).⁹⁸ A major finding was the dearth of publicly available, peer reviewed research or evaluation, conducted with rigorous methodologies, on the effects of equity initiatives in Australian higher education (Naylor et al., 2013, p. 7). Program design was essentially “an act of faith”, and it was recommended that there be a stronger platform for research and evaluation, and that results be more widely published (Naylor et al., 2013, p. 7).

The Behrendt Review (2012) found that while considerable data was available through departmental program-based reporting to monitor progress, there was not always sufficient evidence to assess the overall success or otherwise of specific programs, and in some cases, there were no independent evaluations of programs (p. 154). Subsequent research also noted the lack of robust and comprehensive evaluations of program and policy effectiveness in Indigenous higher education (J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 81), finding that evaluation can mean different things to different people (pp. 35–39), and recommending development of “innovative qualitative evaluation strategies aligned with Indigenous methodologies and methods” (Recommendation 7, p. 7). The research also provided an Indigenous-focussed conceptual model of potential performance parameters to strengthen Indigenous higher education monitoring and evaluation in Australia (J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 68), one which positions Indigenous students at the centre, in a metaphorical representation of the need for student-centred approaches as the primary focal point in Indigenous higher education work (p. 71). This underlined the need for qualitative methodologies and evidence in evaluation in Indigenous contexts more aligned with Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies, in contrast with a higher education reporting “system” which favours quantitative methods and evidence

⁹⁸ See also, Naylor (2015) which provides a useful guide for evaluation of equity programs, which should have “clear, unambiguous and measurable aims and objectives” (p. 2).

(J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 35). Importantly, qualitative approaches can also provide greater depth and complexity of data reflecting the lived experience of students (Habel et al., 2016, p. 14).

There is a tendency however towards quantification and measurement of the instrumental impacts of the arts,⁹⁹ which are focused more on measuring ways in which the arts serve social, economic and environmental agendas than on trying to understand the intrinsic, conceptual and aesthetic processes that are central to them (Bartleet, 2019). The arts operate as a part of complex ecosystems of forces and factors where “cause and effect explanations are rarely sufficient, and systems of data collection struggle to find effective ways of measuring impact” (Bartleet, 2019). Common impact metrics within university frameworks may not capture the more subtle and complex transformational changes that can emanate from participatory research (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 171), noting also that effective evaluation of impact most frequently utilises both quantitative and qualitative data and is “stakeholder-centred, context specific and iterative” (Bennett et al., 2015, p. 89). A “transformative philosophical framework” has also been suggested as a way for evaluators to become more aware of the implications of assumptions made by both themselves and stakeholders (Mertens, 2016, p. 102). What is clear is that there is a need for development of more holistic understandings of impact and integration of instrumental and intrinsic impact and value, in which formative and participatory evaluations of impact can enhance practice and help understand how benefits work (Bartleet, 2019).¹⁰⁰

2.7 Research paradigm

We as Indigenous peoples now want research and its designs to contribute to self-determination and liberation struggles as defined by us and our communities.
(Rigney, 2000, p. x)

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.6.5) the research comprised a place-based, extended case study conducted at the ANU School of Music, and was situated within a transformative applied paradigm and an Indigenous-centred participatory-action theoretical framework informed by a critical perspectives approach. The literature review revealed a lack of scholarly literature explicating research paradigms in research addressing First Nations underrepresentation, exclusion, and inequities in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ The expression *social outcomes* is suggested as preferable to *social impact* (Bartleet, 2023, p. 37).

¹⁰⁰ See also, Bartleet (2023, p. 38).

¹⁰¹ See Newsome (2008, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

The research is based in a transformative applied paradigm.¹⁰² This provides a framework for addressing social justice issues and consequent methodological decisions in research, recognising realities as “constructed and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and racial/ethnic values” and acknowledging power and privilege as “determinants of which reality will be privileged in a research context” (Mertens, 2007, p. 212). Leading First Nations researcher Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney has confirmed that Indigenous peoples want research to contribute to self-determination and liberation struggles “as defined by us and our communities (Rigney, 2000, p. x). The transformative paradigm provides a means for achieving this, based in a social justice theory of ethics which considers the need to “redress inequalities by giving precedence, or at least equal weight, to the voices of the least advantaged groups in society” with a view to empowerment as active agents in social change (Mertens, 2007, p. 222).¹⁰³ While it may be a Western approach, the transformative paradigm is a “value-driven” one rooted in “social emancipation and solidarity with oppressed people”, with the potential to be inclusive of other systems of knowledge, including non-Western epistemologies and ontologies (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, pp. 2–3).¹⁰⁴

It has been argued that introducing Indigenous knowledges into any form of academic discourse (including research) must ethically include the influence of colonial relationships, thereby introducing a “decolonizing perspective to a critical paradigm” (Kovach, 2009, p. 30). Researchers active in Indigenous community research will look therefore to a form of participatory action research methodology which “fits within a transformative paradigm” (Kovach, 2009, p. 30). The “transformative/emancipatory paradigm” is one in which the researcher views research as a “moral and political activity” that requires commitment to a “value position” (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, p. 12). The central tenant of the paradigm is that power is an issue which should be addressed at each stage of the research process (Mertens, 2007, p. 213), and where it is the role of the researcher to recognise inequalities and injustices and strive to “challenge the status quo” (Mertens, 2007, p. 212). This means being cognisant of the philosophical assumptions that guide research work and the methodological implications of those assumptions (Mertens, 2007, p. 212).

¹⁰² This has also been described as the Transformative/Emancipatory Paradigm (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, pp. 11–12), which can encompass participatory action research (p. 11).

¹⁰³ This recognises historical imbalance in research and knowledge production that “favours the ‘elite’ and disadvantages many others” (Noel, 2016, p. 3).

¹⁰⁴ The key ontological assumption is that there are multiple realities, and knowledge is not only created by the elite researcher or dominant group (Noel, 2016, p. 4).

Review of sources and details of the case study are provided in Chapter 3: The Case Study. Review of sources on research methodologies, including Indigenous and participatory research methodologies; and explication of the research methodology and implementation of methods in the research, are provided in Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Methods.

2.8 Decolonisation and First Nations research

Decolonization demands fundamental changes in hegemonic power relations and the decentring of hierarchies such as those between scholarship/activism, theory/practice, and researcher/researched. (ICTM, 2022)

The research was informed by discourses on decolonisation and decolonising approaches in research.¹⁰⁵ Decolonisation demands “fundamental changes in hegemonic power relations” and “the decentring of hierarchies”, including in research (ICTM, 2022). It is vital therefore that qualitative researchers working with populations oppressed by colonial legacies “critically examine and apply decolonizing methodological practices in their research” as a moral imperative (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, p. 6).¹⁰⁶ The Indigenous research agenda may be understood as firmly situated within the “decolonization politics of the indigenous peoples’ movement” and focussed strategically on “the goal of self-determination” (L. Smith, 1999, pp. 115–116), where it is more than a “political goal”, becoming also “a goal of social justice” (p. 116).¹⁰⁷ A conceptual and methodological framework for implementing Indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2021, p. 15) and decolonising the academy (p. 270),¹⁰⁸ urges non-Indigenous researchers to respect Indigenous methodologies “on their own terms” (p. 12) and consider alternative methodological possibilities (p. 29).

Decolonisation has been described as a “critique of the dominance of Euro-Western language and thought, cultural and academic imperialism” (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 327), which means “engag[ing] with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels” (L. Smith, 1999, p.

¹⁰⁵ Arbon (2008); Chilisa (2005); Chilisa et al. (2017); Datta (2018); Kendall et al. (2011); Kovach (2021); Locke & Prentice (2016); Rigney (1999); Smith (1999, 2021); Beng & Ostachewski (2022); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021); Tuck & Yang (2012).

¹⁰⁶ This includes through exercising “critical reflexivity”, enabling “reciprocity and respect for self-determination”, embracing “‘Other(ed)’ ways of knowing”, and embodying “a transformative praxis” (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, p. 6). See also, Akama et al. (2019, pp. 60, 64, 66, 71, 75); Porter & Arabena (2018, p. 9).

¹⁰⁷ The terms “decolonial” and “anti-colonial” may also be considered as meaning “there is a huge lot of political work that we need to do” (Te Rau Ora Webinars, 2017, 1.07:24–1.07:53).

¹⁰⁸ This must be anchored in “Indigenous epistemology, theory, ethics, story and community” (Kovach, 2021, p. 42).

20) and the “bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (p. 98). The exercise of decolonising methodologies must however do more than simply critique colonialism, it must open up possibilities for “understanding and knowing the world differently” and offer “different solutions to problems caused by colonialism and the failure of power structures to address these historic conditions” (L. Smith, 2021, p. xiii).¹⁰⁹

Despite indications of positive change (L. Smith, 2021, p. xi), and although discourse may have shifted to words such as “reconciliation, inclusion and diversity”, no real progress has been made to decolonise the major knowledge and political institutions of academia (p. xii).¹¹⁰ Knowledge and the power to define what counts as “real knowledge” lie at the epistemic core of colonialism (L. Smith, 2021, xii), thus for researchers of decolonising methodologies as a set of knowledge-related critical practices, the challenge is to simultaneously work with colonial and Indigenous concepts of knowledge, “decentring one while centring the other” (L. Smith, 2021, p. xii).

It has been argued that “western research is a western concept” therefore an entirely Aboriginal research framework is not possible, however Indigenist research can occur through a centring of “Aboriginal Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing” in alignment with aspects of western qualitative research frameworks (Martin-Miraboopa Boran, 2003, p. 211).¹¹¹ Leading Canadian First Nations researcher Associate Professor Shawn Wilson makes a distinction however, suggesting that while it is possible for non-Indigenous researchers to follow an “Indigenist paradigm” as a philosophical belief system, this does not mean you would have the same experience of the world as an Indigenous person (CTET Studio RRU, 2020). This has significant implications for non-Indigenous researchers, especially with respect to the ethics of “voice and representation” (Kovach, 2021, pp. 236–237), which requires researchers to be conscious of the theoretical lens through which they are interpreting Indigenous experience (p. 238).

Any paradigm with an Indigenous label has a decolonising intention as its axiological characteristic, challenging researchers to make explicit the ontological, epistemological and axiological standpoints that inform the research process (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 327). This demands a critical understanding of the “underlying assumptions, motivations and values

¹⁰⁹ This can include application of a decolonising lens to music education and research, for example, by asking key questions concerning the certification of “masters” as lecturers, music curricula, the musical canon, and musical practices (Beng & Ostachewski, 2022).

¹¹⁰ The language of diversity in institutions has also been critiqued as heralding the departure of more critical terms such as “equality”, “equal opportunities”, and “social justice” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 1).

¹¹¹ “Indigenist research”, named after Rigney (1999), is expanded on here by Martin-Miraboopa Boran (2003).

which inform research practices” (L. Smith, 1999, p. 20) and recognition that meaningful decolonising practices are “not all about theory or all about action” but are “all about praxis and the reflexivity that is necessary for the integrity of research and of the researchers themselves” (L. Smith, 2021, p. xiv). For myself, as a non-Indigenous researcher engaged in Indigenous matters research together with First Nations Peoples, this means recognising “indigenous epistemologies” and addressing “critical imperative practices that are shaped by indigenous research agendas” (Evans & Lee, 2022, p. 3, citing L. Smith, 1999, in Denzin, 2005, p. 953).¹¹²

It has been argued that in Australian research the distinction between methodology and epistemology has not yet been fully recognised, and that for non-Indigenous Australians to make the necessary paradigmatic shifts in research practice, a process of “decolonization” must be undertaken (Kendall et al., 2011, p.1722). This requires the researcher to learn about and acknowledge the historical facts and impacts of colonisation and about the “social and cultural values and worldviews” of diverse Aboriginal peoples (Kendall et al., 2011, p.1722). “Postcolonial theorizing” can also be useful in explaining the general process of colonisation and counter-attempts by former colonies to disengage from the colonial syndrome (Chilisa, 2005, p. 665).¹¹³

In addressing the politics of representation, leading Indigenous researcher Professor Marcia Langton has argued for an “anti-colonialist cultural criticism of representation” (Langton, 1993, p. 7). Leading Indigenous researcher Dr Veronica Arbon has also highlighted the importance of “counter-hegemonic acts of decolonisation” as advanced by Indigenous people within the academy (Arbon, 2008, p. 148), and protection of Indigenous knowledge, philosophies and ontologies through valorisation and use of Indigenous knowledge “for our own advantage” and through a view of “what is ‘best’ for us from our own being, knowing and doing” (p. 151).¹¹⁴

For a non-Indigenous researcher such as myself, this means seeking to view the nature and processes of research through a First Nations lens. Decolonising research and researcher “from the participants’ perspective” is suggested as a way to positively re-position both researcher and participants and to connect participants and researcher with all parts of the research “as a collective and collaborative endeavour” (Datta, 2018, p. 2). This sees

¹¹² See also, Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021).

¹¹³ Most Indigenous scholars don’t see themselves as “post-colonial” however, because this assumes that colonialism is over (Te Rau Ora Webinars, 2017, 1.07:28–1.07:44).

¹¹⁴ Similarly, decolonisation means “active valorisation of indigenous knowledges” (Locke & Prentice, 2016, p. 140), and where researchers need to develop a critical stance towards their subject and discipline (p. 139).

decolonisation as a continuous process of “anti-colonial” struggle, one that “honors Indigenous approaches to knowing the world” and which recognises “Indigenous land, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous sovereignty – including over the decolonization process” (Datta, 2018, p. 2).

“Dehegemonisation” may be considered a critical step in the decolonisation of research practices (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1722). This seeks to legitimise non-Western ways and cultures as meaningful forms of knowledge and recognise how knowledge constructed by the owners of the knowledge, or even co-constructed with a researcher, differs from knowledge re-constructed by non-Indigenous researchers (Kendall et al., 2011, pp. 1723–1723). Such an approach underlines the importance of privileging First Nations agency, voices, and knowledges in progressing First Nations interests within the academy. Decolonisation needs to be understood however as a distinct project from other civil and human rights-based social justice projects (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 2), which should bring about the “repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (p. 1), and recognise that the “too-easy adoption of decolonizing discourse (making decolonization a metaphor)” can get in the way of “more meaningful potential alliances” (p. 3). This means supporting self-representation in decision making by Indigenous Peoples (L. Smith, 1999, p. 150), including in “proposing solutions to the real-life dilemmas that indigenous communities confront” (p. 151). Doctoral students, in seeking to respond more ethically to research issues in settler/colonial contexts,¹¹⁵ also have an opportunity for “decolonising the academy” (Weir et al., 2019, p. 1301), but which ultimately must be addressed through “systemic change” (p. 1317).¹¹⁶

2.8.1 Positionality and power

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.5.1), my theory-practice position in the research was an Indigenous-informed, transformative-rectifactory one which recognises the rights of First Nations people to primacy of voice, agency, and control in Indigenous matters research and in progressing an institutional transformative change agenda. The literature review on researcher positionality focussed primarily on the role of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous matters research, with the aim of interrogating the ethics of participation, determining the roles of

¹¹⁵ This draws attention also to issues of “consent and risk; the resource gap in research collaborations; the consequences of not collaborating with Indigenous people; and the importance of examining knowledge frames” (Weir et al., 2019, p. 1301).

¹¹⁶ In conducting ethical research there is also a need for universities to have “appropriate protocols and training around Indigenous engagement and co-design” to underpin innovation and fulfil commitments to strengthening and harnessing Indigenous knowledge through “ethical, reciprocal partnerships” with communities (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 5).

participants, and ensuring that all aspects of the research were acceptable to First Nations stakeholders and participants.

Research constitutes a powerful intervention which has traditionally benefited the researcher and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society (L. Smith, 1999, p. 176). First Nations Peoples have often expressed a suspicious, cynical, and openly resistant stance towards the traditional Western research agenda and have every reason to be sceptical about the activities of non-Indigenous researchers.¹¹⁷ Some have demanded that Indigenous matters research should be conducted only by Indigenous researchers, and/or that there should be limits on the involvement of non-Indigenous researchers (Aveling, 2012; Rigney, 1999; L. Smith, 1999, p. 178). For me, this raised questions about whether, as a non-Indigenous person, it would be appropriate for me to undertake the research.

The “cultural interface” as articulated by Nakata (2007) may be understood as a “site of contestation” and a “space of tension” that generates the conditions of possibility for a multitude of positions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous subjects and between colonised people and colonial power structures (McGloin, 2009, p. 39). This tension may best be understood as existing within a framework of on-going colonial power relations that are integral to cultural institutions, and where struggle, as with all regulatory forces, produces “the capacity for change” and “opportunities to undermine the repressive terrain of the ‘cultural interface’” (McGloin, 2009, p. 41). Non-Indigenous researchers who study Indigenous people and issues may therefore be considered as situated in a “highly contested epistemological space”, one which Indigenous sovereignty and decolonising endeavours have transformed into a “thriving liberatory arena” (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 408).

But who should participate in this “liberatory arena” and on whose terms, and how? Research undertaken in Western paradigms in non-Indigenous research institutions bears enormous epistemic privilege (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 9). Who you are matters (Olsen, 2018, p. 206). Academic researchers represent “centers of power, privilege and status” within institutions and the production of knowledge (Muhammad et al., 2015, p. 1046), and research related to Indigenous people and issues is “infused with power/knowledge dynamics” (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 409). Leading Kaupapa Māori researcher Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us too that in Indigenous research there is no “neutral position” in a space where everything involves multidimensional relations of power, and is therefore inherently political

¹¹⁷ Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Kendall et al. (2011); Martin-Miraboopa Boran (2003); McCartan et al. (2002, p. 2); Mooney-Somers & Mahor (2009); Olsen (2018, p. 206); Smith (1999, pp. 175–176; 2021, p. 49); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021, p. 1), Yu (2018).

(Te Rau Ora Webinars, 2017). Being a researcher affords power, the power to ask questions and interpret knowledge, which demands interrogating what our research is about, whose business we are doing, who will benefit, and whether it will dislodge and transform current power relations or simply reinforce the status quo (Te Rau Ora Webinars, 2017). These were core ethical and methodological questions at the heart of the research.

Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith has argued that the challenge to colonial legacies in institutions should not be left to First Nations people alone and that non-Indigenous people also need to speak up and fight, but cautioned also that non-Indigenous people need to check their intentions.¹¹⁸ It may even be considered a responsibility of non-Indigenous researchers to be prepared to “challenge and change organisational cultures” (Porter & Arabena, 2021, p. 22). The “relational nature” of colonialism suggests also that “anti-colonialism” can involve all parties of the colonial relationship and thus include the support and actions of people of the coloniser group (Hart et al., 2017, p. 333), who can use their power to challenge the oppression of colonialism (p. 334). Similarly, there is a role for the non-Indigenous collegium in facilitating Indigenous knowledges and research and as allies in “re-imaging academic research policy” (Kovach, 2021, p. 266). In the context of multiple relations of power, it is “time to seek dialogue” (Olsen, 2017, p. 210, referencing Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 6). This recognises the potential of dialogue in the struggle for a “clearer understanding of dominator culture” (Hooks & Scapp, 2010, p. 37), including through processes of “dialectical exchange” (p. 38) which demonstrate that “solidarity across difference is not only possible but necessary” (p. 40).¹¹⁹

By centring “Indigenist ways of knowing, being and doing” Indigenous and Settler researchers can conduct decolonising research together and create “a space of deep learning and knowledge co-creation with communities” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 333).¹²⁰ This means ensuring that “trust and relationships are must be [sic] at the core of practice” (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 23) and highlighting and correcting for “colonial power dynamics” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 333; Jones, 2012). The possibilities of a “*decentred* space” have also been suggested (Olsen, 2018, p. 206), in which an intersectional approach (p. 211) is taken to the

¹¹⁸ These views were expressed during a live streamed panel discussion on Decolonising Education hosted by the Te Kotahi Research Institute & Te Pua Wānanga at the University of Waikato (12 March 2018) as noted in my research journal, and were drawn from the live stream video, viewed March 13, 2018 (<http://bit.ly/2Fn1q5f>), which has since been archived and is no longer publicly available. See also, Smith (2021).

¹¹⁹ This supports the proposition that non-Indigenous/Indigenous relationships can be productive and positive despite the “different positioning around the colonial divide” (Barney & Proud, 2014, p. 91).

¹²⁰ This requires a profound commitment to “Indigenous based values and practices”, leadership by experienced Indigenist researchers, and the guidance of Elders (Hart et al., 2017, p. 340).

complexity and relationality of privilege (p. 207), challenging binary constructs (pp. 206, 210–211) and the complexities of insider/outsider relations (pp. 207, 212).¹²¹ Irrespective, a fuller exploration of the possibilities for self-determination in academia should ideally place concern for improving the life circumstances of all Indigenous Australians ahead of the “politics of difference” (Nakata, 2017, p. 4).

A “relational ethos” suggests the possibility of moving beyond “polarized silos” to construct “new, mutual, relational forms of dialogue, research, theory and action” (Kovach, 2021, p. 12). For non-Indigenous researchers a “*living in Indigenous sovereignty*” framework is proposed for anti-colonial research, one based in a transformative, relational, and decolonising process (Carlson, 2016, pp. ii- iii). This has similarities with a “*being in Indigenous sovereignty*” position (Nicoll, 2004, p. 20), which recognises the power and rights dimensions of a “racialized trope of perspective” and requires us to distinguish between subjective and objective representations of the past (p. 20). Likewise, the case is made for an “anti-colonial” construction of non-Aboriginality based in an “embodied awareness of ‘being in Indigenous sovereignty’” (Carey, 2008, p. i, referencing Nicoll, 2004), and which constitutes a “radical recentring” for processes of identity construction within invader/settler societies (p. i).¹²² The role and place of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous research has rightly been challenged (McCartan et al., 2022, p. 10), however these perspectives suggest a role for non-Indigenous researchers, which can include speaking up from within the institutional space as a form of “epistemological resistance” (Aveling, 2013, p. 211; Kendall, 2013, pp. 177–178; McCartan, 2022, pp. 9–10; Puch-Bouwman, 2014, pp. 412, 415–416). Any involvement in First Nations matters research needs to accord however with the expectations, aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people and have the support of First Nations people. This should never subsume or eclipse the role of First Nations Peoples in determining and directing change, which means engaging on terms acceptable to First Nations Peoples.

An “anti-colonial response” requires both non-Indigenous allies and the collegium (Kovach, 2021, pp. 256, 265–267), which means seeking and listening to the input of those who have experienced colonial oppression to “rebuild an anti-colonial academy”

¹²¹ This demands that researchers examine their research purpose and motive and are aware of relational power dynamics (Kovach, 2009, p. 112) and, also, reflect upon their insider/outsider status and situate themselves in relation to the research (p. 50). See also, Muhammad et al. (2015, pp. 1048–1050).

¹²² Greater inclusion of Indigenous interests within institutional frameworks should not be seen however as a radical overturning of the sovereignty of the Australian people, and inclusive processes such as co-design are merely a way of “sharing sovereignty” differently from the way it is currently shared (Dillon, 2021. p. 24).

(Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, p. 6). Similarly, an “activist” approach can affirm a “political alignment with an organized group of people in a struggle”, allowing dialogue with them to shape the research process (Hale, 2006, p. 97). This goes beyond “extracting knowledge from communities” by actively contributing to the goals of the individuals and groups involved in the research (Pickerill et al., 2021, p. 3). Irrespective, no matter what the intention, it is vital that non-Indigenous people acknowledge their research as taking place “in a continuing colonial paradigm” structured through “a myriad of dynamics that will always work to reproduce and reconstitute colonial relations” (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 28). This includes treating Indigenous knowledge as a “commodity” thereby further entrenching “privileges of entitlement” (Porter & Arabena, 2018, pp. 9–10) and seeking to dissolve the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges and worldviews through communication and dialogue, thereby underplaying the impacts of “structural relations of power” (p. 9). It may also include paternalistic paradigms which are concealed where research projects are uncritically positioned in emancipatory terms (Bartleet, 2023, p. 43).¹²³

Power relations are more complex than a simple insider/outsider dichotomy (Pease, 2021, p. ix). In collaborative methodologies attempting counter-colonial research, multiple layers of reflexivity are therefore essential (Nicholls, 2009, p. 117).¹²⁴ This means resisting “essentialist positions” while also recognising “difference within the collective” and that the “Self-Other hyphen” both connects and distinguishes between us (Nicholls, 2009, p. 117). Scholars are therefore challenged to critically reflect upon their own position (Pease, 2021, p. xi).¹²⁵ This is based in the argument that it is not possible to understand oppression unless we understand our own privilege and our complicity with systemic injustice (p. ix.) and also examine the way in which privilege is reproduced by social processes and practices in particular contexts and locations (Pease, 2012, p. xiii).

Changing people in privileged groups will not in itself abolish privilege, rather, what is needed is engagement in a process that will challenge “the institutionalisation of privilege” (Pease, 2021, p. 225). This does not imply a binary choice between “a focus on the personal and a focus on the structural” given that “all responsibility is at some level personal” and “the individual is the central locus of ethical responsibility” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 13, referencing

¹²³ There is a need to also critique the language used by “progressive members of privileged groups”, to acknowledge their relationship to power and implications in systems of privilege and oppression (Pease, 2012, pp. 236–237).

¹²⁴ This comprises additional political and relational layers of “self-reflexivity, inter-personal reflexivity and collective reflexivity” (Nicholls, 2009, p. 117).

¹²⁵ This may be understood as an organic process which is an essential part of a “decolonizing mindset” (Kovach, 2009, p. 85).

Young, 2011). Considering that the problem is one of “settler-coloniality” the work should however not rest with Indigenous people alone (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 21). The argument is that those who are privileged have a greater responsibility to address privilege and domination (Pease, 2021, p. 231), and that meaningful and lasting change relies upon “the combined efforts of the oppressed and those willing to forgo and challenge their privileges” (p. 243). While Indigenous researchers may have “a responsibility to assist others to learn our ways”, allies also have a role in “pushing back against an all-consuming Eurocentrism” (Kovach, 2021, p. 12). It has been suggested that one of the most effective ways to use privilege is to become “the ally of those on the other side of the privilege seesaw” (Kendall, 2013, p. 173),¹²⁶ however, there is a thin line between “being a constructive ally” and “taking over another group’s struggle” (Pease, 2021, p. 236). Critical reflection on the history of one’s own discipline and profession as cultural standpoints is also suggested as instructive (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 22).

A relational paradigm and multi-epistemological approach can inform a “partnership of knowledge systems” and a postcolonial research methodological framework within which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can fit their research (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 326). This encourages researchers to adopt multi-paradigmatic perspectives and delve into multi-epistemologies that accommodate Indigenous paradigms and epistemologies (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 327),¹²⁷ the challenge being to define and illustrate research conducted from an Indigenous perspective (p. 327).

There are a range of “theory-practice positions” which non-Indigenous researchers have turned to and that may affect their practices (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 409).¹²⁸ These range from the Indigenous to the colonial, and often overlap, creating a body of knowledge that is “*in flux and evolving*”, but which are still “entangled within prescribed colonial relations” and have mostly “*recreated colonial residues and relations*” (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 410). A “rectifactory position” is proposed which applies principles of trans-generational justice towards the “healing of colonial damages”, as articulated by Collste (2010, 2016) (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 410). This acknowledges injustices and addresses colonial outcomes as a moral obligation through the righting of wrongs and rectifactory

¹²⁶ Notably, the Contemporary Australian Indigenous Music course at the ANU School of Music offers a unit of study which highlights also the role of non-Indigenous musician allies in First Nations music.

¹²⁷ These are based in “ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions emanating from the cultures, histories, philosophies and lived experience of those marginalised by Euro-Western paradigms” (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 327).

¹²⁸ These include Indigenous, decolonizing, postcolonial, anti-colonial, counter-colonial, whiteness studies, settler studies, traditional colonial, and idealizing positions (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 410).

actions (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, pp. 415–417).¹²⁹ The rectifactory position promotes new research practices based firmly on social contracts, policies and procedures, and where rectifactory resistance constitutes an epistemological withdrawal that creates space for innovative action (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 416).

My own theory-practice-position reflects this conception of rectifactory justice, recognising the right of First Nations Peoples to primacy of voice, agency, and control in colonial research contexts, and the essential role of Indigenous self-determination in progressing transformative institutional change aimed at rectifying injustices and their ongoing effects.

Whiteness

A critically reflexive approach means recognising the “politics of representation” in Indigenous research and knowledge construction and acknowledging that researcher bias can influence research findings (Kovach, 2009, pp. 26, 32–33). In the context of multiracial dialogue, white people need to therefore critically engage with “whiteness” in order to “problematise their own social location” (Pease, 2021, p. 233), “confront their prejudice”, and develop the ability to “understand other’s perspectives”, which in the Australian context means acknowledging the ongoing colonisation of Indigenous people (p. 234).¹³⁰ As a white non-Indigenous researcher this demands examining whiteness and power as an ongoing process (Kovach, 2021, p. 267), and undertaking the personal work needed to reveal the identity-based privileges that are systemically granted to us and the biases that we hold (Kendall, 2013, p. 158; Kovach, 2009, p. 33).¹³¹ This understands “whiteness” as an “invisible regime of power” that secures hegemony through discourse and which has power within the “production of knowledge and representation” (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 75). It is important therefore to recognise that “white supremacy” can operate also in and through everyday racism to maintain a “normalised orientation to ‘white superiority, virtue, moral goodness and action’” (Pechenkina & Liu, 2018, p. 2, citing Feagin, 2013, p. 10).¹³² The power relations inherent in the relationship between “representation, whiteness and knowledge production” are also embedded in our identities (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 87),

¹²⁹ This can include by establishing educational and research programs (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 416).

¹³⁰ See also, Aveling (2012).

¹³¹ In this context identity may be understood as “a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic phenomenon that is both fluid and situational, yet retaining core characteristics” (Muhammad et al., 2015, p. 1047).

¹³² An “emancipatory research paradigm” can help designers not to patronise collaborators by offering to help “fix their problems”, but to design “interventions which empower them” (Noel, 2016, p. 10).

which demands an exploration of one's own beliefs and values about knowledge, and how it shapes practices (Kovach, 2009, p. 169).

Indigenous-led research

In the research an initial starting point was the position that anti-colonial actions as non-Indigenous people should be oriented towards “supporting Indigenous people’s self-determination” (Hart et al., 2017, p. 334).¹³³ For the scholar this means “not being the centre of attention, not being the centre from where legitimisation comes from, not being the measure of what is right or wrong”, regardless of Indigenous or non-Indigenous identity (Olsen, 2018, p. 213). In Indigenous matters research, the ideal is projects that are First Nations led rather than agendas that “emanate from contexts that are disconnected from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and the intended beneficiaries of research” (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 55). This is a widely held position with significant implications for non-Indigenous researchers.

The research does not claim to be “Indigenous led” however it does claim to proactively support Indigenous agency, input, and control.¹³⁴ Indigenous self-determination and advancement of Indigenous-led research is everyone’s business and responsibility (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 63). There are different definitions as to what “Indigenous led” research means (Clapham, 2011, p. 40), however the most common understanding is that the lead researcher/s should be First Nations people (AIATSIS, 2020a; Clapham, 2011; Puch-Bouwman, 2014). The *AIATSIS Code of Ethics* defines Indigenous led research in the Australian context as being research where Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people have “genuine decision-making responsibility and the research is informed by Indigenous priorities, values, perspectives and voices” (AIATSIS, 2020a, p. 17), and where Indigenous leadership is evident in both the “why” as well as the “how” of research, “from conceptualisation to communication of research” (p. 17).

The ideal is where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander researchers are project leaders and/or researchers, however, Indigenous leadership can also be demonstrated through “governance and oversight of the project” or through “partnerships and collaboration”

¹³³ It is however always Indigenous people who determine “what is right” as anticolonial action (Hart et al., 2017, p. 334).

¹³⁴ In the research the terms “Indigenous-centred” and “Indigenous-informed” distinguish the research from Indigenous-led research where the principal researcher is an Indigenous person.

(AIATSIS, 2020, p. 18; Clapham, 2011, p. 41).¹³⁵ The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* stipulates that proposals for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should demonstrate “evidence of respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” and the approach to the research should “value and create opportunities to draw on the knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by their active engagement in the research processes, including the interpretation of the research data” (NHMRC, 2023, p. 81).

The NHMRC stipulates it is important that research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is “led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities” (2018a, p. 2). This can mean “as the chief researchers and/or members of the research team” or where the research and its priorities are “driven and guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with whom the research will take place” (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 2). It can also mean that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standpoints and research methodologies are considered and used in research where appropriate” (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 2). Research should also respond to “priorities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and have key objectives that demonstrate beneficial impacts and outcomes” (AIATSIS, 2020a, p. 18).

2.9 Indigenous research ethics and protocols

The [AIATSIS] Guidelines set an expectation that research will be carried out in respectful partnership – that pay attention to important aspects of reciprocal and tangible benefit, agreement and informed consent, engagement in design, conduct and communication of research, attribution, authorship and collaboration in the presentation and publication of research, and finally, ownership, representation, and the reuse of data, knowledge and personal information ... and these are the essential foundations for impactful and engaged research. (Dodson, 2018, 32.43–33.33)

In social justice research it is crucial that researchers pay particular attention to matters that impact on the “integrity of research and the researcher”, and “continuously develop their understandings of ethics and community sensibilities” and “critically examine their research practices” (L. Smith, 2021, p. 261). An Indigenous conceptual framework identifies ethics as

¹³⁵ There is however no one “‘right’ model of Indigenous leadership for projects”, which can involve First Nations people as chief investigators, members of the research team, research assistants, community brokers and government workers, but not in “tokenistic roles” (Clapham, 2011, p. 45).

one of its four core foundations (Kovach, 2021, p. 236).¹³⁶ The critical importance of ethical conduct in research was highlighted also in the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012, Recommendations 23 and 24, pp. xxiii, 118), confirming the fundamental importance of ethical research practices that ensure that “the rights of Aboriginal people to their stories and knowledge” are respected; that “ownership over the products of the research” is negotiated and agreed; that research is undertaken “in partnership with communities” and that communities are “informed and consent to all phases of the research”; and that research is “of benefit to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities involved” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 118).

In Australia, university research involving First Nations Peoples must demonstrate compliance with two guiding documents to gain ethics approval: the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023* (NHMRC et al., 2023) and the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020a). Chapter 4.7 of the *National Statement* (NHMRC et al., 2023, pp. 79–81) refers researchers to four further documents: *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* (NHMRC, 2018a); *Keeping Research on Track II* (NHMRC, 2018b); the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics* (AIATSIS, 2020a); and the *AIATSIS A Guide to Applying the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020b).

The NHMRC *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities* document spells out six core values important to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, equity, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 3). This aims to ensure that human research undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities respects “the shared values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; is relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, needs and aspirations; develops long-term ethical relationships among researchers, institutions and sponsors; and develops best practice ethical standards of research” (NHMRC, 2018a, p. 3).¹³⁷ The *AIATSIS Code of Ethics* outlines four principles that underpin ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research: Indigenous self-determination; Indigenous leadership; impact and value; and sustainability

¹³⁶ The four foundations are “epistemology, ethics, community, and self” (Kovach, 2021, pp. 18, 46–47).

¹³⁷ The NHMRC guidelines on intellectual property rights have however been identified as vague on the limitations of Australian law, offering little practical advice on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests can be asserted, with the AIATSIS code seen as being more helpful (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 58).

and accountabilities, each of which includes a set of responsibilities for conducting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research (AIATSIS, 2020a, p. 2).

For First Nations people, the AIATSIS Guidelines (now *AIATSIS Code of Ethics*) set an expectation that research will be conducted “in respectful partnership” and adhere to the “essential foundations for impactful and engaged research” (Dodson, 2018, 32.43–33.33). Indigenous ethics can never be limited however to a set of “procedural rules” instituted and governed by institutional ethics boards but must also focus on “relational ethics” (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 25). Ethical protocol for Indigenous peoples can thus be understood as being about “relationality” and ethics as being about “trust” (Kovach, 2021, p. 127), engendered through “respect, responsibility, *and* reciprocity”¹³⁸ (p. 249; also, Wilson, 2004, pp. vi, 108, 109, 148).¹³⁹ Indigenous ethical research therefore “lives in relationship”, requiring vigilance and honesty and “a continuance that goes beyond attaching the label of *Indigenous to research*” (Kovach, 2021, p. 107). The case has been made for relational accountability as also being central to an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2004, pp. 180). A key ethical challenge in research is therefore establishment of relational trust built on respect, integrity, and accountability, where researcher motive, role and positionality are made explicit, and great care is taken in how we behave, and in accessing and representing Indigenous knowledges and perspectives (Kovach, 2021, pp. 98–101, 127–129; Wilson, 2004, p. vi).

The four principles of “ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP)” have been highlighted as an expression of self-determination in research, the benefits of which include “the rebuilding of trust, improved research quality and relevance, decreased bias, meaningful capacity development, and community empowerment to make change” (Schnarch, 2004, p. 80). Application of OCAP principles is seen as enhancing the potential of research to promote change that can transform people’s lives, whereby Aboriginal Peoples can “regain(ing) control of institutions and processes that impact them” (Schnarch, 2004, p. 94). As a set of principles OCAP is considered as representing “a decolonizing force in Indigenous research practices” (Kovach, 2021, p. 120), one which calls for researchers to “pause and reflect upon the Indigenous communities’ point of view with respect to control of research involving

¹³⁸ Connectedness may be defined here as the “underlying principle of reciprocity”, without which “it is not possible to perform the responsibilities as determined by the relationship” (Thomas, 2015, p. 8).

¹³⁹ Indigenous ethical framing starts with respecting “Indigenous peoples, places, and knowledges”, and considering “truth and trust” in research from an ethics point of view (Kovach, 2021, p. 98).

them” (Kovach, 2021, p. 122), and for ownership of knowledge, including management of, access to, and stewardship of research data about them (Schnarch, 2004, p. 81).¹⁴⁰

The research sought to implement “best practice” ethical practice and integrity in research involving First Nations Peoples. The approach is detailed in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A) and the *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document (Appendix B) and is embedded also in the other key research documents.

2.10 Indigenous data availability, sovereignty, governance, and functionality

Data have important implications for Indigenous Peoples’ ability to exercise their individual and collective rights to self-determination. (Global Indigenous Data Alliance, 2019)

2.10.1 Data availability

For Indigenous people data is important to exercise of the right to self-determination (Global Indigenous Data Alliance, 2019). Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, former Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2005–2010), has drawn attention to the absence or lack of data on how Indigenous peoples are faring in relation to the realisation of individual and collective rights, which is directly related to weaknesses in “developing and implementing Indigenous-sensitive decisions and programs” (Tauli-Corpuz, 2016, p. xxi.). The Behrendt Review also highlighted the need for “a greater focus on data and evidence that specifically identify the critical factors influencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success in higher education” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xv). However, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council has identified difficulties in accessing good data as a common concern across the university sector (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council, 2015a, p. 2), arguing that good quality, accessible data is “an essential tool” for policy makers in universities and could provide the foundation for “effective monitoring of progress at the system wide level” (p. 5). NIAA suggests also that access to current, consistent, and reliable data would ensure that policy advice and program development was “better targeted” and could “support institutional operation and sustainability and improve student participation, completion and attrition rates” (NIAA, 2023, p. 4) There are however data lags of up to twenty months, with impacts on provision of current and responsive policy (NIAA, 2023, p. 4).

¹⁴⁰ See also, Bowery et al. (2022, p. 62); Kovach (2012, pp. 119–124); Wilks et al. (2018, p. 8).

Australian higher education statistical data is fully reliant upon universities' internal reporting of enrolment and completion numbers, and data collection methods and terminology vary between institutions, largely dependent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' self-identification, posing data limitations (Pechenkina & Anderson, 2011, p. 9).¹⁴¹ The Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (2023) advises that in developing new targets for attainment and participation by First Nations students, there needs to be a focus on adoption of "evidence-based approaches" to addressing barriers across the student lifecycle, which would require institutional and system-level data collection to capture information on existing and emergent equity cohorts more effectively (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 50).¹⁴²

Limitations and complexities in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting have also been identified as challenges in improving the engagement, participation, success, and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within higher education (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 28).¹⁴³ It has been observed too that the "administrative gaze of policy" can swallow Indigenous Peoples' identities in a "fetish of statistics, objectifying through numbers" (Bunda et al., 2012, p. 943), which may be addressed through an increased Indigenous presence in Indigenous data production (Walter, 2010, p. 52) and insights informed by Indigenous quantitative methodologies (p. 54). Qualitative reporting and evaluation processes are also recommended, to complement existing quantitative data sets and provide greater contextual information that can inform future policy, program development and reform (J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 7).

Significant doubts have been raised about the adequacy of current university systems and processes for managing Indigenous student information, highlighting the need for local data collection and documentation to track the progress of individual students in the different faculties, disciplines and subjects (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 8). Challenges have also been identified in the interpretation of data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, which requires cultural shifts in the way data is analysed (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 28). Adjustments to data collection and evaluation approaches are recommended, with more needing to be done to ensure that capability in universities is also improved with respect to conducting and interpreting meaningful program evaluations (Zacharias & Brett,

¹⁴¹ See also, Drew et al. (2016) which addresses data quality challenges in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education statistics.

¹⁴² The Group of Eight Australia has recommended establishment of a National Equity Data/Evidence Institute (2023, p. 8) which could address such deficiencies.

¹⁴³ See also, Kinnane et al. (2014, pp. 11, 140).

2018, p. 6). Although Australian universities may articulate a commitment to student equity there are few checks and balances to ensure that obligations and commitments are upheld (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 6).

The literature review revealed a lack of publicly available national data on the participation and success of First Nations tertiary music students and on First Nations staffing in Australian tertiary music education institutions. Statistical data on First Nations student outcomes and staffing profiles for individual universities is publicly available only in broad-brush form via annual institutional *Indigenous Education Statements*. There is generally a lag of up to two years in reporting however, and this form of reporting is not sufficiently disaggregated to reveal outcomes for tertiary music education institutions specifically.¹⁴⁴ Currently there is also no culturally-informed data quality framework for the higher education sector (Wilks et al., 2018, p. 4), and no clear evidence of standards or guidelines for the collection, interpretation, or usage of data on, for, or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education students, or for the storage of such data within the main information repositories (p. 7). It is recommended that individual institutions monitor and track equity participation rates by course and discipline as part of standard evaluation and monitoring processes (Cakitaki et al., 2023, p. 3).¹⁴⁵ It is essential therefore that tertiary music education institutions develop reliable processes for collecting, analysing, and reporting First Nations student access, participation, and success outcomes as a means for ensuring evidence-based decision making, and to strengthen accountability.

2.10.2 Data sovereignty, governance, and functionality

Control of the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of knowledge is a matter of sovereignty not merely a matter of procedural ethics. (Porter & Arabena, 2018, pp. 24–25)

The literature review confirmed the critical importance of data sovereignty, governance, and functionality in progressing research agendas with and for First Nations Peoples in the Australian higher education context. Sovereign rights, as expressed in UNDRIP, are linked with Indigenous data sovereignty, self-determination, self-governance,

¹⁴⁴ There is an evident need for improvements in data collection, disaggregation, and availability (Tauli-Corpus, 2016, p. xxii); the problem being with the “level and type” of data available (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 6).

¹⁴⁵ The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council recommends the need to work towards a national minimum data set for Indigenous higher education to provide critical support for assessment of progress at a system level (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Council, 2015a, p. 2).

and development (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016b, pp. 1–3, 13–15).¹⁴⁶ The *AIATSIS Code of Ethics* requires compliance with principles of “Indigenous data sovereignty and governance and the emerging theories and practice that underpin it” (AIATSIS, 2020a, p. 18). This recognises the right of Indigenous peoples to “control the use of their data, wherever it is held (governance of data)” and the importance of “access to data for Indigenous decision making and self-determination (data for governance)” (AIATSIS, 2020a, p. 18). Indigenous data sovereignty asserts self-determination and control over data projects, however, it is unclear how this agenda can be meaningfully advanced where “the tools of the dataverse are not Indigenous authored and data governance models are undeveloped” (Bowery et al., 2022, p. 62).¹⁴⁷ In the Australian context this requires the “decolonisation of existing nation-state statistical systems” (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016b, p. 15).

Control of the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of knowledge is “a matter of sovereignty” (Porter & Arabena, 2018, pp. 24–25). Leading First Nations scholar Professor Maggie Walter has argued that data sovereignty also means “Indigenous data functionality”, that is, where data is functional for Indigenous people and meets their needs (quoted in J. Smith et al., 2018, p. 63). Professor Peter Yu (2012), Vice-President (First Nations) at the Australian National University (ANU), has confirmed the critical role that data can also play in development scenarios when Aboriginal people are “in control of collecting, managing and interpreting data” (Yu, 2012, p. 3), and which should “support the objectives that Indigenous people want to determine” (p. 4). Attention has also been drawn to community empowerment when community “owns data and is involved in collecting and reporting it” (Dreise, 2018, p. 5).

Dominant discursive agendas around the collection and use of data and statistics related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been challenged (Drew et al., 2016, p. 117), with guidelines proposed for a data quality framework that would ensure a commitment to Indigenous self-determination in line with international human rights standards (pp. 116–117). Attention has been drawn also to colonising and deficit-based narratives that continue to dominate discourses about Indigenous data (Wilks et al., 2018, p. 5), with a call for development and implementation of an “agreed-upon and decolonised Indigenous data framework” for the Australian higher education sector (p. 4). This would see the sector engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in conversations

¹⁴⁶ See also, Wilks et al. (2018, p. 10).

¹⁴⁷ In Indigenous contexts this means developing frameworks for “participatory data stewardship” (Bowery, 2022, p. 62).

towards embedding “the principles of data sovereignty” in data frameworks (Wilks et al., 2018, p. 12).¹⁴⁸

Respecting Indigenous knowledge and rights needs to be practically applied through governance measures that enable Indigenous knowledge holders to “own, control, access and possess their own knowledge”, which includes controlling “the terms of its sharing and use (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 24). The same applies to data analysis, where “sense-making” by Indigenous knowledge holders can ensure that data collection and analysis is “culturally safe”, enhancing the validity and ethics of the project (Porter & Arabena, 2018, p. 24). The research sought to implement approaches aligned with these principles through protocols facilitating Indigenous self-determination, governance, ownership, and control in the research.¹⁴⁹

2.11 Summary

The literature review encompassed a wide range of sources relevant to the topic of the research, and which informed the research. Of significance were sources and literature addressing First Nations rights and interests with specific reference to Indigenous tertiary education. Indigenous self-determination is considered essential to progressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples in Australian higher education, affirming the obligations and responsibilities of Australian tertiary music education institutions to uphold First Nations cultural and educational rights. The literature provides valuable insights into ways to achieve this, however there is a paucity of literature addressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the tertiary music education system specifically. Given the underrepresentation of First Nations people in Australian higher education, equity and inclusion remain key areas of concern.

The literature identifies the importance of support for Indigenous self-determination and the need for transformative change. This includes in addressing structural discrimination and racism and ensuring that tertiary education institutions are inclusive, supportive, and culturally responsive, which includes by recognising and valuing First Nations cultures, knowledges, perspectives, and ways of knowing. Recommendations include the need for a greater focus on evidence-based decision making, data reliability, and Indigenous data control; increased Indigenous employment and participation of First Nations people,

¹⁴⁸ This recognises that improvements to data collection methods require cultural collaboration and building “relationships of trust” (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 28).

¹⁴⁹ See *Research Agreement* (Appendix A); *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B); Participant Information Sheets (Appendices I, K, N, P).

including in governance and leadership roles; targeted strategies to support equitable access, participation, and parity of outcomes, including through Indigenous centred evaluation of policies, programs, and equity initiatives; recognition of First Nations diversity; collaborative and partnership approaches, including in community engagement and research; material investment proportionate to need; and ethical conduct in research.

With respect to tertiary music education institutions specifically, recommendations include support for Indigenous self-determination and social justice as core business; flexible access provisions; culturally inclusive curricula and pedagogy (inclusive of diversity); tailoring programs to the learning aspirations and requirements of First Nations students; more inclusive engagement with First Nations musicians, musics, and music making; greater support for First Nations music diversity and sustainability; enhanced engagement with communities, professions, and industry; and adequate and targeted funding. Although the literature describes examples of engagement with First Nations musicians and music in research and education, there is a paucity of literature detailing measures to progress deeper structural change within music institutions, including strategies to support Indigenous self-determination and equitable access and inclusion.

The literature also provides valuable insights and recommendations regarding the responsibilities and roles of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous matters research. Non-Indigenous people may be considered as having a responsibility to respond to injustice and inequity, including in the academy, which in research should support Indigenous self-determination and self-representation; address First Nations priorities and have beneficial impacts and outcomes for First Nations people; and be conducted on terms acceptable to First Nations stakeholders and participants. For non-Indigenous researchers this means interrogating what our research is about, whose business we are doing, and who will benefit; conducting research aligned with Indigenous research agendas; respecting Indigenous knowledges, standpoints, and research methodologies; applying decolonising methodologies; and observing principles of Indigenous data control and the ethics of relationality and participation in Indigenous matters research. Awareness of ongoing coloniality, critical self-reflexivity, and clarity of positionality, including with respect to the roles of the researcher and research participants, are therefore essential.

Chapter 3: The Case Study describes the co-design case study conducted at the ANU School of Music and includes a review of sources and literature that informed the case study, details of the institutional contexts at the time of the research, the approach to the case study, and implementation of the case study at the ANU School of Music.

Chapter 3: The Case Study

The time is ripe, therefore, to reconceive conservatoires now as unashamedly public institutions, overtly and actively engaged with the pressing social issues of our times. Conservatoires may then become better known as institutions that support and nourish not just the dreams and hopes of the talented, elite, performers fortunate to enter their doors, but ultimately the dreams and hopes of us all.

(Tregear et al., 2016, p. 288)

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.2), the research comprised an Indigenous-centred, place-based extended case study conducted on the unceded lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples at the ANU School of Music from 2022–2025. This chapter reviews the literature and sources that informed the approach to the case study and describes the institutional contexts and circumstances of the case study and its development within the School. The case study was tailored to suit the context and circumstances of the ANU School of Music at the time of the research.

3.1 Sources and literature

The notion of *place* may be broadly defined as “space + meaning” (Raciti et al., 2017, citing Harrison & Dourish, 1996, p. 2),¹ and as an “experiential setting” that consists of “a specific location and the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social activities that occur within” (referencing Relph, 1976, p. 3). “Space”, which is empty and abstract, may be differentiated from “place”, which is “concrete, sensed and grounded in lived experiences and realities” (Styers, 2019, p. 26). In this sense “place-making” may be understood as emerging from “space”, which requires “the substance of culture and stories to render it placeful” (Styers, 2019, p. 26). In the research the notion of *place* was conceived as an interactive, dynamic, and continually evolving “field of action” comprising multiple actors, inclusive of First Nations stakeholders.

¹ This understands “space” as “the three-dimensional environment in which objects and events occur, and in which they have relative position and direction” (Harrison & Dourish, 1996, p. 68).

3.1.1 Case study research

The literature review revealed a paucity of case study research addressing the need for improved outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.² It did however reveal several case studies on topics closely related to the topic of the research, of which the following may be considered illustrative. Raciti et al. (2023) provides a study which looks at the role of place and relationality at two selected Australian university campuses, with the aim of enhancing the participation and success of First Nations students.³ The findings provide valuable insights into the lived experience of First Nations peoples and how “nurturing connections to place (Country) and each other (relationality)” create the “cultural safety” which is needed to enhance participation and success at university (Raciti et al., 2023, p. 207). Rigney (2017) describes the development and implementation of a “whole of institution” Indigenous Education Strategy at a selected Australian Group of Eight (Go8) university. The study presents a conceptual *Design and Evaluation Framework for Indigenisation (DEFI)* which is potentially valuable for evaluating university change beyond single isolated approaches towards innovative “whole of university” approaches to improving Indigenous participation (Rigney, 2017, pp. 45-46). Another study investigates the gap between the digital inclusion of First Nations Australians and other Australians, to inform digital inclusion outcomes and access services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote area communities (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2023).⁴ The study provides data on the scale of the digital gap, which increases with remoteness, and is used to inform policy development in relation to Closing the Gap Outcome 17 (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2023). Dreise and Mazurski (2018) describes a long-term participatory research project involving co-design, co-production and co-evaluation of services aimed at improving service delivery in and for Aboriginal communities (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 17).⁵ The findings provide useful practical tips for co-design and co-production in community-based participatory research (CBPR) for Aboriginal communities, researchers and policy actors, in which “mutual capacity building and knowledge weaving among the main actors” is required (Dreise & Mazurski,

² See Newsome (2008, 2016), which provide case studies related to the work of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM).

³ This employed interviews and focus groups (qualitative data) and a follow up quantitative survey (Raciti et al., 2023, pp. 205–206).

⁴ This involved qualitative research including face to face interviews (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2023).

⁵ This involved co-design workshops with stakeholders in selected Aboriginal communities (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, pp. 19–20).

2018, p. 27). In common with the approach taken to the case study in the research, each of these examples employed a collaborative participatory approach to research involving First Nations stakeholders.

Case study research is one of the most extensively used strategies in qualitative social research (Priya, 2021, p. 94) and is an approach that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context, and uses multiple methods of data collection (Priya, 2021, p. 95, referencing Yin, 2009, p. 18). This can allow “in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings” (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 1) and lends itself to capturing information on more explanatory “‘how’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions”, and can offer additional insights into “what gaps exist” in the delivery of an intervention on the ground or “why one implementation strategy might be chosen over another” (p. 4). Case study research offers a versatile form of qualitative enquiry which is most suitable for a “comprehensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation” of a phenomenon, event, situation, organization, program, individual or group, in context, including where “the boundary between the context and issue is unclear and contains many variables” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 12).

Case study research can accommodate a range of philosophical perspectives, may be applied across a variety of disciplines (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 1), and can be tailored to the complexity of the research problem (p. 8). Multiple research methods may be used, which in combination can be mutually informative and provide “a more synergistic and comprehensive view of the issue being studied” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 12).⁶

Creswell (2014) defines the case study strategy as:

... a qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (p. 241).

Case studies are concerned with observation of an instance (a “case”) for the purpose of making inferences about a phenomenon (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 71). However, given that case studies are “unique and atypical” (Priya, 2021, p. 102), a contentious issue with case study research is whether “the findings of the study of a single social unit can be generalised over the larger population of similar units” (p. 95). The case study approach may be useful however for

⁶ How methods are used may vary depending on the research purpose and design; and research design can include multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, focus groups, artifact and document review, and questionnaires and/or surveys (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 14).

developing hypotheses which can then be tested in comparable case situations, and which can help researchers move towards theory building or generalisations (Priya, 2021, p. 103).

Predominant understandings of case study research are built on “a positivist epistemology” characterised by “specific understandings of causality and causal mechanisms” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 69). This orientation takes a position which applies views about how the natural world can be examined and understood to the social world of human beings and societies (L. Smith, 2021, p. 49). In such a position, understanding the world is reduced to issues of measurement where the challenge then is to develop operational definitions of phenomena that are “reliable and valid” (L. Smith, 2021, p. 49). The emphasis is on “external evidence, objectivity, neutrality, testing, and universal laws of generalizability” emerging from a deductive rationalist paradigm in which the primacy of “objectivism” narrows the knowledge field to that which can be validated through “a rationalist, secular approach” (Kovach, 2021, p. 66).

The empirical theory of knowledge and the scientific paradigm of positivism derived from empiricism have been significant arenas of critique in research (L. Smith, 2021, p. 49). The challenge to the scientific paradigm of positivism as a way of understanding the social world (L. Smith, 2021, p. 49) encompasses both methodological issues and epistemological concerns inclusive of “the techniques of research” and “the presuppositions about knowledge that underlie research” (p. 222). It has been argued though that even within the emancipatory paradigm of “post-positivism”, approaches generated from different value systems and world views may be denied (L. Smith, 2021, p. 219). The surface-level tension between “objective” social science and “interested” critical research can however be navigated and negotiated in different ways, which can include the use of “sophisticated techniques that account for subjectivity and even intersubjectivity” (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2017, p. 3).⁷

Both positivists and non-positivists may therefore employ the case study approach, although they may be looking for different things (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2015, p. 863).⁸ Participatory action research has been described as a “new paradigm science” which rejects the oppressions and shortcomings of “positivistic science” and posits “an equal role for those intended to benefit from the research and recognition of their knowledge and experience” (Dudgeon et al., 2020, p. 14). The argument has been made too that we have entered a new

⁷ Barkin and Sjoberg (2017) caution also against quantitative/qualitative and positivist/post-positivist divides, arguing that these can be paired with critical (traditionally post-positivist) theorizing (p. 4).

⁸ The extended case study methodology has been described as a non-positivist approach (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 67).

moment when “inclusivity of voices in research practice is possible” (Kovach, 2021, p. 27), and where the interpretive nature of qualitative methodologies and Indigenous methodologies offers a “bridge for understanding” (p. 31).⁹

3.1.2 The extended case study methodology

The fundamental goal of case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue within its context, with a view to understanding the issue “from the perspective of participants” (Harrison, 2017, p. 8). This is consistent with a pragmatic constructivist approach which assumes that reality is constructed intersubjectively through “meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially” (Harrison, 2017, p. 10, referencing Merriam, 1998).¹⁰

In the research the case study approach was informed by the “extended case methodology” explicated by Lai and Rocco (2019).¹¹ This proposes the extended case study methodology as a “non-positivist route to systematically conducting empirical analysis” and thus as a viable alternative to conventional approaches to case study research (Lai & Rocco, 2019, p. 81). Here the term “methodology” refers to an overall research strategy that is informed by ontological-epistemological commitments which shape “how we conceive the relationship between the mind and the world” and “the type of knowledge claims we make” (Lai & Rocco, 2019, p. 69). Such an approach is explicit and transparent in its research choices and recognises possibilities for pairing methodologies and methods in ways that expand, rather than constrain research possibilities (Lai & Rocco, 2019, p. 68).

The methodology as described by Lai and Rocco (2019) was informed by the work of Burawoy (1998) whose extended case study approach applies “reflexive science” to ethnography and is a model which embraces “not detachment but engagement as the road to knowledge” (p. 5). Such an approach is premised on “participation in the world we study” and deployment of “multiple dialogues to reach explanations of empirical phenomena” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). This embeds social processes in the wider array of social forces (Burawoy, 1998,

⁹ Binaries such as “objectivism-subjectivism” and “empiricism-interpretivism” have also been refuted, based in the argument that choices about what knowledge to call upon are dependent upon the context and purpose of a problem or situation at hand and are about “what type of knowledge is most helpful at a given time” (Kovach, 2021, p. 217).

¹⁰ In such an approach, methods are aimed at “generating inductive reasoning and interpretation” rather than testing hypotheses (Harrison, 2017, p. 10).

¹¹ This in turn was inspired by the work of sociologist Michael Burawoy (Lai & Rocco, 2019, p. 68) and developed in the context of International Relations case study research.

p. 29) and takes context and situation as points of departure in seeking to “reduce the effects of power – domination, silencing, objectivation, and normalization” (p. 30).

Most importantly, the extended case study methodology provides a critical, reflexivist approach in which the case is “constructed” rather than “selected”, and where knowledge is produced through “extensions rather than generalisations” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 67). The distinguishing feature of the approach is that rather than observing a given situation in relation to theory, the extended case study is a “construction” that emerges during the research process through “the constant relation of observation and theory” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 81).¹² The extended approach studies the world in complex and non-linear terms and takes context and positionality seriously in its approach to theory-building and in seeking to generate “explicitly political and emancipatory knowledge” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 81). This is concerned with “contextually rich, complex accounts of the social world” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 69), and possesses key features of a critical methodology in being driven by questions that challenge established assumptions about the social world, and which seek answers to these in ways that “destabilise dominant narratives and foreground subaltern voices” (p. 72).¹³

Burawoy’s case method approach rests in a process of “extension” which allows analysis of complex constitutive relations (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 74), and sees the researcher and the world to be studied as standing in a “relational position” where “the reality researched is never completely independent or separated from the researcher” and the position of the researcher should thus be problematised (p. 73).¹⁴ These extensions comprise valuing “intervention”, seeing this as not only unavoidable in social research but as “a virtue to be exploited” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 14); employing a process of data reduction which takes “multiple readings of a single case and aggregates them into social processes” (p. 15); studying the everyday world from the standpoint of its “structuration” by regarding it as “simultaneously shaped by and shaping an external field of forces” (p. 15); and recognising

¹² This adopts a “relational and iterative approach to sense-making and knowledge production”, linking theoretical insights to observation of the social world (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 71).

¹³ This offers a bridge between “interpretive and critical approaches” (Wadham & Warren, 2014, p. 5) and emphasises research as a “creative process that pieces together different stories, perspectives and knowledge” (p. 29).

¹⁴ This sees the researcher as placed *within* the social relations surrounding the object of study (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 72) and recognises the “words and deeds” of the researcher as contributing to the emergence of social facts (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 70), thus demanding researcher reflexivity (p. 73). In the context of participatory activist research such an approach has been described as “doings in place” (Pickerill et al., 2019, p. 2).

that while prior theory may inform the research process from the outset and throughout, this may then be “reconstructed” based on insights gained through the research (p. 16).¹⁵

In the research these extensions provided scope for intervention through application of an Indigenous-centred participatory action approach to progressing transformative change within the institution. This recognised the site of the study, the institution (and those within and associated with it), as simultaneously subject to a range of social forces (including policy agendas), and as constituting a powerfully positioned form of social and cultural agency with the capacity to progress systemic reform and engender beneficial change for First Nations peoples and communities within the particular institutional context. Methodologically, the extended approach provided scope for integration of multiple methods (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group) within an Indigenous-centred co-design framework, inclusive of a diverse range of stakeholders, and for employing collaborative and dialogic approaches to progressing institutional change. Theoretically, the extended approach is useful in recognising insights gained through application of theory in real-world contexts as important to informing future theory. The research was based in Indigenous-self-determination as an ethical, pragmatic, and practical means for progressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system (theory), a tested outcome of which was demonstration of the efficacy of Indigenous self-determination in developing Indigenous-informed evidence-based approaches to addressing rights and interests within the tertiary music education institution context (future theory).

Useful additions to Burawoy’s method are those concerned with the epistemological grounding of the approach, the link between theories and research questions, and the use of data collection methods (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 75).¹⁶ Essential to the research was an approach to critical reflexivity which incorporated systematic consideration of the role of the researcher in the process of knowledge production, and attention to the point of view and perspective of participants, with a critical outlook a necessary step in the production of knowledge that can contribute to “progressively transform[ing] society” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 75–76). A flexible approach to theorising was also important, recognising the need to consider the “conceptual framework” from the outset, and for a commitment to an iterative process of “theoretical reflection and empirical observation” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 76).¹⁷

¹⁵ This emerges not only in dialogue between participant and observer, but also among observers, now viewed as participants (Burawoy, 1998, p. 16).

¹⁶ These were focussed on case study research by international relations scholars (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 75).

¹⁷ This is based in an awareness that interaction with the social world requires constant revision of interpretation of these frameworks (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 76).

Finally, what characterises the extended case methodology is not the method of data collection but the way in which data is incorporated and used within the methodological process, which must acknowledge “the importance of reflexivity and power effects” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 76–77). In the research this was applied through consideration of the roles and needs of differentially positioned participants in the research and a dialogic approach to development and implementation.

The approach to the extended case study methodology in the research may be understood as aligned with a transformative applied paradigm and participatory action approach in which context and situation are considered points of departure in seeking to reduce the effects of power and generate emancipatory knowledge (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 7, 30; Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 69, 71, 73, 81). This meant gaining an understanding of contextual factors and influences in considering the place-based contexts and circumstances of the School of Music. The extended methodology also emphasises the importance of an iterative approach to theoretical reflection and generation of knowledge that allows for a dialogue between micro and macro fields of forces (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5; Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 74, 76, 81). In the research this meant considering both internal and external factors influencing outcomes for First Nations Peoples in the work of tertiary music education institutions and at the School of Music specifically, and the need to include a range of experientially informed internal and external views and perspectives in considering the key research questions and addressing the aims, goals, and objectives of the research.

The extended approach is premised on relationality and recognition of the role of the researcher as a participant in the knowledge production process (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 5, 15, 16; Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 70, 72, 75). In the research this meant recognising researcher influence and the importance of self-reflexivity, and thus the need for clarity of researcher positionality and explicit definition of researcher and participant roles. The extended methodology also supports deployment of a multiple dialogues approach in reaching explanations of empirical phenomena (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 2, 5, 8, 13, 14, 16; Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 80), which in the research was facilitated through an integrated dialogic approach to incorporating a diversity of First Nations voices throughout the research and in the co-creation of the recommendations for the School of Music. Most importantly, the approach embraces “intervention” as a methodological device (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 14, 16; Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 73, 74) with a focus on constitutive relations in which the case is constructed as the research unfolds (Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 73–75, 81). In the research, the actions of the researcher and co-researchers were therefore recognised as contributing to the institutional

dynamic, with the explicit intention of progressing transformative change within the School of Music.

3.2 Institutional context

3.2.1 *The Australian National University*

The ANU is a world-leading university and Australia's foremost research university (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 2). The university is situated on the traditional country of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples in the heart of Canberra, the nation's capital city and seat of federal government. ANU is one of the Group of Eight (Go8) research-intensive universities,¹⁸ and is consistently ranked among the top universities in the world (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 2).¹⁹

3.2.2 *First Nations strategic policy environment*

The research identified four institutional policy documents relevant to the work of the ANU School of Music in the First Nations space: *ANU by 2025 Strategic Plan 2021–2025*; *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026*; *Research School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025*; and *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan 2019–2023*.

The *ANU by 2025 Strategic Plan 2021–2025* declares the commitment of the university to better engagement with First Nations Peoples (ANU, 2021, p. 11) and to championing a “just and meaningful reconciliation” built on “equity and engagement” (p. 3). The *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026* declares an “ambitious systemic shift in the University's culture and its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (ANU, 2024b, p. 11),²⁰ and recognises the importance of “building broader and deeper relationships and collaborations” with First Nations Peoples in order to enable the university to “give back” to the communities with which it engages (p. 12).²¹ The *Research*

¹⁸ The Go8 so-called “sandstone” universities include some of the oldest institutions and which typically rank highest in research focussed international rankings and attract the largest research and student-based revenues (Cakitaki et al., 2022, 15).

¹⁹ ANU ranked #34 in the QS World University Rankings 2024 (Australian National University, n.d.-e).

²⁰ Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are a standard feature of the First Nations policy environment in Australian universities. There have been shortfalls reported however in the implementation of RAPs in some contexts (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 101); and it is advised that organisational commitments must continue to be actioned (Smith et al., 2017a, pp. 26–27). Examples of other RAPs include University of Sydney (2020) and The University of Melbourne (2018).

²¹ The twin pillars of *reconciliation* are regarded as “truth and justice”, with “truth” being about a better account of history and “justice” and the change required for “repair” to occur and for restoring “faith and trust” in the state and its institutions. (Davis, 2023, p. 39). It has been argued however that although universities may develop

School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025 declares a commitment to designing and undertaking “rigorous and purpose-driven research, especially in the areas of First Nations knowledges, culture, heritage; and health and wellbeing” (ANU, 2022). The *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan 2019–2023* is discussed below.

What is noticeably missing from these documents is the commitment to Indigenous self-determination, with the terms “partnership” and “reconciliation” suggestive of preferred paradigms. The *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026* however declares the resolve of the university to drive systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives (ANU, 2024b, p. 4), to which the research seeks to contribute.

3.2.3 *ANU Mission*

The declared mission of the ANU is to:

... support the development of national unity and identity, improve our understanding of ourselves and our neighbours, and provide our nation with research capacity amongst the best in the world, and education in areas vital for our future. (ANU, n.d.-a)

The *ANU by 2025 Strategic Plan 2021–2025* spells out the national mission of the university, declaring that its work will be characterised by “trust, respect, goodwill and generosity” (ANU, 2021, p. 8). The *Strategic Plan* includes the commitment to “pursue reconciliation with First Nations Peoples”, “respect diversity in all its forms”, and “solve intransigent societal problems” (p. 9); and to “chart a better future for health and wellbeing in Australia”, “promote better engagement with First Nations Peoples” through work on social equity, and “promote debate around a reconciled, just, equitable and respectful Australia” (p. 11). The commitment to equity and inclusion includes being open to students “from the widest possible backgrounds and perspectives” (ANU, 2021, p. 20) with the threshold being “talent and potential” (p. 18), and for the student and staff profile to reflect “the full diversity of modern day Australia” (p. 22). This is to be achieved by being “proactive and innovative” and creating a positive culture characterised by “respect, collaboration, equity and diversity” (ANU, 2021, p. 22). The *Strategic Plan* also commits the university to “partnering” with First Nations communities “to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and culture” in research and teaching programs (ANU, 2021, p. 15). The research aligns with these commitments, with the

reconciliation statements, the lack of fundamental recognition of Indigenous sovereignty “underscores all the other absences” (Bunda et al., 2012, p. 944).

aim of making a contribution through First Nations informed research and evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes of benefit for First Nations Peoples and communities in and through the work of the School of Music.²²

3.2.4 *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–2026)*

The *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (2024–2026)* is a key institutional policy document directly relevant to the work of the ANU School of Music in the First Nations space. This declares the unwavering commitment of the University to “acknowledging and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on sacred land that was never ceded”, and the responsibility of ANU, as Australia’s only national university, to leading the way and fully committing to making Australia and the world a better place for all First Nations people (ANU, 2024b, p. 4). The *Reconciliation Action Plan* also positions Indigenous perspectives as being central to the university’s mission (ANU, 2024b, p. 4).

The university seeks to embed reconciliation into core business practices and decision making at all levels, with a focus on five themes: Students, Staff, Research and Policy Development, Education, and Community Engagement (ANU, 2024b, p. 5). The *Reconciliation Action Plan* also provides a benchmark for initiatives which are to be implemented at a university-wide level while also permitting flexibility and creativity in implementation at the local level (ANU, 2024b, p.11). These initiatives are articulated as fifteen detailed action areas addressing four topics: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities, and Governance (ANU, 2024b, pp. 12–24), each of which is accompanied by a broad statement of intent which can act as a guide for action at the local level.²³

3.2.5 *ANU Research School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025*

The ANU School of Music is one of four schools located in the Research School of Humanities and Arts (RSHA) which is situated within the ANU College of Art and Social Sciences (ANU School of Music, 2023). The *Research School of Humanities and the Arts Strategic Priorities Plan 2022–2025* is a policy document that is relevant to the research and

²² This recognises that the best approach for organisational change depends on the organisation itself (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 23).

²³ Exceptions are Actions 13–15 which are solely the responsibility of university senior management (Australian National University, 2024b, pp. 23–24).

has direct bearing on the work of the School of Music in the First Nations space. The document articulates the following vision:

We will be recognised nationally and internationally for producing distinctive, world-leading research and education in the humanities and innovative, impactful creative arts practice. We will adopt a leadership role in promoting the profile of the humanities in Australia and internationally, affirming and demonstrating the contribution of our disciplines to knowing, understanding and intervening with impact in the world. (ANU, 2022)

The research seeks to contribute to realising this vision. The *Strategic Priorities Plan* spells out several objectives which are specifically relevant, which include: “rigorous and purpose-driven research, especially in the areas of First Nations knowledges, culture, heritage”; “health and wellbeing outcomes, with a focus on Indigenous health and wellbeing”; “Indigenous-led projects, working with First Nations Peoples and communities on priority issues”; building interdisciplinary networks and teams to “conduct research that address contemporary national and global issues”; “creation of research outputs that have demonstrable societal impact and benefit”; and exploration of “partnerships and alternative pathways to support the recruitment of students from Indigenous, rural and low-SES backgrounds” (ANU, 2022).

3.3 ANU School of Music

The ANU School of Music (SoM) is situated on the main campus of ANU and has played a leading role in the life of Canberra and surrounding region for close to sixty years. The School was founded as the Canberra School of Music in 1965,²⁴ and functioned as a performance school in line with the conservatory model until 1992 when as a result of the Dawkins reforms the School moved to a “hybrid model”,²⁵ part conservatoire and part university (ANU School of Music, 2023).²⁶

²⁴ The School was originally located in the Canberra suburb of Manuka, where I commenced my formal music studies in flute and musicianship as a child.

²⁵ This was instituted by the then Federal Education minister John Dawkins.

²⁶ This is in common with other leading Australian conservatoriums and tertiary music schools.

3.3.1 ANU School of Music vision and mission

The vision and mission of the School of Music is articulated in the *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan 2019–2023*²⁷:

The ANU School of Music will be a world-class music school that fosters excellence in musical practice and research. A music school that innovates to redefine music in the twenty-first century, a music school that is the musical hub for Canberra, that befits the role of the ‘National University’ and one that advocates for a fairer and a more inclusive world through music. A music school that shows the creative arts have a vital role to play in the humanities and the university environment. A place of innovation, diversity and excellence. (ANU School of Music, n.d.-b, p. 8)

The research supports realisation of this vision in advocating for fairness and increased engagement with and inclusion of First Nations musicians and communities in and through the work of the School. The declared “mission” of the School is:

To transform society through music. The ANU School of Music’s mission is to be academically and musically excellent, socially and technologically progressive, and intercultural. The ANU School of Music will train musicians to an international standard in musicology, performance, composition and music technology, as well as helping them to become dynamic makers and interpreters of culture through world class research, scholarship and collaboration. The ANU School of Music will work within the principles of equity and merit, and will play a part in defining and realising societal transformation through music. (ANU School of Music, n.d.-b, p. 8)

The research aligns with this mission in supporting equity and in seeking to contribute to realising societal transformation through research which supports the cultural and educational rights and interests of First Nations musicians.

3.3.2 ANU School of Music Strategic Plan (2019–2023)

The School of Music regards itself as a “place of participation and societal transformation through music” and as one of the most outward-facing areas of the university, thereby placing it in a key position to meet the objectives of the *ANU Strategic Plan 2021–*

²⁷ References to the *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan* reflect the vision and mission of the School at the time of writing, noting that a new Strategic Plan is being developed in 2025.

2025 (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 3). The School supports the mission of the University in seeking to conduct research and outreach that contribute to the undertaking of the ANU to “engage meaningfully with First Nations’ Communities and Peoples, in a manner that addresses historical power imbalances” (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 3). The research aligns with and supports this objective.

The *ANU School of Music Strategic Plan (2019–2023)* while not making an explicit reference to engagement with First Nations Peoples, confirms the importance of “fruitful partnerships” with Indigenous performing arts and music arenas and the involvement of leading Indigenous musicians as regular guests to the School (ANU School of Music, n.d.-b, p. 21). The *Strategic Plan* does not detail how the School will implement the institutional commitment to First Nations Peoples and communities, however, current School initiatives are demonstrative of a strong and proactive commitment, evident in multiple arenas of engagement and activity. The research seeks to contribute to fulfilling this commitment, with the intent of progressing Indigenous self-determination and supporting a declared transformative change agenda.²⁸

3.3.3 ANU School of Music First Nations governance

The ANU School of Music is situated within the Research School of Humanities and the Arts (RSHA) in which the Head of School and School Manager are members of the Executive Committee (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 28). This arrangement is typical of managerial structures within which Schools of Music operate in Australian universities. Notably, the School currently has no identified First Nations representation at this level of institutional governance and decision making.

The School does however have a robust integrated First Nations governance structure, which includes a dedicated Indigenous Convenor position and financial support for the First Nations work and Indigenous governance of the School within the core budget (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 8). The First Nations governance structure comprises two formally constituted bodies, a First Nations Programs Committee, which is a core internal committee chaired by the Indigenous Convenor,²⁹ and an outward facing advisory SoM Indigenous Reference Group,³⁰ which interfaces with the Indigenous community and is also chaired by the Indigenous Convenor.³¹ The School also has a Community Advisory Board convened by the Head of

²⁸ See also, Newsome (2022).

²⁹ This includes the First Nations staff and selected non-Indigenous staff.

³⁰ This was established as one of the four components of the research.

³¹ This includes both internal and external First Nations membership.

School comprised of community members external to the School and which includes a dedicated university based First Nations position.

The First Nations Programs Committee is a recently created internal committee within the School which informs the Head of School and the wider staff body on matters concerning First Nations engagement (community and industry), First Nations courses and programs, First Nations student engagement, and First Nations staff engagement and experience within the School. The committee provides a framework for the many First Nations programs in the School and supports the embedding of First Nations perspectives and knowledge within all teaching and research in the School. Together with the Head of School and the School Executive Committee, this committee is also responsible for implementing the contribution of the School to the University's Strategic Plan (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 30).

The School of Music First Nations governance structure integrates external and internal facing functions, thereby contributing to a diversity of First Nations views and perspectives in the work of the School, which are operationalised by the Head of School and the Indigenous Convenor through the First Nations Programs Committee. This structural arrangement aligns with a commitment to First Nations governance as “key to moving towards self-determination and greater equity” and to self-determination as the best chance for “genuine and effective measures to support the success of First Nations people” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 237).

3.3.4 ANU School of Music First Nations student and staff profile

The ANU School of Music is a relatively small tertiary music school which in 2022 had a student load of 154.2 students (133.7 undergraduate, 20.6 postgraduate) (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 8).³² In 2023, the First Nations student cohort comprised 3.1% of School enrolments (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 8), which was above the national undergraduate average of 2% and approaching popularity parity of 3.8% (Department of Education, 2023a, p. 71).³³ In the same year, the School reported a First Nations staffing cohort of six, the largest First Nations teaching cohort in Australia (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 36).

³² The School however makes a disproportionately large contribution to engagement with First Nations Peoples and communities through its nationally and internationally recognised collaborative project work (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 12).

³³ Indigenous students are underrepresented among the Group of Eight (Go8) institutions compared with their overall representation (Cakitaki et al., 2022, p. 16), noting that unequal representation within selective institutions and disciplines carries consequences, including being typically correlated with higher incomes, and perceptions of a better fit between qualifications and employment (p. 1).

3.3.5 ANU School of Music First Nations student access

The School recognises the pressing need to provide entry to students from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 9). Currently the School has an ATAR entry requirement of 80 (ANU, 2024a), which, as noted in Chapter 2 (2.6.3) may constitute a barrier to participation by First Nations students. The School has however successfully advocated for an inclusive admissions protocol for First Nations students; and working with the ANU admissions team and the Kambri Indigenous Undergraduate Scholarship access program,³⁴ is now able to offer a place to any Indigenous student who the School feels are ready for tertiary music education (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 17). This applies to any applicant who is assessed as being at a suitable level (via interview, suitable ATAR, alternative pathway, aptitude, and commitment) consistent with First Nations students being a priority cohort for the School. The School is also able to offer free on-campus accommodation and meals for these students (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 17).

3.3.6 ANU School of Music programs

The School offers degrees in Performance, Composition, Musicology, Music for Film and Video Games, and Music Technology, across Bachelor Degrees, Honours, and Postgraduate Research Programs.³⁵ Students can also combine study of music with other disciplines across the university through a Flexible Double Degree program; and single degree students can take double majors across any two disciplines, for example by combining Composition with Performance. In common with most Australian tertiary music schools, the main styles of music study offered by the School are “Western” classical, jazz, and contemporary/popular musics. The Community Music Program (formerly known as the Open School) offers programs also for the broader community across a range of areas/music styles (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 36).

3.3.7 Indigenous Music Studies

The School offers the *Contemporary Australian Indigenous Music Studies* course as an elective course,³⁶ which is taught by First Nations practitioners and is designed for all students. The course provides a comprehensive study of contemporary Australian Indigenous

³⁴ This provides a flexible package of ongoing monetary and pastoral support “to ensure Indigenous students receive the support required to succeed at university” (Australian National University, n.d.-c).

³⁵ References to the programs offered by the School reflect the situation at the time of writing, noting that the research and educational programs of the School are undergoing changes in 2025.

³⁶ This was designed by Professor Christopher Sainsbury.

music styles and introduces students to “a living culture with which they can have a relationship” (ANU, 2024c),³⁷ encompassing First Nations contemporary music in all styles and genres. The course aims to give students “the knowledge and skills to interact with Australian Indigenous music in its contexts inclusive of narratives and issues pertinent to the music and its peoples” and examines a range of protocols and traditional cultural expressions which can inform students’ research and practical assignments and/or engagement with Australian Indigenous music (ANU, 2024c). The educative approach is a research-enriched one, in which students learn from nationally acclaimed leading First Nations musician/composers who are engaged in research into contemporary First Nations music, where the content refers to research, and where students are required to undertake a small research project. The course is also integrative in facilitating engagement with First Nations music across every part of the curriculum (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 14), where every student must take a course with Indigenous content (culture/history), as mandated by the College. In the School, this recognises the growing presence of First Nations composition in the Australian repertoire across all styles, which is facilitated in the performance, composition, musicology, and recording/production courses.

3.3.8 First Nations Music in Practice Research Hub

A recent School initiative was establishment in 2022 of four Research Hubs: First Nations Music in Practice³⁸; Music in Action: Interactions with Science and Health; Artistic Practice: Performance and Composition Now; and New Perspectives in Global Music. These hubs aim to provide a focal point for research initiatives in each field and allow the School to align and develop transdisciplinary approaches to each, as well as providing forums to discuss and shape future research initiatives (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 11). The First Nations Music in Practice Hub seeks to foster “a place of deep thought, dialogue, questions and music-making, yet where criticality in research is coupled with advocacy” and which affirms that “culture is articulated via cultural expressions including music” (ANU School of Music, n.d.-a).

3.3.9 Engagement with First Nations Peoples and communities

The School of Music sees itself as a leading space for Indigenous engagement (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 8) and its First Nations programs as pivotal to the recruitment of

³⁷ This course may be understood as a music focussed Indigenous Studies course as referred to in Chapter 2 (2.6.5) (Fredericks, 2009; Mackinlay & Dunbar-Hall, 2003; Ma Rhea & Russell, 2012; Nakata, 2004; Page et al., 2017).

³⁸ At the time of writing, I was one of five members of this Hub.

First Nations students (p. 25). As with all Australian tertiary music institutions the ANU School of Music is still grappling with the long-standing impacts of a colonial legacy, however the School demonstrates a strong and ongoing commitment to advancing the interests of First Nations Peoples and communities as core business through multiple initiatives and commitment of resources (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024). This is consistent with reconceiving conservatoires as public institutions that support and nourish “the dreams and hopes of us all” (Tregear et al., 2016, p. 288), and an approach which seeks to situate the experience of First Nations people “at the heart” of the institutional response, and in which First Nations leadership and self-determination are central elements of progress (Department of Education, 2024, p. 237).

3.3.10 First Nations spaces and initiatives

The ANU School of Music hosts several successful, nationally-focussed First Nations-led music initiatives: the award-winning *Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers* program led by Professor Christopher Sainsbury; the *Yil Lull Studio* led by eminent First Nations producer and musician Will Kepa; the *Space to Create* initiative led by Professor Sainsbury and Will Kepa, in partnership with Creative Australia; and the *H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Indigenous Fellowship* which is awarded to pre-eminent First Nations musicians.³⁹ The School also hosts the *Wamburang Women’s Choir*, a First Nations community choir led by prominent local Ngunnawal musician and educator Alinta Barlow, and the *My Song: Gugan Gulwan* program offered through the School’s Community Music Centre, led by respected local First Nations musician Dale Huddleston. The School also regularly hosts visiting First Nations musicians and groups.⁴⁰

Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers

Ngarra-burria is a nationally-focussed program initiated by Professor Christopher Sainsbury in 2015/2016, and which has grown to become an internationally award-winning program, mentoring and supporting some of Australia’s most successful and productive First Nations composers (ABC Classic, 2022).⁴¹ This research and education initiative has “spurred significant change in the Australian classical and new music landscape” and contributed to “improved opportunities and representation of First Nations composers in the industry”,

³⁹ Joe Geia in 2019; Shellie Morris in 2024.

⁴⁰ This most recently included residencies by acclaimed First Nations musicians Col Hardy and William Barton, and a visit by the Tiwi Island Strong Women for the Canberra International Music Festival.

⁴¹ The *Ngarra-burria* program was awarded the prestigious international *Classical: NEXT Innovation Award* in 2022 (ABC Classic, 2022).

providing a model to inform the work of cultural organisations and universities (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 12). It also represents a proven successful innovation in Australian tertiary music education, serving as a specialised pathway to tertiary music studies at undergraduate and post-graduate levels and a “surrogate Indigenous tertiary music education entity in practice” (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024, p. 109).

Yil Lull Recording Studio⁴²

The *Yil Lull Recording Studio* constitutes a significant innovation in the Australian tertiary music education system that is changing how First Nations music is recorded in Australia, providing a dedicated all-Indigenous facility that is a “safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians to develop their craft” (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 42).⁴³ Non-Indigenous musicians can and do also work with First Nations musicians in the studio, acknowledging collaborative approaches, and the School also has a second recording studio which is used by both non-Indigenous and First Nations musicians. While other universities may have recording studios that serve the interests and needs of First Nations People,⁴⁴ what distinguishes this studio is that it is nationally focussed and free to use for any First Nations musician from around the country. This initiative also opens a pathway for First Nations recording engineers to develop skills and receive mentoring, a distinctive opportunity not available elsewhere and which will help to address the low numbers of First Nations recording engineers in Australia (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 42). The university has made a long-term investment in the Studio through the Vice-Chancellor’s Grand Challenges Scheme (ANU, 2023b),⁴⁵ in recognition of the responsibility of the national university to “support Indigenous health and well-being through music making” (ANU School of Music, n.d.-b), and which has seen the Studio rapidly become a well-known and respected First Nations music hub around the country.

Space to Create

The School of Music’s *Space to Create* program is another successful, groundbreaking national initiative which is supported through a partnership with peak arts funding body

⁴² Australian National University School of Music (n.d.-b).

⁴³ The Studio is named after the widely known song *Yil Lull* which was composed by renowned 2020–2021 H.C. Coombs Indigenous Creative Arts Fellow Uncle Joe Geia, who gifted and endorsed the name (Australian National University School of Music, 2023, p. 8).

⁴⁴ An example is the facility offered through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, at Adelaide University.

⁴⁵ This was awarded through a competitive process and was based on a proposal by Professor Christopher Sainsbury and Professor Brenda Croft (ANU School of Art and Design) in 2019.

Creative Australia and is open to emerging through to established First Nations songwriters, audio engineers, producers, and people employed in the music industry (Creative Australia, 2025). The program provides an intensive music industry residency, with access to state-of-the-art recording studios and studio production support, as well as one-to-one mentoring by music industry professionals, music industry masterclasses and creative labs tailored to participants' needs (Creative Australia, 2025). It also provides a residency fee, per diem payment and paid accommodation and travel (Creative Australia, 2025). Significant features of the program include First Nations community and cultural engagement, inclusivity (of diversity), responsiveness to individual creative and skills development, and no costs to participants.

Wamburang Women's Choir⁴⁶

The *Wamburang Women's Choir* was created in 2023 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Canberra and the surrounding regions. The choir is community-oriented and has a focus on contemporary music and Australian Indigenous languages, with an emphasis on retaining and retrieving "lost" languages and stories through song. Significant features of the initiative include openness to community, sustaining culture through performance for family, friends and remote communities, and integration with other First Nations initiatives, including the *Yil Lull Recording Studio* and collaboration with *My Song: Gugan Gulwan* musicians (ANU School of Music, 2023, pp. 41–42).

My Song: Gugan Gulwan⁴⁷

The School has developed a strong collaborative relationship with the community based *Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Centre*, which has a music program that facilitates opportunities for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to learn and develop musical skills of their "traditional" cultures and engage in diverse styles of music, and which also provides a pathway to performing (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 41).⁴⁸ Participants also have an opportunity to spend time in the *Yil Lull Recording Studio* to record covers of songs and their own compositions (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 41). Significant features of the program include inclusivity, cultural and community responsiveness, and a long-standing collaborative relationship with the School.

⁴⁶ Australian National University School of Music (n.d.-c).

⁴⁷ Australian National University School of Music (n.d.-d).

⁴⁸ ANU School of Music tutors contribute to this program.

Success factors

These initiatives all have features in common which have contributed to their success. These include being First Nations-led by leading First Nations practitioners; having a high degree of First Nations autonomy over goals, processes and outcomes; targeting an identified gap or priority area of interest or need for First Nations musicians; being collaboratively framed and harnessing First Nations organisational and partner expertise and strengths; building First Nations networks and sharing knowledge amongst participants; being participant-focussed and involving predominantly First Nations participants; and providing both short term and longer term tangible benefits for participants. They also aim to be “culturally safe” in being culturally responsive,⁴⁹ contributing to sustaining and developing First Nations music cultures, and in supporting creative and practical outcomes that are flexible and adaptable to a diversity of individual and group interests and needs. Of particular significance is the level of institutional investment in these initiatives, which, in the spirit of rectifactory justice,⁵⁰ ensures that the institution is of service to First Nations musicians. This includes a long-term commitment to ongoing relationships based in shared goals; providing space within the host institution for the activity; ensuring that projects are adequately resourced, well-organised and include social aspects; and ensuring that activities are free or involve minimal costs to participants (Newsome, 2022; Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024).

These initiatives are demonstrative of a strong institutional commitment to sustained engagement with First Nations musicians, music, and music making, and to proactive support for concrete, tangible outcomes of benefit to First Nations Peoples and communities. This level of ongoing commitment to First Nations interests and priorities made the School an attractive, receptive, and conducive environment within which to conduct the research.

3.4 The Case Study

3.4.1 *Commencing the research*

The ANU and the ANU School of Music provided a progressive, nationally focussed institutional environment, supported by high level First Nations leadership and expertise, and with evidence of a strong commitment to research-led advancement of the interests of First

⁴⁹ The term *culturally responsive* as used in the thesis refers to policies, programs, initiatives, and curricula that are proactive in recognising, respecting, and taking into account First Nations people and their backgrounds, beliefs, knowledges, cultures, values, and practices, and in supporting equitable inclusion and outcomes, inclusive of diversity.

⁵⁰ See Puch-Bouwman (2014); Collste (2010, 2016).

Nations Peoples and communities.⁵¹ These factors were significant in my decision to undertake the PhD at the ANU School of Music.⁵² Pivotal to the decision was also consultation about the proposed research with Professor Christopher Sainsbury, as a leading First Nations composer and music scholar and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Convenor. His support for the research, which included agreeing to be a co-supervisor on my PhD panel, confirmed the decision to pursue the research at the ANU School of Music. I was very fortunate also that leading ethnomusicologist and international researcher Associate Professor Bonnie McConnell (Chair of the Research Committee) also agreed to be a co-supervisor.

Understanding of context and situation may be considered essential to place-based and participatory research (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28; Harrison et al., 2017, p. 13; Pickerill et al., 2021, p. 5). This recognises the need for localised responses, including to Indigenous stakeholder priorities and needs, in an understanding that different contexts require different approaches and solutions. A critical early step in the research was therefore learning more about ANU and the ANU School of Music.⁵³ This meant finding out more about the School, including its recent institutional history, and historic and more recent engagement and collaborations with First Nations Peoples and communities, and gaining first-hand experience of the institutional environment and culture. Of particular importance was learning more about the First Nations priorities, initiatives, and activities of the School and about the existing relationships between the School and First Nations Peoples and communities.

Throughout my candidature I was fortunate to have an opportunity to undertake sessional teaching at the School which enabled me to spend a considerable amount of time in Canberra and on-the-ground at the ANU School of Music. This was invaluable to learning more about the School, including its musical and cultural focus; teaching and learning programs; research priorities; staff and student profile; organisational structures and systems; and day-to-day working realities. It also provided opportunities to learn more about, and to engage in-person with the First Nations staff and First Nations initiatives and activities of the School, which included attending university and community events, observing activities, and

⁵¹ A supportive, nationally focussed institutional environment with a history of prior stakeholder interaction and successful “collaborative governance” indicated potential for future successful collaborations (Ansell & Gash, 2007, p. 543).

⁵² The commitment of the ANU School of Music in the First Nations space was confirmed by then Head of School, Professor Kim Cunio, who expressed strong support for the proposed research topic and agreed to take on the role of Principal Supervisor.

⁵³ This included learning about institutional strategic vision, mission, and goals; policies; structures, systems, and entities; governance framework; and values and culture, with particular attention to those specifically relevant to/impacting on the interests of First Nations Peoples and communities.

meeting people. This level of engagement with the School provided opportunities to also develop working relationships with the broader staff of the School.

3.4.2 Stakeholder Analysis

An essential early phase in the research was development of a *Draft Stakeholder Analysis Framework* identifying stakeholders and potential research participants, inclusive of internal and external stakeholders.⁵⁴ It was important to ensure scope in this for engagement with First Nations institutional leadership and stakeholders directly associated with the work of the School, including staff and students. The *Draft Stakeholder Analysis Framework* was adapted from Guijt & Mayne (2019) and addressed “who to involve, why, in what way and at what stage of the research” (p. 3). This considers three groups, those who are directly affected by the issue being researching (e.g. at community level), those who can affect or influence the issue (e.g. policy-makers or other target audiences), and those with relevant know-how or interests (e.g. experts, staff, allies, donors) (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 3). The *Draft Stakeholder Analysis Framework* provided an initial starting point, and the processes of stakeholder engagement and recruitment then evolved in response to institutional/relational dynamics as the project unfolded. This process was supported by Professor Sainsbury, with whom I had many conversations about who should be consulted, and who should be directly involved in the research, and how and in which components. See *Stakeholder Analysis Framework* (Appendix H).

3.4.3 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Stakeholder engagement and consultation are recognised as constituting an essential aspect of ethical conduct in research in First Nations contexts and which involves First Nations Peoples (AIATSIS, 2020a, 2020b; NHMRC et al., 2023). In the research, engagement and consultation included attending formal meetings and official and other formal events. Consultations included discussions with: ANU School of Music leadership and staff; Ngunnawal and Yuin Elders; ANU Vice President (First Nations), ANU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience); ANU Professor of Indigenous Policy Research and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR); Professor of Law and former Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS); leadership and

⁵⁴ This included recognition of the ethical and real-world implications of engagement processes in the research with respect to potential future impacts on institutional stakeholder engagement and internal and external stakeholder relationships.

staff of the NCIS and the Tjabal Centre; artsACT Assistant Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts Engagement; *Space to Create* and *Ngurra-burria* participants; and visiting First Nations composers and musicians. These discussions proved invaluable, providing views and perspectives that informed/confirmed key aspects of the research, including ethics, purpose, principles, scope, aims/goals, design, methodology/approach, and researcher positionality and role.

During the early period of the research, I also consulted several eminent non-Indigenous researchers with experience in First Nations research, who provided valuable advice including with respect to research ethics, scope, design, methodology and methods. Along the way I had many informal conversations about the nature and goals of the research with both First Nations and non-Indigenous stakeholders and interested parties, which helped to clarify and consolidate my thinking and approach to the research.

Throughout the research I was fortunate to also have opportunities to attend and/or participate in a range of First Nations institution and community meetings, presentations, music activities/events, lectures/symposia and other formal and informal events. These included: official meetings with and a visit to Two Fold Bay Corporation at Jigamy Farm (on Yuin Country) with ANU Senior Management; a visit to the Eora Centre (Redfern, Sydney) with Professor Sainsbury in which I attended a *Ngarra-burria First Nations Composers* workshop; participation in the NCIS Annual Research Lab (2019); attendance at the official launch of the *Yil Lull Recording Studio*; attendance at the launch of a First Nations exhibition at the ANU School of Art and Design; attendance at a public event at the Redfern native rooftop garden, which included a performance by the *Barayagal* choir, hosted by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and directed by First Nations musician and songwriter Nardi Simpson; and attendance at *Ngarra-burria First Nations Composers* concerts. These and attendance at other events proved invaluable to gaining a better understanding of the work of the School of Music in the First Nations space, as well as providing important opportunities to meet and chat informally with people who were engaged with the School in a range of different capacities and ways.

3.4.4 Briefing documents

Seven individual briefing documents were created to support the engagement and consultation process, which were tailored to the different components of the research and explicitly addressed the roles of stakeholders in the research. These documents included details about the research project and were provided to potential participants prior to formal

meetings/discussions, and to stakeholders, as needed. The documents comprised: *SoM PhD Research Project Brief* (an overview designed for all stakeholders); *SoM Staff PhD Research Project Brief* (for the staff of the School of Music); *SoM Indigenous Reference Group Research Project Brief* (for potential participants in the SoM Indigenous Reference Group); *Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research Project* (for potential participants in the SoM Indigenous Reference Group); *Indigenous Co-design Workshops Research Project Brief* (for potential participants in the Focus Group Workshops); *Interviews PhD Research Project Brief* (for potential interview participants); and a one-page *Space to Create PhD Project Research Brief* for *Space to Create* participants, which was presented in person as part of a group briefing session at the ANU School of Music in 2022.

These briefing documents were vital to providing consistent, accurate and clear information about the research to interested parties, and to ensuring that all stakeholders invited to participate in the research were well informed about the research prior to discussions and/or agreement to becoming involved. This approach contributed to a comprehensive process of informed consent.⁵⁵

3.4.5 Ethics approval

The ethics approval process was a lengthy and challenging one due to complexities inherent to the multi-component research framework, the applied methodological approach to the research,⁵⁶ and the First Nations and institutional contexts and nature of the research.

First Nations research at ANU is understood as encompassing research that “impacts or is of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (ANU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, n.d.-d, referencing AIATSIS Code, p. 6). ANU researchers planning to undertake First Nations research are required to demonstrate compliance with both the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics*, and to articulate how the research “is a priority for, or meets the needs of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (ANU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, n.d.-d). All research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is reviewed by the university’s full Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) as required by the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human*

⁵⁵ The briefing documents also provided a useful reference point for discussions about the research with potential participants.

⁵⁶ It has been suggested there is a need for guiding principles and ground rules for ethics committees in considering research protocols based in participatory design and co-design approaches (Goodyear et al., 2015, p. 1).

Research (ANU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, n.d.-d). The research review process was a comprehensive and thorough one which proved beneficial to the research, in providing detailed, helpful feedback that then informed improvements to the Ethics Protocol and key research documents,⁵⁷ and which ultimately shaped important aspects of the research design, methodology, methods, and implementation.

Ethics review feedback included advice on the need to make a distinction between the role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group as a part of the research and its role as a new and ongoing advisory body for the School.⁵⁸ This included advice also on how to manage the role of the research within the broader School processes for developing First Nations capacity and programs,⁵⁹ which necessitated making a clear demarcation between the research (the PhD) and implementation of the recommendations (post PhD), and which meant addressing implications of the dual role of members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the research (straddling the PhD and post PhD phases), including with respect to risk mitigation.

Such risks included potential conflicts of interest for members of the Indigenous Reference Group in terms of their role in the research (which needed to be independent and unbiased) and their role as members of the ongoing Indigenous Reference Group for the School. Mitigation of risk needed to address a situation for example where members of the Reference Group might be privy to institutional information (e.g. budgetary matters) which could potentially form the basis for decision making contrary to the wishes of research participants (as expressed in the recommendations). As such, risk mitigation needed to extend to matters beyond the research project per se, and included the need to address issues of “cultural safety” where for example, in an environment of limited funding there might be conflicting views amongst members of the Reference Group about the future direction of educational programs.

3.4.6 Establishing the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

Establishing the School of Music (SoM) Indigenous Reference Group as a part of the research constituted a significant structural “intervention” in the First Nations space in the School and the most significant feature of the “extended” case study approach (Burawoy, 1998, pp. 14, 16; Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 73, 74). This key component of the research had the

⁵⁷ *Research Agreement, Risk Management Strategy, Benefits of the Research, Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research, Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms*, and the recruitment email for the Survey Questionnaire.

⁵⁸ This included advice on wording for the Reference Group *Terms of Reference* and *Standard Operating Procedures*.

⁵⁹ This included with respect to implementation of the recommendations of the research.

dual purpose of facilitating First Nations self-determination and oversight in the research and providing a new ongoing First Nations advisory body for the School.⁶⁰ Of essential importance was the role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in taking carriage of the set of formal recommendations arising from the research.⁶¹ While not responsible for implementing the recommendations, this new body would have a pivotal role in advising the School on implementation priorities, plans, and processes, and in monitoring progress and evaluation of outcomes over time.⁶²

The process for establishing the SoM Indigenous Reference Group commenced early in the research with creation of an initial PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group comprising all five First Nations staff of the School.⁶³ This initiative sought to facilitate Indigenous self-determination in the research by providing opportunities for input by institutional First Nations stakeholders at an early point in development of the research, and as an essential aspect of an integrated “whole-of-School” approach to supporting transformative change in the School through the research.

The members of the PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group played a key role in development and confirmation of the processes for the research. This commenced with feedback on the PhD proposal, and review and endorsement of key documents for the Ethics Protocol (*Research Agreement, Benefits of the Research, Risk Management Strategy*).⁶⁴ It also included advice on the establishment and membership of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group; potential participants for the Focus Group Workshops; discussion of the Thematic Framework working document; and development of the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and *Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)* for the SoM Indigenous Reference Group.⁶⁵ The PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group continued up until the time of the official establishment of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group, at which point four of the five members became members of the new SoM Indigenous Reference Group. This ensured ongoing input into the project by the First

⁶⁰ This is consistent with an active role of the researcher in recognising inequalities, transforming power relations, and challenging the status quo (Mertens, 2007; Pease, 2021; Porter & Arabena, 2021; Te Rau Ora Webinars, 2017; University of Waikato, 2018; Young, 2011).

⁶¹ This recognises that maintaining co-design collaboration into service delivery can bring mutual benefits to providers and community and lead to “improved outcomes and greater impact” (WACOSS, 2017, p. 6).

⁶² This could support processes of institutional policy and program review and evaluation (Behrendt et al., 2012; Frawley et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2018).

⁶³ This was initially dubbed the Inaugural Working Group (i.e. of the proposed SoM Indigenous Reference Group).

⁶⁴ The members also provided a letter of support for the research project as part of the Ethics Protocol approval process.

⁶⁵ Drafts of the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and *Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)* were subsequently created by me for review and confirmation by the SoM Indigenous Reference Group.

Nations staff of the School and provided continuity of understanding about the project within the formally constituted Reference Group. It also consolidated involvement of the SoM First Nations staff as members of the new advisory body for the School.

3.4.7 The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

The *ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group* constituted a core component of the research.⁶⁶ The role of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* was to act as a key touchstone for the project and to provide project-specific oversight, guidance, support, and advice on ethics, protocols, and the overall conduct of the research. This included discussion of the Thematic Framework working document and suggestions for participants for the Focus Group Workshops. Three meetings of the Reference Group were held during the research, one at the outset, one in the middle, and one at the end of the project.

The establishment of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group was a considered process which sought to ensure the ‘right mix’ of representative stakeholders. Membership of the Reference Group comprised ANU and non-ANU First Nations stakeholders with a particular interest in the research question and who could provide experientially informed perspectives and views on the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the tertiary music education system and at the ANU School of Music specifically. The membership comprised: Chair: SoM Indigenous Convenor (or nominee); local First Nations Elder (or nominee); ANU SoM First Nations staff and student representatives (x3) consisting of 1 staff member, 1 undergraduate student/recent graduate, and 1 post-graduate student/recent graduate; First Nations music or arts/cultural organisation representative; First Nations independent industry professionals (x2); and a First Nations ACT school sector representative.⁶⁷ The membership sought to ensure gender equity, representation from a range of ages,⁶⁸ and First Nations Peoples descended from a range of locations/communities, both local and national.

An important provision in establishing the SoM Indigenous Reference Group was delineation of its finite role within the research and its ongoing role as a formally constituted advisory body for the School. The initial membership of the Reference Group was stipulated as ending when the research project was complete, at which point the membership will be reconsidered by the existing members of the Reference Group together with School

⁶⁶ Members of the Reference Group were considered co-research participants.

⁶⁷ ACT (Australian Capital Territory).

⁶⁸ Members needed to be aged 18 years or older.

leadership.⁶⁹ This important proviso was outlined in the *Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research Project* briefing document and the *Participant Information Sheet* provided to prospective participants prior to consent. It was also reflected in the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* which spells out the role of the Reference Group in the research,⁷⁰ together with key ethical considerations, including those related to potential conflicts of interest and “cultural safety” as referred to earlier.⁷¹

The SoM Indigenous Reference Group provides a new structural mechanism for supporting Indigenous self-determination and amplifying the voices of First Nations people in the work of School. It was critically important to ensure that the Reference Group would add a strong and influential voice to the decision-making processes of the School, which is facilitated through the Chair (the Indigenous Convenor of the School) and the First Nations staff members who are also members of the Reference Group. An important role of the Chair is to convey the deliberations of the Reference Group to a SoM General Staff Meeting once per Semester.⁷² Integration within the business of the School is facilitated also through the internal First Nations Programs Committee, which is chaired by the Indigenous Convenor and includes First Nations staff who are also members of the Reference Group.⁷³ This committee interfaces with the Head of School, and through that person, with the Dean of the College and the wider staff of the university, as well as with community and industry, and also plays a role in steering the School’s Strategic and Implementation Plans (ANU School of Music, 2023, p. 30).

3.4.8 The “whole-of-School” approach

The research sought to contribute to facilitating a “whole-of-School” approach to supporting transformative change within the School. This recognised existing First Nations (and non-Indigenous) internal and external stakeholders, networks, and relationships as integral to the work of the School and therefore as essential to future outcomes in the First Nations space. The research sought to support the transformative change process through involvement of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders as members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group, as co-researchers in the Focus Group, and as contributors to the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components.

⁶⁹ This was beyond the remit of the PhD research project.

⁷⁰ This included the role of the Principal Researcher, which fulfilled the duties of Secretariat.

⁷¹ The *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* document will be reviewed/rewritten by/for the ongoing Reference Group after completion of the PhD research.

⁷² This mechanism is stipulated in the *Terms of Reference (ToR)*.

⁷³ This committee also includes non-Indigenous staff.

The research sought to also facilitate an inclusive, collaborative “whole-of-School” approach by engaging with the staff of the School of Music.⁷⁴ The Head of School was involved from the outset, as were all the First Nations staff. The broader staff of the School were provided with information about the research and opportunities to engage with it through comprehensive “whole-of-School” staff briefings, two at the beginning of the research and a post-research briefing reporting on the findings and recommendations of the research, and through informal opportunities for interactions with Indigenous co-research participants. The research protocols also included provision for members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group and participants in the Focus Group Workshops to invite attendance at meetings by any/all SoM staff if they wished, however this did not eventuate. The set of formal recommendations to the School will be presented to the staff of the School following a process of review by the members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group.

3.4.9 Researcher reflections

Systemic and structural change in institutions can only occur through the agency and actions of engaged people and is therefore all about people and relationships. Any institutional change process therefore needs to harness the efforts, knowledges, strengths, and skills of a range of stakeholders, where everyone who has the knowledge and/or power to contribute has a place (Kovach, 2021; Pease, 2021; Porter & Arabena; Young, 2011). In the extended case study approach the researcher thus has an ethical and practical responsibility to engage productively with stakeholders in supporting the processes of institutional change, a responsibility that does not end with completion of the research.⁷⁵

The extended case study approach was essential to achieving the aims of the research, providing scope for institutional “intervention” aimed at progressing the transformative change agenda, and facilitating Indigenous self-determination through an integrated Indigenous-centred dialogic methodology inclusive of a diverse range of informed First Nations stakeholders. This approach is aligned with a transformative-rectifactory theory-practice position, in embracing collaborative engagement and recognising the potential of the actions of the researcher and co-researchers to contribute to institutional dynamics and hence to systemic change.

⁷⁴ This sought to contribute to the integrity and efficacy of the research in supporting institutional change aimed at bringing about outcomes of benefit for First Nations Peoples and communities in the work of the School into the future.

⁷⁵ This is based in a commitment to sustained critical reflexivity and an embodied transformative praxis (Porter & Arabena, 2018; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021).

Progression of transformative change within the institution could not have taken place without a “whole-of-School” investment and the support of committed stakeholders. Endorsement and support by the Head of School and First Nations leadership and staff was critical, as was support by members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group, the co-research participants in the Focus Group, and the contributors to the Survey Questionnaire and Interviews. The combined institutional investment and support by experientially informed First Nations stakeholders may be considered testament to the efficacy of a “distributed leadership approach” in progressing transformative change within the institutional setting (Miller, 2011; Naylor & Misfud, 2019, pp. 45–46; Shay & Sarra, 2023). This sees First Nations stakeholder expertise and leadership as vested both within and external to the university, inclusive of staff, students and community members, who as co-research collaborators may be considered in combination as an “epistemic community” of knowledge holders engaged in the co-creation of knowledge (after Hass, 1992).⁷⁶

3.5 Summary

Chapter 3 describes the co-design case study conducted at the ANU School of Music and includes a review of sources and literature that informed the case study, details of the institutional contexts at the time of the research, and the approach to the case study and its implementation in the School.

Case study research is employed extensively in qualitative social research and is an approach that examines phenomena in real-life contexts and uses multiple methods of data collection (Priya, 2021). This offers a versatile form of enquiry suitable for a holistic and in-depth investigation, one which can be tailored to the research problem, accommodate a range of philosophical perspectives, and be applied across a variety of disciplines (Harrison et al., 2017). Both positivist and non-positivists can employ the case study approach (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2015), which can include participatory action research (Dudgeon et al., 2020) and interpretative qualitative and Indigenous methodologies which offer a “bridge for understanding” (Kovach, 2021, p. 31). However, as case studies are unique to the particular circumstance, findings may not necessarily be generalisable (Priya, 2021).

In the research the bespoke approach to the case study was one in which *place* (Raciti et al., 2017; Styers, 2019) was conceived as an evolving “field of action” comprising multiple actors, inclusive of First Nations stakeholders. This approach was informed by the “extended

⁷⁶ See also, Harrison (2012, pp. 505–506).

case methodology” (Burawoy, 1998; Lai & Roccu, 2019), in which the case is “constructed” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, p. 67), “intervention” is valued as “a virtue to be exploited” (Burawoy, 1998, p.14), and where the actions of the researcher and co-researchers are recognised as contributing to the institutional dynamic. As such, the “extended” methodology provided scope for an Indigenous-centred participatory action approach to progressing transformative institutional change, and for integration of multiple methods within an Indigenous-centred co-design framework, inclusive of multiple stakeholders. Essential to the research was critical reflexivity, attention to the point of view of participants, and acknowledgment of “power effects” (Lai & Roccu, 2019, pp. 76-77).

The context of the case study at the ANU meant understanding the broader institutional First Nations strategic policy environment, inclusive of policies and plans relevant to First Nations research, and the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the ANU School of Music, to which the research sought to contribute. Although the School of Music strategic plan does not detail how institutional commitments to First Nation People and communities will be implemented, the School demonstrates a strong and proactive commitment, evident in multiple arenas of successful, innovative engagement and activity.

Understanding of context and situation are essential to place-based and participatory research, including co-design. In the research this meant learning about the School, including its recent engagement and collaborations with First Nations Peoples and communities, and gaining first-hand experience of the institutional environment and culture. An essential early phase in the research was development of a *Draft Stakeholder Analysis Framework* (Guijt & Mayne, 2019), identifying stakeholders and potential research participants, inclusive of internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement and consultation was also essential, consistent with ethical conduct in research in First Nations contexts and involving First Nations Peoples (AIATSIS, 2020a, 2020b; NHMRC et al., 2023). Briefing documents were essential to supporting the engagement and consultation process, which were tailored to the individual components of the research and contributed to informed consent. The ethics approval process proved to be lengthy and challenging due to complexities inherent to the multi-component research framework and the applied nature of the research.

Establishment of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group as a core component in the research constituted a significant structural “intervention” in the First Nations space at the School, and the most significant feature of the “extended” case study approach (Burawoy, 1998; Lai & Roccu, 2019). This facilitated Indigenous self-determination and oversight in the research and also provided a new First Nations advisory body for the School. Prior to this, an

initial PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group comprising all the First Nations staff of the School also provided scope for input into the development of the research and confirmation of the research processes by institutional stakeholders.

The research sought to also facilitate a “whole-of-School” approach to supporting transformative change within the School. This recognised existing First Nations (and non-Indigenous) internal and external stakeholders, networks, and relationships as essential to future outcomes in the First Nations space; and the institutional change process was supported through participation of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders in all components of the research. The staff of the School were provided with information about the research and opportunities to engage with it through “whole-of-School” staff briefings.

The “extended” case study approach proved essential to achieving the aims, goals, and objectives of the research, in facilitating Indigenous self-determination and providing scope for an institutional “intervention” aimed at progressing a transformative change agenda. The combined institutional investment and support by First Nations stakeholders may be considered testament to the efficacy of a “distributed leadership approach” (Miller, 2011; Naylor & Misfud, 2019; Shay & Sarra, 2023), where stakeholders, as co-research collaborators, are considered an “epistemic community” of knowledge holders engaged in the co-creation of knowledge (after Hass, 1992).

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods describes the research methodology and methods and includes a review of sources and literature that informed the research methodology and methods, and details of implementation of the methodology and methods in the research.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

For Indigenous Peoples, research has the power to transform our lives, influence the relations of power in our societies, and indeed, contribute to our cultural well-being; but only where it's grounded in an understanding of our right to be involved and to make informed choices about the research we are engaged in, and how our knowledge, our knowledge, is used and represented to the world.

(Dodson, 2018, 37.30–38.06)

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.6.5), the research was based in a transformative applied paradigm and an Indigenous-centred participatory-action theoretical framework and employed an Indigenous-centred advanced mixed-methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous centred co-design. The chapter is in two parts:

- PART 1 – Sources and Literature: This provides a review of scholarly literature and sources that informed the research methodology and methods.
- PART 2 – Methodology and Methods in the Research: This describes the details of the research methodology and methods and their implementation in the research.

4.2 PART 1 – Sources and literature

4.2.1 *Applied research*

The research was based in a transformative applied paradigm,¹ and an applied participatory action research methodology. Applied research lends itself to transformative change in institutional contexts, providing a practical means for developing new knowledge directed towards addressing real-world problems (Araújo, 2008; Harrison, 2018; Newsome, 2008; Beng, 2008; Treloyn, 2016a). The applied research approach may be defined as research that is “guided by principles of social responsibility” and which extends the usual academic goal

¹ Chilisa & Kawulich (2012); Kovach (2009); Mertens (2007); Schensul et al. (2014); Sheehy (1992); Thambinathan & Kinsella (2021); Trotter et al. (2014).

of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward “solving concrete problems” and “working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts” (International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance, 2010–2025).² As in the research, applied research can encompass research directed towards “intervention” intended to “stimulate a benefit or solve a problem” within institutions, inclusive of institutional policies and practices (Harrison, 2018, p. 18). It is important however that applied research is embedded in a setting in which a problem has been identified and there is a group present to address it, otherwise the research may be useful but rarely used (Trotter et al., 2014, p. 665).³

Leading ethnomusicologist Daniel Sheehy has advocated for applied research as *conscious practice* with “a sense of purpose” which goes beyond simple advancement of knowledge and answers the question, “To what end?” (Sheehy, 1992, p. 323). This can help shape action into “concrete lines of strategy” that are not preconceived or predetermined by an “absolute idea of what these actions should be” (Sheehy, 1992, p. 324), but instead, are guided by a sense of “social purpose” (p. 335).⁴ Such actions can include being proactive and becoming involved, with the aim of “changing institutions which deal with indigenous peoples” not “changing indigenous peoples to fit the structures” (L. Smith, 1999, p. 147). In the research the applied approach was directed towards progressing genuine transformation “informed by the communities it benefits”, and challenging “entrenched structures of social inequality” (University of Newcastle, 2023, p. 9), based in a participatory strategy that sought to “equalize power relations and improve access to resources and power” (Schensul et al., 2014, p. 192).⁵

4.2.2 Participatory research

The best approach to conducting ethical research in applied contexts is to carefully select “the most appropriate combination of theory and methodological approaches” consistent with the “local context and the intended outcomes of the research process” (Trotter et al., 2014, p. 661). In the research it was essential therefore to identify a methodological approach that would facilitate participation by a range of internal and external stakeholders in realising the aims, goals, and objectives of the research.

² Other terms that refer to music research with social and cultural impact include *action*, *adjustment*, *administrative*, *advocate* (Pettan, 2008, p. 90) and *engaged*, *active*, *action*, *practice*, *public*, and *public sector* (Harrison, 2018, pp. 1, 5).

³ The institutional research context satisfied both these conditions.

⁴ This provides a strategic means for “developing broad, structural solutions to broad problems” (Sheehy, 1992, p. 331) which can include “social and political action to affect broad societal policies” (p. 334).

⁵ See also, Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Dudgeon et al. (2020); Lai & Roccu (2019).

Participatory research can encompass a wide range of approaches and methods, however it typically involves those people who are the focus of the research (Guitj & Mayne, 2019, p. 1) or who have direct experience of or particular interest in the research topic, as active participants in some or all aspects of the research process (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 161).⁶ Participatory approaches are often based in principles of “empowerment and accountability” and can be more inclusive of the voices of people affected by the issues being researched (Guitj & Mayne, 2019, p. 1).⁷ Such approaches are therefore compatible with the goals of a reform agenda in research involving First Nations Peoples (Dudgeon et al., 2020, pp. 13–14; Henry et al., 2004, p. 13). Participatory research can thus provide a way to recalibrate the relationship between First Nations people and researchers and reflect the needs of First Nations people, however the parties involved are encouraged to “proceed with caution and with eyes open” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 10).⁸

Participatory methodologies have become a preferred approach to academic research in Australian First Nations research contexts.⁹ It has been argued however that First Nations research needs to move beyond the “rhetoric of participatory research” towards a model in which Indigenous knowledge, processes, and ways of knowing are respected and acknowledged through “relational ethical frameworks, appropriate epistemology and negotiated agreements” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1725).¹⁰ Participatory research differs from research methodologies that treat people as “objects of research” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 162) and which emphasise the need for “objectivity” and control by professional researchers (Guitj & Mayne, 2019, p. 1). In practice, objectivity and participation may be compatible however where there is a “careful sequencing of the research process and management of researcher bias (Guitj & Mayne, 2019, p. 1). This means employing a strategic approach that ensures active participation by Indigenous people throughout the entire research process (Putt, 2013, p. 6) and a focus on working with Indigenous people who hold the knowledge and expertise

⁶ This can include in “research design, data collection, analysing findings, and reporting and dissemination” (Lenette et al., 2019, pp. 161–162).

⁷ Participatory approaches can be useful in recognising and valuing differing and diverse experiences and knowledge and in challenging “sociopolitical inequities” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 162).

⁸ Although participatory research may involve “collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve ... their own social practices” (Cochran et al., 2008, citing Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998, p. 5), this does not necessarily prevent the risk of marginalisation of Indigenous ways of knowing (p. 22).

⁹ Barney (2014a, 2014b, 2023); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bendrups et al. (2013); Bracknell (2019a); Dreise (2018); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Dudgeon et al. (2020); Kendall et al. (2011); Mackinlay (2010); Mooney-Somers & Mahor (2009); Newsome (2016); Putt (2013); Sainsbury (2019); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Treloyn (2016a, 2016b); Walter (2010).

¹⁰ See also, Mertens (2007, p. 223).

of their circumstances, past and present, and is directed towards “positive change” (p.1). This is consistent with an approach to research in which stakeholders with lived experience are considered “co-creators of knowledge” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 161).

Participatory action research

Participatory action research (PAR) is widely accepted as a means for ethical conduct in applied research (Dudgeon et al., 2020, p. 1; Kendall et al., 2011, pp. 1723–1724; Trotter et al., 2014, p. 664). PAR is a methodology which aims to solve “concrete problems rather than hypothetical ones” (Beng, 2016, p. 109), and may be broadly defined as research which involves the community (as end users, intended beneficiaries, or stakeholders) in the “planning, design and management of research” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 8), and where the focus is on the process by which knowledge and shared understanding can mobilise “collaborative action for change” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1724).¹¹ This kind of participative approach results in the empowerment of those involved,¹² which in turn “alters the structures and institutions that lead to marginalization and exclusion” (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 4, referencing White, 1996).¹³ Participatory action research may thus be considered as aligned with the transformative research paradigm (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, pp. 11–12).¹⁴

The epistemological assumption of the transformative paradigm gives rise to a “cyclical model” of research which involves establishing partnerships between researchers and community members, recognises power differences, and builds trust through culturally competent practices (Mertens, 2007, p. 218). Mixed methods is a critical aspect of the cyclical model, which as in the research, involves stakeholder participation from the beginning to the end of the study with the goal of contributing to sustainable change (Mertens, 2007, p. 218).

Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda and others, participatory action research has been identified as consistent with a “decolonial epistemology”, in which the focus is on social justice and academic transformation, and which adopts practices of producing knowledge by “working *with* people rather than *on* people” (Sardo, 2017, p. 225).¹⁵ Such an approach responds to the call for “relational” approaches to research (Kendall et al.,

¹¹ Research then becomes a process for change “driven by those most affected by the topic, and researchers become facilitators rather than experts” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1724).

¹² Participatory research may only be considered transformative however where participants are “in control of the research process” (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 8).

¹³ This reflects a critical perspective which emphasises a “reframing of an inequitable situation to address the structural and social factors that create it” (Trotter et al., 2014, p. 663).

¹⁴ A methodological assumption is that there is a “participatory and political aspect” (Noel, 2016, p. 4).

¹⁵ Aboriginal Participatory Action Research (APAR) also provides a critically reflexive and transformative methodology which is deliberate in its intent to “centre and increase Indigenous voice and ‘epistemic self-determination’ in Indigenous research” (Dudgeon et al., 2020, p. 1).

2011, p. 1723), and emphasises “participation *with* others rather than research for research’s sake”, combining participation with action to understand and address societal issues (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020, p. 4). This has similarities with community-based participatory research (CBPR), core elements of which include “reciprocal co-learner relationships between researchers and communities” and “immediate and direct benefit of new knowledge” (Mooney-Somers & Mahor, 2009, pp. 112–113). In the research a participatory action approach was integral to facilitating Indigenous self-determination through the participation of First Nations people as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research. The Indigenous-centred co-design methodology developed for the research provided a means for achieving this.

4.2.3 Indigenous research methodologies

The literature review revealed a large body of scholarly literature on Indigenous research methodologies, much of which is highly critical of historical approaches by non-Indigenous people to research involving First Nations Peoples, and which argues for self-determination, self-representation, and the privileging of First Nations world views, philosophies, and knowledge in research.¹⁶ The review focussed primarily, though not exclusively, on recent Australian First Nations sources, which informed the research paradigm, principles, design, methodology, and methods. Special attention was paid to sources addressing Indigenous research agendas and methodologies.

Indigenous research methodologies may be defined as approaches based in Indigenous epistemologies (Kovach, 2021, p. 24) and which are grounded in Indigenous philosophy (p. 13) and Indigenous knowledge systems and are “relational at their core” (p. 12).¹⁷ Indigenous research methodologies thus emerge from Indigenous epistemologies or knowledge frameworks and are therefore always “people- and place-specific” (Tuck & Yang, 2019, p. xi). There is no one definitive Indigenous research model, however a primary focus in Indigenous research is participation in and control over research processes and outcomes by First Nations people and communities (Putt, 2013, pp. 5–6).

First Nations communities have long suffered from research done to and about Aboriginal people, rather than with and more ideally by Aboriginal people, and where

¹⁶ Arbon (2008); Dreise (2018); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Dudgeon et al. (2020); Foley (2003); Kovach (2021); Martin-Mirabooopa (2003); Porter & Arabena (2018); Rigney (1999); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024); Smith (1999, 2021); Tuck & Yang (2019); West (2000a); Wilson (2004). These sources are by Indigenous identified authors except for Mazurski, Porter & Arabena, Newsome, and Yang (and unlisted co-authors Bray, Darlaston-Jones, and Walker).

¹⁷ See also, Porter & Arabena (2018, pp. 7–8).

Aboriginal people have been “unwittingly subjects of, or unwillingly subjected to, research” (Dreise, 2018, p. 10). This has led to legitimate challenges by Australian First Nations scholars concerning the efficacy and usefulness of academic research, and to a self-empowering agenda which has seen the emergence of First Nations researchers, methodologies, and agendas that have sought to “decolonise and empower Aboriginal communities in research and evaluation” (Dreise, 2018, p. 11, referencing Jackson-Barrett et al., 2015).

First Nations scholars have drawn attention to the critical importance of ethically responsible and responsive research in First Nations contexts, and to methodological approaches that emphasise *relevance, respect, relationality, representation, reciprocity, beneficence, and control* and the centrality of Indigenous cosmologies, ontologies, axiologies, and epistemologies.¹⁸ At the heart of the Indigenous research paradigm is the regaining of “Indigenous intellectual and spiritual sovereignty” (Puch-Bouwman, 2014, p. 410). The case has been made for a research agenda strategically focussed on the goal of Indigenous self-determination, one which goes beyond a political goal to become a social justice goal involving processes of “transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples” (L. Smith, 1999, pp. 115–116).¹⁹ This means being involved, and making informed decisions about what research to be engaged in and how “knowledge is used and represented” (Dodson, 2018). Similarly, the argument is made for “epistemic self-determination” and the critical role of Indigenous knowledge systems (Dudgeon et al., 2020, pp. 3, 6–7), and for the centring of Indigenous voices in transformative research in Indigenous contexts (pp. 1, 6).

Indigenous people want research and its designs to contribute to “self-determination and liberation struggles as defined and controlled by their communities” (Rigney, 1999, pp. 109–110). In the Indigenist research paradigm as proposed by Rigney (1999),²⁰ research by Indigenous people serves and supports Indigenous self-determination and gives voice to and privileges Indigenous voices (pp. 116–118).²¹ This positions the interests, experiences, and knowledges of Indigenous people “at the center of research methodologies and the construction of knowledge about us” (Rigney, 1999, p. 119). However, the principle of “resistance as the emancipatory imperative” as elucidated by Rigney has been questioned

¹⁸ Arbon (2008); Chilisa (2005); Chilisa & Kawulich (2012); CTET Studio RRU (2020); Dreise (2018); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Foley (2003); Kovach (2021); Lee & Evans (2022); Martin-Mirraabooa (2003); Moreton-Robinson (2015); Nakata (2007); Rigney (1999); Smith et al. (2019); Tuck & Yang (2019); Wilson (2017).

¹⁹ See also, Smith (2021).

²⁰ This is defined by Rigney (1999) as “research by Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous struggle for self-determination” (p. 118).

²¹ “Indigenist research” is based also in the proposition that research participants should be provided with an opportunity to “voice their experiences using their own preferred method” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1723).

(Martin-Mirraabooa, 2003, p. 205),²² based in the argument that Indigenist research needs to also “centralise the core structures of Aboriginal ontology” (p. 206) through a standpoint based in the strength of Aboriginal heritage and a relational world view, ontology, and epistemology (pp. 205–206). Leading First Nations scholar Japanangka errol West honours the uniqueness of an Aboriginal ontology and epistemology (as described in Martin-Mirraabooa, 2003, p. 206; see West, 2000), as have other leading First Nations researchers (Arbon, 2008; Bracknell, 2015; Fredericks et al., 2011).

First Nations activist and scholar Professor Gary Foley has proposed an emancipatory Indigenous Standpoint Theory model, based in Indigenous epistemological approaches, and which must be flexible and applicable for a range of Indigenous nations and of benefit to the researchers’ or wider Indigenous community (Foley, 2003, p. 50). Kaupapa Māori research takes into account also the legacies of previous research and the parameters of both previous and current approaches, through which Māori have been able to engage in a dialogue about setting new directions for the priorities, policies, and practices of research “for, by and with Māori” (L. Smith, 1999, p. 183).²³ This is based in “relationships, connections, reciprocity and accountability” embedded in Indigenous understandings of ethics and knowledge, which may be considered foundational to decolonising theory and praxis (L. Smith, 2021, p. xiii).²⁴

Decolonisation of existing Western research traditions which have historically marginalized the knowledge, perspectives, and values of Indigenous peoples is also highlighted (Henry et al., 2004, p. 51) with a “needs-based approach” recommended (pp. 10, 50). Research should be culturally appropriate, utilise appropriate research methods, and employ practices that “fully acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing and equality in research partnerships” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1720). Attention has also been drawn to the ethics of consent in making research agreements, where a recent recalibration of research relationships means that Aboriginal communities are now more likely to demand research “on our terms” (Dreise, 2018, p. 5).

A postcolonial/Indigenous research paradigm is one that is guided by relational accountability and is informed by Indigenous knowledge systems and “participatory, liberating and transformative” approaches to research (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012, pp. 5–6, 13–14).²⁵ A relational Indigenous methodology advances collaborative research, inclusive of

²² See Rigney (1999, pp. 116–117).

²³ See also, Jones (2012).

²⁴ See also, CTET Studio RRU (2020).

²⁵ See also, Chilisa (2012).

community voices, and is driven by a decolonisation intent and “legitimises indigenous knowledge as content and as a body of thinking” (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 329). Relationality and relational accountability may thus be considered central to Indigenous knowledge systems and to an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2004, p. 112) where “all things are related and therefore relevant” (p. 107).) Indigenous-led research and an Indigenous research paradigm which “prioritises community needs and voices” (Clapham, 2011, pp. 40–41) are considered also important, including in ensuring Aboriginal community control (p. 46). It has been argued however that the decolonising struggle needs to shift from a position focussed on “control” to one focused on “experience, interpretation and engagement”, representing a “powerful authority within our own research agenda” (Arbon, 2008, p. 107).

Policy and programming grow out of research, and when the research-policy-practice phenomenon is unpacked it reveals methodological choices that are deeply implicated in the interpretation of research and the recommendations made (Kovach, 2021, p. 12). Although the influence of research methodologies may not always be visible, their influence on how research questions are asked, to whom, the findings that are found, and whether knowledge will be shared with communities, cannot be understated (Kovach, 2021, p. 11). It is important to also consider problem formulation, how one undertakes a project, the methods used, and what one does at the end with outcomes; where the principles and protocols of research with Indigenous communities should address “control, consultation, engagement (partnership or relationship), dialogue, respect, and reciprocity” (Arbon, 2008, p. 108).²⁶ The bespoke co-design methodology developed for the research sought to address these considerations.

Indigenous research methods are distinct from other research methods however not because they are so vastly different, but because of the theories that guide them and the need to ensure that methods are tailored “to match community needs and understandings of knowledge and knowing” (L. Smith et al., 2019, xi). Participatory researchers are therefore advised to consider the “power that indigenous methods can bring to research design and to the entire research process” (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 22), and to apply ethical approaches based on “consultation, strong community participation, and methods that acknowledge indigenous ways of knowing” (p. 23).

Indigenous research methodologies can also encompass creative practice methodologies (music composition, song writing, performance, event curation etc.). Indigenous practice-as-research projects are commonly led by First Nations researchers and

²⁶ See also, Dreise & Mazurski (2018, p. 10).

creative practitioners but can also include collaborative approaches with non-indigenous people, in which First Nations practitioners have varying levels of input and control.²⁷ Leading First Nations composer Professor Christopher Sainsbury positions First Peoples composers as researchers and Indigenous creative work as research, emphasising that “as an expression of culture, Indigenous composition requires a high degree of autonomy within the community-institution setting” (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024, p. 122).²⁸

4.2.4 Research Methods

The research employed an advanced mixed methods approach within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed, Indigenous centred co-design. Mixed methods research is an open and generative approach that seeks a richer, deeper and better understanding of important facets of the social world and which lends itself to dialogue about “multiple ways of making sense of the social world” and “multiple standpoints on what is important” (Greene, 2007, p. 20). The mixed methods approach has thus become popular due to its ability to address research questions comprehensively (Ivankova, 2015, pp. 3–4) and which call for “real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences” (p. 9).

Mixed methods research may be broadly defined as research in which the investigator “collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study” (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 4). The mixed methods approach reaches beyond the traditional quantitative-qualitative divide, capitalising on the fact that “qualitative and quantitative research approaches are complementary” (Ivankova, 2015, p. 4) and may be intentionally integrated to draw on the strengths of each method (p. 9). Meaningful integration of quantitative and qualitative methods can generate conclusions about the research problem that are “more credible and persuasive” (Ivankova, 2015, p. 5) and can also provide a “fuller picture of the complexities of problems” and the “design, implementation, and determination of the effectiveness of solutions” (Mertens, 2016, p. 107). Mixed methods are thus useful for developing a more complete understanding of a problem and are suited to addressing research problems where “using one data set may be insufficient to answer the research questions” (Ivankova, 2015, p. 11). Mixed methods approaches are useful also for engaging with epistemological differences and respecting

²⁷ Protocols and negotiated agreements are important therefore in protecting Indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights (Arts Law Centre of Australia, 2024; Australia Council for the Arts, 2019).

²⁸ See also, Newsome (2016).

multiple ways of knowing (Greene, 2007, p. 27), and where triangulation, complementarity, and development are important (Greene et al., 1989, pp. 258–260).

It has been argued however that the postcoloniality of our power relations should lead us to be “more suspicious of the accepted or the so-called standard or universal methods of research” and that we should interrogate to whom these methods are acceptable (Chilisa, 2005, p. 678). Fortunately, the transformative perspective suggests an orienting framework for mixed methods approaches in which the aim of “creating a more just and democratic society” can permeate the entire research process, from problem to conclusions and use of the results (Creswell et al., 2010, p. 4, referencing Mertens, 2009). Within the transformative paradigm, mixed methods may thus be considered crucial to an understanding of “community members’ realities” and reality as it is experienced in culturally complex communities (Mertens, 2007, p. 224). In the research, a mixed methods approach was therefore essential to developing an informed understanding of First Nations priorities and requirements in engaging with the tertiary music education system.²⁹

Mixed methods are preferred when working towards social justice because they allow for qualitative dialogue throughout the research cycle as well as collection of quantitative data as appropriate (Mertens, 2007, p. 224). Such an approach can open up opportunities for input “by those whose voices have been traditionally excluded” (Mertens, 2007, p. 214) and provide a strategy for addressing the diverse needs of community members (p. 220) and obtaining data that represents a variety of perspectives (p. 215). However, employing a transformative approach in mixed methods research depends also upon the evaluation community being willing to be a part of the change process (Mertens, 2016, p. 107).

The different methods in a mixed methods approach may be integrated in a variety of ways (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 4). Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis can occur either concurrently or sequentially, or by embedding one method within another (Ivankova, 2015, pp. 6–7). In the research a concurrent advanced mixed methods approach was employed in which the different methods were embedded (or “nested”) within an added framework (Creswell, 2013).³⁰ This approach involves integration of methods whereby the researcher combines collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data within a traditional quantitative research design or qualitative research design (Creswell & Clark, 2010, pp. 90–93), and in which a “dataset of secondary priority is embedded within a larger primary

²⁹ See also, Bennett et al. (2015); Habel et al. (2016); Lenette et al. (2019); Smith, et al. (2018); Zacharias & Brett (2018).

³⁰ In the research this comprised the Indigenous-centred co-design framework.

design” (Creswell et al., 2010, p. 6). In the research, the Survey Questionnaire (quantitative and qualitative) and Interview (qualitative) secondary data sets were “embedded” in the Co-design Focus Group Workshop (qualitative) primary data set component. This approach provided a means for incorporating a diversity of First Nations perspectives and views in the research and for facilitating a data informed approach whereby the co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops could draw on data from the Survey and Interview components in considering the key research questions and developing the recommendations for the School.³¹

4.2.5 *The co-design methodology*

First Nations peoples are the experts in their own lives and tailored interventions and programs co-designed and co-implemented with First Nations peoples are strongly encouraged. (Raciti et al., 2023, p. 208)

The research employed a bespoke adaptation of the co-design methodology which centred the perspectives and views of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders. The literature review revealed a large body of scholarly literature on co-design,³² and a significant quantity on co-design in Australian First Nations contexts.³³ However, there is a lack of scholarly literature on co-design research addressing First Nations underrepresentation, exclusion, and inequities in the Australian tertiary music education system. The Indigenous-centred co-design methodology developed for the research responds to this gap.

Co-design is a collaborative participatory methodology which is based in design principles (Blomkamp, 2018; Bradwell & Marr, 2008; Burkett, 2012),³⁴ and which involves the “active engagement of research participants, end-users of services, and beneficiaries of intended programs in designing, implementing and evaluating services and products” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 8).³⁵ As such, co-design may be best defined as a “process” rather than an event (NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS], 2017, p. 1; Schwab, 2021, pp. 8, 15,

³¹ This aimed to facilitate a transformative approach whereby diverse participants would have a voice in progressing the change process within the institution (See Cresswell, 2009, p. 215).

³² Blomkamp (2018); Bradwell & Marr (2008); Bridge (2012); Burkett (2012); Design Council (2024); Dorst (2010); McDougall (2012); NCOSS (2017); Government of Western Australia (2024); Sanders & Stappers (2008); Sanders & Westerland (2011); Sutton-Long et al. (2016); Terrey (2014); Victorian Council of Social Service (2015).

³³ Abbott et al. (2015); National Indigenous Australians Agency (2021); Dillon (2021); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Fono et al. (2024); Healing Foundation (2017, 2020); New South Wales Government (n.d.); Schwab (2021); Shay & Sarra (2023); Shay et al. (2023); TACSI (n.d.); Queensland Government (2018); WACOSS (2016).

³⁴ These comprise “process, principles, and practical tools” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 731).

³⁵ This is also known as generative design, co-creation, participatory design or co-operative design (NCOSS, 2017, p. 1), and has similarities also with community engagement, co-production, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and human centred design (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 735).

22),³⁶ one which deliberately engages users of the system, deliverers of services and other experts to “actively understand, explore and ultimately change a system together” (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, pp. 23, 35).

“Unless you have user input you cannot design a good service” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 8). Co-design involves design of services together with stakeholders using a structured approach that provides an opportunity for stakeholders to have a “meaningful and significant influence” over the planned service (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 1).³⁷ Co-design thus begins with the people and their “experiences, perspectives, values, challenges and understandings” (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 3). A common co-design model is the “Double Diamond” developed by the UK Design Council, which provides a visual representation of the design and innovation process, comprising iterative stages of divergence (going wide) and convergence (focussing in) (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732). This encompasses “discovery” (gaining insight into the problem), “defining” (the challenge), “developing” (co-designing potential solutions), and “delivering” (testing and determining solutions) (Design Council, 2024). In the research, the “Double Diamond” model provided an initial starting point in developing the bespoke approach to co-design.

A distinction can be made between “co-design”, “co-production” and “co-creation”, with co-design attempting to define both the problem and the solution, co-production attempting to implement the proposed solution, and co-creation combining both processes (McDougall, 2012).³⁸ Other definitions focus on the different phases of the design process, in which co-design is concerned with the whole design process and the involvement of those who will use it or deliver it, while co-creation is mainly concerned with the development phase and the creation of new solutions, and co-production is associated with the delivery phase (Burkett, 2012, p. 4; NCOSS, 2017, p. 1). It is not unusual however for the terms co-design and co-production to be used interchangeably, and the meanings ascribed to co-design may be circumstance specific and therefore require definitional clarity for each individual project on a case-by-case basis (Western Australian Council of Social Service [WACOSS], 2016, p. 10).³⁹ Co-design, co-production and co-creation processes may also overlap

³⁶ This may be characterised in simple terms as “a plan or method for doing something” which occurs “when more than one person is involved in making something happen” (McDougal, 2012).

³⁷ For example, in co-design the recipients of a program or service may work in partnership with the service delivery agency to “tailor the program or service” to the needs of recipients (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 8).

³⁸ The term “co-creation” is sometimes also used to encompass the entire process of design and production (McDougall, 2012).

³⁹ There is a tendency towards “polysemy” in co-design in which different actors have different interpretations of its meaning (Dillon, 2021, p. 23).

(McDougall, 2012) with projects often using a mixture or combination of collaborative design approaches (WACOSS, 2016, p. 10). However, while the term co-creation may be used to refer to “any act of collective creativity”, the term co-design can be used to refer to “collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process” (Sanders & Stappers, 2008, p. 53), consistent with the conception of co-design in the research.

Distinguishing features of co-design

Co-design has become a pervasive methodology employed across the globe in diverse contexts (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 35; Schwab, 2021, p. 8). There is no one definition of co-design, however the general principles that underpin the various definitions of co-design comprise the active involvement of and in-depth participation of a comprehensive range of end users and stakeholders in partnership and design-led decision-making processes that lead to productive innovation and improved outcomes (WACOSS, 2016, pp. 3–5, 8).⁴⁰ A key feature that distinguishes co-design from other participatory or collaborative approaches is that co-design places end-users “at the very heart of the design of a public service” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 18).⁴¹ Most approaches build on the notion of a cooperative process whereby both expertise and lived experience are recognised and respected, and where “the products of the process are seen to be of greater value than that of their constituent parts” (Schwab, 2021, p. 8).

Co-design may be broadly defined as a “design led process” involving creative and participatory principles and the use of tools that engage different kinds of people and knowledge in problem solving (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 731; Schwab, 2021, p. 8). Co-design may thus be understood as a collaborative and developmental process based on “designing with people, not merely for people” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 17). As such co-design is a design principle or planning process which is “jointly developed and is collaborative in nature” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 8).⁴² Co-design thereby “shifts power to the process” and creates a framework that defines and maintains “the necessary balance of the rights and freedoms between participants”, and involves exchange of information and expertise “relating not only to the subject of the research but to the research process itself” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 17).

⁴⁰ Co-design cannot be defined however by “magic formulas, rules and strict dogmas but mostly by the commitment to core principles of participation in design” (CO-CREATE, 2019, 21).

⁴¹ This means that “the voices of users are heard and given a position of influence over the development and application of the service” (Bradwell & Marr, 2016, p. 18).

⁴² Simply opening up possibilities for choice and participation will not necessarily lead however to more effective services if this just means more “one-size-fits-all” services to choose from (Burkett, 2012, p. 8).

Co-design is thus strongly process oriented, emphasising an in-depth, wide input approach in the form of negotiation and co-creation involving all critical stakeholders, and particularly those who are likely to be impacted by or to benefit from the process and/or outcome (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732; NCOSS, 2017, p. 2). This differs from approaches focussed principally on engagement, consultation, coordination, or delivery, or which merely offer an opportunity for feedback after a policy or plan has already been formulated or put in place (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732, referencing Al-Kodmany, 2001, p. 118; Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 18; Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 35). Co-design thus goes beyond traditional forms of “consultation” and is concerned with gaining a perspective from the point of view of users and giving the community “a legitimate role” in development and design (Bridge, 2012, p. 169). As such, co-design is commonly understood as a more “effective, democratic, and innovative” alternative to conventional participatory approaches such as community engagement and public participation (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 731). At its best, co-design is about “respectful and collaborative partnerships working with people and communities for transformation” (Miller et al., 2025, p. 2), which in the First Nations context means adhering to cultural protocols (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 17) and conducting research that is meaningful and engenders “empowerment and ownership” (p. 8).

Tailored interventions and programs co-designed and co-implemented with First Nations peoples are recommended (Raciti et al., 2023). Co-design holds great promise for policy development in providing a novel means for “creatively engaging stakeholders to find solutions to complex problems” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 739),⁴³ and is concerned with finding solutions and developing practical innovations that open up possibilities and make improvements to enhance people’s lives (Burkett, 2012, p. 3).⁴⁴ Importantly, this focusses on the “desired end” as the starting point, which means beginning with aspirations rather than simply looking at what is wrong with the current service (Burkett, 2012, p. 6; NCOSS, 2017, p. 2).⁴⁵ The most significant distinguishing feature of co-design is its emphasis on a transparent in-depth collaborative approach, and a developmental process that involves input from a range of parties inclusive of diverse perspectives and experience, and a breadth of input and multiplicity of viewpoints (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 17; Dillon, 2021, pp. 23–24;

⁴³ Six guiding principles for action are proposed: purpose driven, recognising complexity, self-determination, equalising power, inclusive collaboration, and adaptive learning (Blomkamp, 2021).

⁴⁴ However, any challenge may have “multiple, varied, opportunities and solutions” (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 18).

⁴⁵ It is important to also strike a realistic balance between “what’s desirable, what’s possible, and what’s viable (Bridge, 2012, p. 170).

Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 33). In the research, the co-design process therefore sought to encompass a breadth and diversity of views and perspectives inclusive of multiple voices internal and external to the School of Music, and incorporating local and community, industry, and professional stakeholder input.⁴⁶

By adopting a strategic approach to innovation, institutions and organisations have an opportunity to review and overhaul how they do business to focus on delivering optimal outcomes, which may include review of existing services and development of new services and programs (WACOSS, 2016, pp. 12–13).⁴⁷ However, co-design provides the best opportunity for transformational change when the process considers ways to deliver services at a “whole of system” level and where numerous agencies, communities and individuals are involved in developing innovative solutions (WACOSS, 2016, p. 12).⁴⁸ This aligns with a systems level approach to change in higher education contexts, one which is informed by the students it is meant to support, and where there is an emphasis on an inclusive approach, considering how each part of the system either contributes to or prevents social inclusion and social mobility (Zacharias & Brett, 2019, p. 16). This is consistent with the Behrendt Review “whole-of-university” recommendation (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. xix), which proposes a collaborative approach to improving the lives of First Nations people through higher education (p. 3).

Co-design principles, processes, and tools

Co-design involves an in-depth form of collaboration comprising three key components: Principles, Processes, and Practical Tools (Blomkamp, 2018, pp. 732–734).

Principles

A distinguishing feature of co-design is its philosophical roots in participatory design and in the democratic concept of empowering people who are affected by a policy issue to actively contribute to developing a solution to it (Blomkamp, 2018, pp. 732; Guijt & Mayne, 2019, pp. 1–2). In co-design people are regarded as inherently creative and experts in their own lives and the outcomes of research should thus be designed together with those with “relevant lived experience” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732; also, NCOSS, 2017, pp. 2–3). Fundamental to co-design is therefore recognition of various forms of expertise (Schwab,

⁴⁶ This sought to also build meaningful connections (Blomkamp, 2019, p. 736; Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 13) and involve local people, as a way of bringing benefits to all collaborating parties (Abott et al., 2015, p. 2).

⁴⁷ See also, NCOSS (2017, p. 2).

⁴⁸ Co-design can also include multiple methods delivered at different levels within a system and to multiple stakeholder groups (Government of Western Australia, 2024, pp. 9–10; WACOSS, 2016, pp. 11–12).

2021, p. 10) in which lived experience can be incorporated through an “additive” approach, and where local knowledge and experiential expertise are valued and brought together with more formal evidence (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733, referencing Durose & Richardson, 2016, p. 41).⁴⁹

A core principle of co-design is that it is inclusive and involves critical stakeholders, from experts to end-users, in a generative process where participants are respected as equal partners and who share their expertise in the design of services or products (NCOSS, 2017, pp. 1, 3). As such co-design challenges the privilege of an established status quo, replacing the traditional “expert mindset” with a “participatory mindset” in which citizens are empowered to actively participate as equals in research and in determining decisions that affect them (Blomkamp, 2018, pp. 732–733; WACOSS, 2016, p. 9).⁵⁰ Co-design may thus be understood as a way of thinking, a mindset, or a philosophy, rather than a specific tool or method (Schwab, 2021, p. 9; Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 23; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 5).⁵¹

Attributes of the co-design mindset include having a “beginners” mind; being curious, open minded, willing to learn, non-judgmental, mindful, creative, and accepting; having empathy, mental discipline, situational awareness and the ability to embrace ambiguity; being able to compromise and change perspective and position; and having optimism, humility, the capacity to learn from failure, and the ability to see whole connected systems (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, pp. 32–33, 37; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 13).) Active listening is highlighted as also playing an important role in productive co-design (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, pp. 9, 23, 26, 31, 39). However, above all, co-design requires a commitment “to create change” (NCOSS, 2017, p. 2).

Processes

The co-design process is human-centred, action oriented, iterative, non-linear, and ongoing in nature, and has a clear orientation towards innovation and practical real-world solutions and outcomes (Blomkamp, 2017, p. 732; Burkett, 2012, p. 6; NCOSS, 2017, p. 2; WACOSS, 2016, pp. 6–9). This is an inherently collaborative process that draws on a variety of perspectives, people, experts, disciplines, and sectors to develop solutions to complex

⁴⁹ This can produce more ethical, moral, legitimate and robust forms of evidence (Shay et al., 2023, p. 83).

⁵⁰ This must ensure that the voice of “experts” is not privileged over the lived experience of stakeholders (WACOSS, 2017, p. 45).

⁵¹ It is important to note however that co-design may fail if one of the parties lacks the willingness or ability to “think like a designer” (McDougall, 2012).

problems, and in complex contexts (Burkett, 2012, p. 6; NCOSS, 2017, pp. 2–3; Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 6). The process is thus inclusive, respectful, participative, iterative and outcomes focussed (NCOSS, 2017, p. 3).

In co-design there are no set procedures or checklists, and the processes may therefore be as variable as the problems it aims to address, reflecting the issues and needs of the people it involves (NCOSS, 2017, p. 2). Hence, there is no step-by-step process or how-to-methodology for effective co-design, but rather, many options in terms of interaction, levels of change, and models of participation, meaning that no two co-design projects will ever look the same (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 36; CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a; NCOSS, 2017, p. 2; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 13). An effective strategy however is one that is “fit for purpose”; has clarity of purpose; is appropriate and realistic given the issue, time frame, and resources available; is ethical and likely to be reliable and useful; and will provide the insights needed (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 8).⁵² As in the research, co-design should thus be customised to the individual project and will vary depending on the local context, the problem it is seeking to solve, social factors, and the people and organisations involved (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 13).

What needs to be remembered is that co-design “is a process, not just a workshop” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 24). A range of methods may be used, but the planning process should ensure that co-design is genuine and that the methods are “fit for purpose and culturally safe” (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 8). This needs to consider the means for involving stakeholders (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738) and be tailored to enable meaningful participation (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738, referencing M. Steen et al., 2011, p. 59). It is the responsibility of the researcher therefore to provide an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to participate, and to be flexible in tailoring activities and methods to the needs of participants (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 31; Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 8).

Inherent to co-design is design thinking, which may be summed up as an “iterative, human-centred, and action-oriented process” oriented towards innovation (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732). In design thinking abductive reasoning is emphasised as a way of reframing a situation or creating a novel standpoint from which a problematic situation can be tackled, and which can make a problem more amenable to a solution (Dorst, 2010, p. 131; Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 20).

⁵² Studies suggest that the effectiveness of co-design depends on the process, including “which users are involved and how their involvement is facilitated” (Trischler et al., 2019, p. 1596).

The overarching process comprises iterative phases beginning with “discovery” (or inspiration), leading to “design” (or ideation), followed by “delivery” (or implementation) (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 16). In practice however the process is not linear or sequential but is one in which solutions are co-created continuously and negotiated together (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 16).⁵³ This involves “ideating through moments of inspiration *with* people, constructing knowledge through collaborative visioning, and working through multiple perspectives to create a powerful solution” (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 16).

Practical tools

The literature review found there were a range of participatory methods that could be employed in co-design. These include public meetings, forums, workshops, ideas groups, focus groups, online forums, fact sheets, surveys, interviews, expert panels, and advisory committees (Bridge, 2012; Dreise & Mazurski, 2018; Government of Western Australia, 2024; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015; WACOSS, 2017). In co-design it is not sufficient however to simply provide opportunities for participation, it is necessary to also ensure that stakeholders have access to the information, skills, capacities, and support they need in order to participate effectively, and to design with implementation and outcomes in mind (Burkett, 2012, p. 8; WACOSS, 2017, pp. 47–48).

A characteristic of co-design is the use of practical tools to enable participation, and to “access, generate, and test experiences and ideas” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733).⁵⁴ These aim to make ideas, experiences and possibilities “visible and tangible” using a variety of media, graphic, kinaesthetic, and experiential methods, which can help make complex systems accessible to a range of people who may see the system in different ways (Burkett, 2016, p. 6). However, different techniques and tools work for different groups and different facets may appeal to different users and contexts (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 26).

Co-design begins with people, their “experiences, perspectives, values, challenges, and understandings” (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, pp. 3), therefore methods and tools must be “carefully selected and appropriately applied to each project” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738, referencing M. Steen et al., 2011, p. 59). Commonly used tools include those that reframe problems; help participants understand more about the problem; connect with participants empathy and curiosity; generate a large number of diverse ideas; focus on

⁵³ Co-design is thus cyclical and may include reassessment or change during the process (NCOSS, 2017, p. 2).

⁵⁴ Some tools are drawn from commercial design disciplines, while others are drawn from community engagement and systems thinking methodologies (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733).

personal learning and mindful reflection; give everyone a voice in problem resolution; and help thinking from the perspective of opportunity (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 27). Skilled facilitation is also an essential element, which involves selecting appropriate tools to enable people to “engage and communicate with each other” and to feel comfortable and inspired enough to “envision their own and others’ ideas” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733).

A wide variety of specialised tools and techniques can be employed, which may reveal knowledge that is “non-verbal, holistic, non-linear, emotional or intuitive” and which might not be uncovered by other methods (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733).⁵⁵ These can include brainstorming, story sharing,⁵⁶ yarning and yarning circles,⁵⁷ group discussion, asking questions, assumption busting, reframing problems, individual and group reflection, collaborative ideation, problem and situation mapping, list making, visual representations, identification of themes and patterns, comparison analysis, prioritisation, shared decision making, consensus-seeking, and prototyping.⁵⁸ Prototyping tests an idea by creating an early “sample, model or scenario” which can then be used to imagine “alternative futures” (Blomkamp, 2018, pp. 733–734).

Critiques of co-design

Some have observed that there is so little common understanding or agreement about what co-design means that the term risks becoming a meaningless “buzzword” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 730).⁵⁹ Definitional clarity is thus required, which should include the key components of co-design, without which an approach cannot justifiably be called co-design (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 739).⁶⁰ Notably, there is also a lack of empirical research investigating the impacts of involving stakeholders in the design and delivery of public policy and services,⁶¹ including in addressing questions of “who participates” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 736)

⁵⁵ Blomkamp (2018) identifies three main co-design techniques, “telling, enacting, and making” (p. 733, referencing Sanders, 2014).

⁵⁶ Stories and narratives constitute culturally relevant and contextual sources of evidence (Smith et al., 2017, pp. 2–8).

⁵⁷ Yarning is an Indigenous cultural form of conversation which establishes relationality and determines accountability (Fredericks et al., 2011, p. 7), and which can be used in participatory action research (p. 11) as a valued process for sharing knowledge (Dreise, 2018, p. 23).

⁵⁸ Blomkamp (2018); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Fono et al. (2024); Government of Western Australia (2024); New South Wales Government (n.d.); Sanders & Westerland (2011); Schwab (2021); Sutton-Long et al. (2016); Victorian Council of Social Service (2015); WACOSS (2017).

⁵⁹ See also, Body (2018); Shay & Sarra (2023); Steen et al. (2011); Victorian Council of Social Service (2015).

⁶⁰ This must distinguish between related but not identical concepts (Blomkamp, 2018, pp. 735, 739), and value “local knowledges”, see “everyone as experts in their own lives”, and offer spaces for people to “tap into their creativity, and work constructively across diversity” (Blomkamp, 2024).

⁶¹ It is also not always clear how co-design contributes to a service design project (Steen et al., 2011, p. 53), or how learnings from service design can be transferred to policy design (Forn et al., 2024, p. 3).

and “configurations of power” (p. 736).⁶² It has been observed too that there is not a lot of evidence about “what effective co-design looks like in Indigenous settings” and how it works in practice “without reinforcing power imbalances” (Shay & Sarra, 2023). Further research is thus needed to understand who is engaged or excluded through existing practices, and to examine the political and social implications of participation, including any negative effects (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 736; referencing Reich et al., 1996; Donetto et al., 2015, p. 243). Gaps have also been highlighted in tracking outcomes and impacts of involving users in the design and delivery of services, and a lack of evidence has been observed about whether “participation by *more* people or *deeper* participation by a *few* key people is more effective” (Burkett, 2012, p. 5).

A common complaint and potent critique of the co-design methodology by First Nations spokespeople, both in Australia and more broadly, is that governments do not meet communities on a level playing field but instead use the “cover of co-design” as a rubber stamp for decisions that have already been made (Bridge, 2012, pp. 168–169; Donaldson, 2019).⁶³ It is claimed too that the term co-design has been “hijacked” and tagged on to all sorts of pre-existing concepts to “avoid change rather than deliver it”, the problem being the lack of change in the engagement process (McDougall, 2012). Co-design by its very definition means “there are two people at the table” and is therefore likely to fail because communities are not fully in control of their own affairs (The Australia and New Zealand School of Government, 2019, citing Dr Karen Diver). This has highlighted the need for First Nations people to be able to “set their own priorities” (Donalson, 2019, quoting Langton). However, even so-called “true co-design” may still constitute an unacceptable level of intrusion into community affairs (Donaldson, 2019).

Another strong critique of co-design is that the dominant problem-solving and action-oriented models of design are intrinsically imbued with monocultural (Eurocentric) and neoliberal values (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 732, referencing Akama, 2017), in which a legacy of Eurocentric origins risks perpetuating acts of colonialism, thereby inadvertently displacing Indigenous practices, knowledges and world views (Akama et al., 2019, p. 59). Indeed, the co-design process itself may be subject to neoliberal forces where participants are given a false sense of agency, and risk manipulation through coercion into “legitimising the political agendas of elites” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738, referencing Kaethler et al., 2017 and Palmås &

⁶² See also, Dillon (2021); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Shay et al. (2023).

⁶³ It is argued also that engagement characterised by predetermined outcomes “fails the shared decision-making test” (Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 21). See also, CollaboratoryPodcast (2022a).

von Busch, 2015). A similar critique points to risks of co-option and “responsibilising” of citizens in service to efficiency and “governing at a distance” (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738, referencing Durose & Richardson, 2016).

Co-design is predominantly found at the level of policy implementation (products, services, projects and programs) but is lacking at the level of policy making (Fono, 2024, p. 3), suggesting the need for a deeper contextual understanding of policy problems and an alignment between “policy aims, strategies and tools to redress problems” (p. 2). Attention has also been drawn to the “dark side” of co-creation and co-production, challenging the normative tendency towards optimism, which may mask a number of pitfalls and inadvertently lead to a lack of clear responsibility, thereby posing a potential threat to democratic ideals, and reinforcing inequalities (T. Steen et al., 2018, pp. 285–290).

Further research and a more critical and nuanced analysis of participation are therefore needed to understand what “*co-design for policy*” entails in practice, and whether, and how it can achieve benefits for those it seeks to serve (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738–739; T. Steen et al., 2018, p. 291). What is critical in Indigenous research is ensuring that research reflects the interests and needs of First Nations people; is culturally appropriate; utilises appropriate research methods; and employs practices that “fully acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing and equality in research partnerships” (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1720). I argue that the research project offers a framework for achieving this.

Limitations of co-design

Co-design provides a flexible participatory methodology which has spread far and wide, influencing design in an almost endless variety of contexts (Schwab, 2021, p. 8). However, despite how pervasive co-design has become, there are contexts in which co-design may not be appropriate (Schwab, 2021, p. 8). These include where an outcome and/or solution has already been defined; where the objectives are in conflict with what consumers see as important; where a project is time-critical; where the service is unable to obtain the lived experience expertise that is relevant to the project; when there is no commitment to implementing and sustaining co-designed improvements; and when there is no “buy in” from senior leadership (Schwab, 2021, pp. 8–9, referencing Agency for Clinical Innovation, 2019, p. 7). There is also the possibility of a “disjuncture between top-down strategic imperatives and people-centred initiatives”, where the commitment to a participatory approach requires “a real willingness on the part of those who have power to share it” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 37). This supports the argument made by Anishinaabe American First Nations tribal leader Dr

Karen Diver that “co-design, co-management only works when the other side follows through”, and where co-ordination “gives way to autonomy” and the “freedom to solve problems our own way”, recognising that “the solutions we design are the ones that work” (The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), 2019).

Scaling of co-design solutions to system-wide responses has also been identified as a potential limitation of co-design (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737). Co-design must be “firmly rooted in its location, time and people” so that it can develop organically through deep interactions and engagement over time (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737, referencing Akama & Prendiville, 2016, p. 37). It is therefore better suited to individual programs, projects or services (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737, referencing Tonurist et al., 2015, p. 20). Hence, in “zooming out” to system wide challenges, it is important to recognise the need for variation (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 45).

Co-designing in First Nations contexts

Indigenous agency and diverse voices are critical in unpacking this complex web between policy/practice/research. (Shay et al., 2023, p. 82)

The literature review revealed a significant body of scholarly literature on co-design in First Nations contexts.⁶⁴ What is known is that co-design does not arrive on “neutral ground” and underlying the processes of co-design in First Nations contexts are practical, cultural and political tensions arising from the colonial history legacy (Schwab, 2021, p. 14). Co-design is recognised however as playing a vital role in First Nations contexts, reminding service providers that “they should do things *with* and not *to* Aboriginal communities” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 5).

Sources on co-design in a range of different First Nations contexts provide insights into key efficacy factors. Participatory research and co-design in Aboriginal affairs and public policy more broadly is regarded as important, as is the need for research relationships with First Nations people to be reset so that research methods respect Indigenous knowledge systems and result in culturally valid results (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 9, referencing Healing Foundation, 2017). Indigenous agency and inclusion of diverse voices are critical (Shay et al., 2023). Co-design should be seen as a process leading to community well-being and empowerment and needs to be underpinned by data (both statistical and narrative) which

⁶⁴ Abbott et al. (2015); National Indigenous Australians Agency (2021); Dillon (2021); Dreise & Mazurski (2018); Fono et al. (2024); Healing Foundation (2017, 2020); New South Wales Government (n.d.); Schwab (2021); Shay & Sarra (2023); Shay et al. (2023); TACSI (n.d.); Queensland Government (2018); WACOSS (2016).

can be “truth tested by communities through data sovereignty” (NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances, 2018, p. 6). Ideally, First Nations social research should be co-designed and co-produced and comprise “a convergence of lived and studied experience” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 5).

From the perspective of First Nations Peoples, co-design is “action over words”, a “mechanism for building a foundation of trust”, and a “commitment to partnership and collaboration” (Schwab, 2021, p. 9).⁶⁵ Principles which can support co-design with First Nations people include being clear about purpose and desired outcomes; not taking key concepts for granted⁶⁶; being aware of the “shadow of colonialism”⁶⁷; building an equal partnership; operating transparently to build knowledge and trust; respecting and recognising various forms of expertise; providing time and remaining flexible; committing to inclusivity; recognising differing Aboriginal interests, experiences and local histories; investing in capacity development; and evaluating and adapting (Schwab, 2021, pp. 9–10). Participatory work in First Nations contexts must also be “trauma informed” (Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 15; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015, p. 9). The research confirmed the critical importance of each of these principles.

Adoption of an “emancipatory research perspective” can help designers develop research that is accountable and gives voice to the communities they are serving (Noel, 2016, p. 5).⁶⁸ Co-design in Aboriginal community-based participatory research (CBPR) contexts requires the close and ongoing involvement of communities in designing and carrying out evaluation and research work that is meaningful, and which should engender “respect, empowerment and ownership” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 8).⁶⁹ In CBPR, co-design needs to invest in mutual capacity building among participants⁷⁰; be based in an understanding of community context, history, key players, politics, needs and aspirations; be “bottom up, not top down”; allow input from providers as well as end users; provide sufficient time and

⁶⁵ This requires a philosophical and practical shift away from “practice as usual” for both parties, and a great deal of trust in the initial stages (Schwab, 2021, p. 9).

⁶⁶ This includes overcoming prejudices and misconceptions (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a).

⁶⁷ This understands that co-design may be seen as originating in the “Western world” and as simply a continuation of colonialism where Aboriginal knowledge, practices and world views are “acknowledged and then ignored” (Schwab, 2021, p. 9).

⁶⁸ The epistemological assumption is that there is an interactive link between researcher and participants, and knowledge is historically and socially situated, therefore in emancipatory research, the voice of the research collaborator should be heard despite the researcher’s privilege (Noel, 2016, p. 4).

⁶⁹ It is recognised too that collaborative teams involving both academic and Indigenous community knowledge holders can facilitate First Nations control in research (Putt, 2013, p. 5).

⁷⁰ This needs to incorporate an understanding of what co-design is, how it works, and what is expected of participants in the research process (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28).

preparation; and ensure that everyone involved knows their role (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28).

Co-design and participatory research in First Nations community contexts are dynamic and ongoing processes which therefore need to incorporate ongoing “joint reflection and reciprocal learning” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28.) Potentially significant factors in collaborative design that can also contribute to efficacy in shaping broader-based policy outcomes, include inclusivity and representativeness of participants, demographic legitimacy, and the deliberativeness of the process (Dillon, 2021, p. 12). Research also identifies First Nations leadership, respect, a culturally grounded approach, benefit to First Nations communities, inclusive partnerships, and evidence-based-decision making (Butler et al., 2022, p. 1).

The literature on co-design and collaborative governance in Indigenous policy contexts provides examples of a variety of initiatives applied in localised settings, confirming multiple opportunities for co-design and other participatory and governance initiatives to emerge and create public value (Dillon, 2021, p. 15). Illustrative examples include: *OCHRE LDM Evaluation Stage 2: Evaluation Blueprint* (Howard-Wagner, 2025); *Indigenous Voice Co-design Process Final Report to the Australian Government* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021)⁷¹; *Weaving Knowledges* (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018); *OCHRE evaluation plan* (Katz et al., 2016); *Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children* (Healing Foundation and Emerging Minds, 2020); *Their Futures Matter* (New South Wales Government, 2019); *Supporting Families Changing Futures* (Queensland Government, 2018); The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (n.d.); *One Sydney, Many People* (University of Sydney, 2020).⁷²

4.3 PART 2 – Methodology and methods in the research

The sector must address how we engage researchers and institutions to be more ethical and construct projects with co-design, leadership and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 3)

⁷¹ It has been argued that several features of the Indigenous Voice co-design process do not meet the usually accepted benchmarks for participatory collaboration or co-design (Dillon, 2021, pp. 21–23).

⁷² See also, Fono et al. (2024) which describes a protocol for co-designing government health policy together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

4.3.1 *Selecting co-design*

The research was based in a bespoke Indigenous-centred co-design methodology adapted to the circumstances and community-institution contexts of the ANU School of Music.⁷³ As such the methodology constitutes an innovative approach to improving outcomes for First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

Selection of co-design as the research methodology was informed by my previous research,⁷⁴ the literature review, and discussions with my PhD supervisors about my concern to ensure that the research would lead to tangible, on-the-ground benefits for First Nations people and communities, both in the short and longer terms. Co-design was identified as providing a suitable approach for achieving this, and a mutual decision was made together with then Director of the School of Music, Professor Kim Cunio and Professor Sainsbury to undertake the research as a co-design project at and for the ANU School of Music.

The higher education and institutional contexts of the research demanded a project based in the “co-design, leadership and self-determination” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (NATSIHEC, 2023, p. 3). Co-design was selected as a suitable participatory methodology due to its inherent inclusivity, flexibility and adaptability, its track record in a range of different Australian First Nations contexts, and its capacity to facilitate Indigenous self-determination by centring the participation of First Nations people in the research.⁷⁵ Importantly, co-design provided a means for bringing together disparate and differentially positioned voices in the complex overlapping community-institution contexts of the research, and for facilitating a dialogic and collaborative approach to integration of multiple diverse views and perspectives in developing the recommendations for the ANU School of Music. Most importantly however, it provided a means for ensuring that the views and perspectives of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders would go to the heart of the research.

4.3.2 *Implementing the co-design methodology*

The bureaucracy needs to be changed to enable co-design of all programs and policies that impact on our people, and we need a much better integrated approach to that. (Guest, 2019, speaker Pat Turner AM)

⁷³ The research was tailored to the circumstances and context at the time of the research (2022–2025).

⁷⁴ This research was conducted during my tenure at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide. See Newsome (1999, 2008, 2016).

⁷⁵ Co-design is positioned at the higher end of the empowerment spectrum (WACOSS, 2016, pp. 5–6).

In the research co-design was conceived as a wholistic process encompassing all phases and components of the research,⁷⁶ and which is defined as:

A bespoke adaptation of the co-design methodology which privileges the voices of experientially informed First Nations people, inclusive of a diversity of views and perspectives, in the co-creation of recommendations to enhance benefits and improve outcomes for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in an Australian tertiary music education institution. (Newsome, 2022)

The research responded to the call for a more integrated approach to co-design of policies and programs impacting on First Nations people (Guest, 2019, speaker Pat Turner AM). The main methodological challenge was to develop an approach that would address the key research questions, and the aims and goals of the research, in the specific context of the research. There were critical concerns related to the need to address presumptions of a level playing field and equality in democratic decision making in co-design, given the differently situated and unequally positioned stakeholder collaborators in the overlapping-intersecting community-institution contexts of the research.⁷⁷ The principal challenge was to facilitate Indigenous self-determination, contribution, control, and ownership in the research, and to respond to the following considerations:

1. The call by First Nations people for self-determination and Indigenous-led “ground-up” research addressing First Nations priorities, requirements and needs.⁷⁸
2. The need for an inclusive and collaborative approach that could involve a diverse range of stakeholders from both within and external to the ANU School of Music.
3. The need to ensure that the views and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations stakeholder participants would go to the heart of the research and have primacy in determining the recommendations for the School of Music.⁷⁹
4. The need to address core ethical issues in ensuring Indigenous control and ownership throughout the research, including with respect to the data, results, and findings of the research.

⁷⁶ This is consistent with the broad definition of co-design as a collaborative, participatory methodology incorporating First Nations participation and decision making in the processes of the research (Blomkamp, 2018; Bradwell & Marr, 2008; Burkett, 2012).

⁷⁷ The central questions were, whose interests would be served and who would be in control?

⁷⁸ Department of Education (2024, pp. 237, 246, 284).

⁷⁹ In the research experientially informed stakeholder participants encompassed First Nations people with experience engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system (i.e. as students, staff, visiting musicians/artists/educators, collaborators, Elders, and community members).

5. The need to address all these considerations in the context of a PhD project initiated and implemented by myself, as a non-Indigenous person.

The primary aims were to facilitate Indigenous self-determination by privileging First Nations perspectives and views, supporting an inclusive and collaborative research process, observing strict ethical protocols and “best practice” in Indigenous research, and ensuring that my role and conduct in the research would not eclipse or subsume the central role and/or contribution of First Nations participants. In seeking to address these aims, the co-design approach encompassed the following features:

- Utilising literature and sources by First Nations scholars wherever possible in developing the design and methodological approach to the research.
- Making provisions for participation by First Nations stakeholders throughout the research.
- Privileging First Nations decision making throughout the research.
- Privileging First Nations voices in the research.
- Including a diversity of First Nations voices in the research.
- Involving both internal and external stakeholders.
- Clearly defining the roles of the participants in the research.⁸⁰
- Collaborating with experientially informed First Nations stakeholders in all key aspects of the research.⁸¹
- Ensuring flexibility and adaptation in the processes and conduct of the research.
- Being proactive in responding to stakeholder and co-researcher rights, perspectives, views, requirements, and needs.
- Adhering to “best practice” protocols and ethics throughout the research.
- Negotiating agreement with First Nations co-research participants to ensure control and ownership of data and protection of cultural and intellectual property rights.⁸²

⁸⁰ This included defining my own role, which necessarily departed from the traditional role of the PhD candidate as Principal Researcher.

⁸¹ This included collaboration with Professor Sainsbury (ANU School of Music Indigenous Convenor), and members of the PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group, the School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group.

⁸² This was incorporated in the *Research Agreement, Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research and Participant Information Sheets*.

The research employed multiple strategies aimed at ensuring the central role and contribution of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholder participants throughout the research. These comprised:

- PhD supervision by Professor Christopher Sainsbury (SoM Indigenous Convenor).
- Engaging and consulting with ANU First Nations leadership, and Elders and First Nations representative groups and individuals.
- Establishing the *PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group*.
- Establishing the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group*.
- Establishing the *Indigenous Co-design Focus Group*.
- Conducting a nationally focussed Survey Questionnaire targeting experientially informed First Nations people.
- Conducting in-depth interviews with experientially informed First Nations people.

I argue that in combination these features and strategies in the research provided a framework for effective co-design in addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

4.3.3 Overview of research design, methodology and methods

The research employed a bespoke Indigenous-centred advanced mixed-methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous-centred co-design.⁸³ The research design aimed to facilitate Indigenous self-determination and ensure the central contribution of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders in all phases and processes of the research.⁸⁴ The advanced mixed methods methodology provided a means for addressing the key research questions, and the aims and goals of the research, from multiple perspectives, inclusive of a breadth, depth and diversity of experientially informed First Nations perspectives and views, and for co-development of the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music by First Nations co-researchers.⁸⁵

⁸³ The co-design methodology is often referred to as the “co-design framework”, which describes the sequence of events and how they will be developed during the co-creation process for solving the issue in question, and the methods used, and materials employed (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 19).

⁸⁴ This included from development of the research proposal to project oversight, design, data collection and interpretation, data ownership and control, and co-development of the recommendations.

⁸⁵ This contributed also to the validity of the results (Bulsara, 2015).

4.3.4 Details of research design, methodology and methods

The Indigenous-centred co-design framework privileged First Nations voices and facilitated input, control, and ownership in the research by First Nations stakeholder participants. As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.6.6), the co-design framework comprised four integrated components, each of which contributed in a different but complementary way to the central positioning of First Nations people in the research and to inclusion of a breadth, depth, and diversity of experientially informed First Nations perspectives and views in the results, findings, and recommendations of the research. The four integrated components comprised:

1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.
2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops.
3. Survey Questionnaire.
4. Interviews.

The co-design components comprised the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, which provided First Nations oversight in the research, and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops, which included co-creation of the Survey Questionnaire and the recommendations to the School of Music.⁸⁶ The data collection process was based in an advanced mixed-methods methodology comprising three integrated methods, the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops, the Survey Questionnaire, and the Interviews.⁸⁷ The research methods were conducted concurrently and contributed both qualitative data (Focus Group Workshops, Survey Questionnaire, Interviews) and quantitative data (Survey Questionnaire). The qualitative data comprised the Survey Questionnaire open-ended opinion responses, the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group summaries of main points of discussions, and the Interview main points thematic summaries. The quantitative data comprised the Survey Questionnaire demographic and closed-ended opinion question responses.

In combination the three component methods contributed to Indigenous self-determination in the research, and to inclusion of a breadth, depth, and diversity of perspectives and views in addressing the key research questions and the research aims and goals. The recommendations for the ANU School of Music were derived from a synthesis of

⁸⁶ The Indigenous Focus Group Workshops constituted the core co-design component.

⁸⁷ This process was informed by Greene (2007), Ivankova (2015), Mertens (2007, 2016), Tashakkori & Creswell (2007); and drew on Creswell (2013), Creswell et al. (2010), Creswell & Plano Clarke (2011).

the data produced through the three methods. This bespoke integrated mixed methods approach offers an innovative response to addressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations people effectively in the Australian tertiary music education system.

The findings of the research are documented in the *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* (Appendix E) and the *Research Results and Recommendations Final Report* (Appendix F).

4.3.5 Details of the research components

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group was established early on in the research and comprised nine First Nations stakeholders with a particular interest in the work of the School of Music, and with a range of relevant experiential expertise and from a diversity of backgrounds and locations.⁸⁸ The members of the Reference Group were Dr Christopher Sainsbury (Chair), Jude Barlow, Tor E Frømyhr (Yuin), Troy Russell, Elinor Archer, Will Kepa, Elizabeth Sheppard, Brenda Gifford, and Rhyan Clapham.⁸⁹

As outlined in Chapter 3 (3.4.7), the Reference Group component provided First Nations oversight, guidance, and support in the research, and contributed to the overall co-design process by acting as a touchstone for the protocols and conduct of the research. The members of the Reference Group contributed to the research by reviewing and confirming key research documents, contributing to discussions on the Thematic Framework working document, and advising on potential participant groups for the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group. Eight of the nine members also contributed to the research data by completing the Survey Questionnaire.

The membership of the Reference Group was determined collaboratively with Professor Sainsbury (SoM Indigenous Convenor), members of the initial PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group, and the then Head of School.⁹⁰ Diversity and gender balance were important considerations in determining membership. Recruitment was via in-person/ social media/email invitation and included provision of the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix I) and *Consent Form* (Appendix J). My role in the Reference Group was essentially that of secretariat, which included liaising with members, organising meetings, and preparing agendas, minutes and other meeting related documents. This included drafting the

⁸⁸ The membership was reduced to eight midway through the research when one member became unable to continue.

⁸⁹ Preferred names were confirmed with each participant

⁹⁰ This drew also on the *Stakeholder Analysis Framework* (Appendix H).

Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* in collaboration with Professor Sainsbury (SoM Indigenous Convenor), the initial PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group, and the then Head of School. These key documents were then reviewed and confirmed by the members of the Reference Group. Meetings were held in person at the ANU School of Music and via Zoom. The Head of School also attended the first meeting of the Reference Group.

The records of the Reference Group meetings comprised audio-visual recordings, meeting minutes, and de-identified main point summaries. Collective provisions for storage and access to the records, and individual options regarding quotation, identification and individual acknowledgement in the outputs of the research were included in the *Consent Form*.⁹¹

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops

The Indigenous Focus Group component contributed to the diversity, breadth, and depth of First Nations views and perspectives in addressing the key research questions and in determining the set of recommendations for the School of Music. The Focus Group membership comprised six First Nations stakeholders with a particular interest in the research question,⁹² and experientially informed perspectives and views on the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.⁹³ The final members of the Focus Group were Alinta Barlow, Rachel (pseudonym), participant (no attribution), participant (no attribution).⁹⁴

The membership of the Focus Group was determined in consultation with Professor Sainsbury (SoM Indigenous Convenor) and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and was drawn principally from my and Professor Sainsbury's combined First Nations networks.⁹⁵ Diversity and gender balance were important considerations. Recruitment was via in-person/ social media/email invitation which included provision of the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix K) and *Consent Form* (Appendix L). Consistency of membership was maintained throughout all four meetings to support continuity in the co-

⁹¹ This supported Indigenous data sovereignty in the research and the need to balance individual and collective rights in collaborative decision making in the co-design process.

⁹² This was inclusive of participants from a range of educational, cultural, and musical backgrounds, and geographic locations.

⁹³ The membership was reduced to four midway through the research when two members was unable to continue.

⁹⁴ Preferred naming protocols were confirmed with each participant.

⁹⁵ These networks were developed during my work at CASM; and for Professor Sainsbury, during his work at Eora College and then through extensive ongoing engagement with First Nations composers, musicians, and educators.

design process.⁹⁶ There were four meetings of the Focus Group held via Zoom, two at the beginning of the data collection phase and two towards the end of the research. My role in the Focus Group component comprised liaising with participants, organising and facilitating meetings, providing background information, preparing agendas, minutes and meeting related documents, providing data summary reports,⁹⁷ and authoring drafts and the final version of the set of recommendations for the School of Music.

Protocols for the conduct of the Focus Group meetings were outlined in the *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document (Appendix B), which was reviewed and confirmed by the participants at the second meeting. The Thematic Framework working document provided a loose starting point for initial discussions, to which the Focus Group participants contributed, and which informed lines of questioning for and analyses of the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components. Four members of the Focus Group also contributed to the research data by completing the Survey Questionnaire.

Contribution by the Focus Group members to developing the recommendations was facilitated through an iterative dialogic process which commenced with the first meeting and was based in consensual decision-making. The statistical and thematic analyses of the Survey and Interview components were conducted by me and then provided to the members of the Focus Group to inform deliberations in determining the recommendations. A draft version of the recommendations was then created by me and provided to the members of the Focus Group for consideration at the final meeting. The final version of the recommendations was confirmed by the members of the Focus Group via email following the final meeting.

Survey Questionnaire

The Survey Questionnaire component extended the reach of the enquiry beyond the Focus Group Workshops and provided scope for contribution to the research by a broader range of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders, thereby adding to the breadth, depth and diversity of First Nations perspectives and views in the research.⁹⁸ The Survey

⁹⁶ In co-design the high level of collaborative participation requires continuity of participants to ensure development of close working relationships (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 17). Members of the Focus Group also had the option of inviting other attendees if they wished, however this did not eventuate.

⁹⁷ Survey Questionnaire and Interview components.

⁹⁸ See *First Nations Music Survey Questionnaire* (Appendix M). The Survey Questionnaire encompassed forty-nine demographic questions; sixty-four closed ended questions addressing four key topic areas (Access to tertiary music education; Teaching and learning; Support for First Nations music and culture; Research projects); and fifteen open-ended questions addressing: values and principles; important priorities; outcomes/expectations; support for achieving goals and dreams; ideal music program; access; teaching and learning programs; First Nations staffing; support for music and culture; research priorities; study experiences/suggested improvements; aspirations and goals; support for achieving aspirations and goals; excellent programs; and additional comments.

Questionnaire was a targeted, nationally focussed one that sought First Nations contribution from two key groups:

1. ANU First Nations staff and students, principally the ANU School of Music.⁹⁹
2. First Nations musicians, composers, songwriters, educators, producers, curators, and culture owners.¹⁰⁰

Recruitment for the Survey Questionnaire was drawn from my and Professor Sainsbury's combined networks together with suggestions from the members of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group.¹⁰¹ Recruitment was initially via in-person/ social media/email and then by formal email invitation, which included provision of the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix N). The *Consent Form* was embedded in the Survey (Appendix O). Quoted participants are Jude Barlow, Mr Grayson Rotumah, Troy Russell, Diat Alferink, Elinor Archer, Rob (pseudonym), Dr Christopher Sainsbury, Gemma Theatre, Corey Theatre, Brooke Rigney, Kiah Kurtzer, Zak, Robert K. Champion, Rhyan Clapham, Mark Munk Ross, Bethany-Rose Marshall, Eleanor, and several Survey participants (not attributed by name).¹⁰²

Development of the Survey was an iterative process which commenced with a working draft developed by me in collaboration with Professor Sainsbury, then amended with suggestions from the Ethics Committee and input from members of the Focus Group. My role in this component comprised creation of multiple drafts of the Survey for review, which was then finalised in collaboration with the members of the Focus Group and my PhD supervisors, and distribution of the Survey and collection and analysis of the responses. The Survey was formatted and distributed using the Qualtrics XM platform and was limited to a response time of seven weeks.¹⁰³

Interviews

The interview component also extended the reach of the enquiry beyond the Focus Group Workshops and comprised semi-structured in-depth interviews with three leading First Nations cultural exponents, music industry, and education professionals, adding to the diversity, breadth, and depth of experientially informed First Nations perspectives and views

⁹⁹ This had the aim of including “on the ground” voices with an experiential understanding of ANU and/or the ANU School of Music.

¹⁰⁰ This targeted experientially informed stakeholders external to ANU and the School of Music with a knowledge and understanding of the Australian tertiary music education system.

¹⁰¹ One member of the School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and one of the members of the Focus Group also referred potential participants.

¹⁰² Preferred naming protocols were confirmed with each participant in the Consent Forms.

¹⁰³ This was due principally to pressures related to the PhD timeline.

in the research. Selection of the interview participants was determined together with Professor Sainsbury, drawing on our combined networks. Recruitment was via in-person/social media/email and then by formal email invitation which included the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix P) and *Consent Form* (Appendix Q). The interview questions were based loosely on lines of questioning co-developed with the members of Focus Group for the Survey Questionnaire and then adapted for each participant.¹⁰⁴ The interviews were conducted in-person (one interview) and via Zoom (two interviews). The interviewees were Uncle Ossie, Joe Geia, and Kaleena Smith.

4.3.6 Details of the data collection and analysis

The data collection phase commenced with the first Co-design Focus Group Workshop.

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops

The Indigenous Focus Group data comprised audio-visual recordings of meetings and meeting minutes and summaries of discussion derived from the recordings. These were drafted by me and then reviewed and confirmed by the members of the Focus Group.

The deliberations of the Focus Group encompassed the first three phases of the UK Design Council Double Diamond four phase model,¹⁰⁵ and were conducted iteratively. The Delivery phase was not included in the research as this was deemed to be beyond the scope of a normal PhD. The Discovery phase comprised developing an understanding of the research project (aims, goals, methods etc.) and initial consideration of the key research questions/problem. The Defining phase comprised further consideration of the key research questions/problem, including drawing on insights from the Survey and Interview data. The Developing phase comprised considering solutions to the key research questions/problem and contributing to co-creation of the recommendations for the School of Music.

Facilitation of meetings included employment of design tools selected to suit the needs of the members of the Focus Group.¹⁰⁶ These included written/PowerPoint documents and diagrams, verbal knowledge/information/perspectives sharing, narrative and dialogic exchange, yarnning/whole group discussions, individual/group reflection, collaborative

¹⁰⁴ See *Interview Topics and Questions* (Appendix R). Interview topics encompassed: values and principles; priorities; aspirations and goals; outcomes; support for First Nations musicians/students; ideal music program; access and inclusion; teaching and learning programs; staffing; support for music and culture; research priorities; institutional environments, spaces and places; and excellent programs.

¹⁰⁵ The four phases are Discovering, Defining, Developing, and Delivering (Design Council, 2024).

¹⁰⁶ Adaptation of methods and tools is a central enabler in co-design (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a).

ideation, use of research data to understand problems and develop preferred solutions, collective affinity grouping/prioritisation, and shared decision making and consensus seeking. Provisions for collective decision-making regarding data storage and access to data, and individual options regarding quotation, identification of data, and acknowledgement in the outputs of the research were included in the *Consent Form*. Communication with members of the Focus Group took place also between meetings (via email and/or social media and/or phone) and included amendments to, and confirmation of the Survey Questionnaire prior to distribution, and confirmation of the *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* prior to delivery.

Focus Group Workshop 1

Workshop 1 included acknowledgment of Country; participant introductions; review of the *Participant Information Sheet* and *Consent Form*; confirmation of the process for creating the records of meetings; overview of the research project; provision of information about co-design in the research, background contextual information and national statistics¹⁰⁷; noting of key documents; review of the *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*; consideration/contribution to the Thematic Framework working document; consideration of lines of questioning for the Survey and Interview components; commencement of co-creation of the Draft Recommendations; and outline of the remuneration process.

Focus Group Workshop 2

Workshop 2 included acknowledgment of Country; participant introductions¹⁰⁸; confirmation of Meeting 1 Minutes and Summary of Main Points of Discussion; confirmation of the *Consent Form* and *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document; deliberation on the key research questions; consideration/contribution to the Thematic Framework working document; consideration of questions for the Survey and Interviews; noting of the Draft Recommendations from Meeting 1; ongoing co-creation of the Draft Recommendations¹⁰⁹; and checking of the remuneration process.

¹⁰⁷ This contributed to a “data-driven” process which commences with sharing existing data (WACOSS, 2016, p. 8).

¹⁰⁸ This was for those members who had not been able to attend the first meeting.

¹⁰⁹ This principally comprised the *Draft Preamble*.

Focus Group Workshop 3

Workshop 3 included acknowledgment of Country; confirmation of Meeting 2 Minutes and Summary of Main Points of Discussion; consideration of the Survey Questionnaire analyses/summaries¹¹⁰; consideration and feedback on the *Draft Preamble* for the Draft Recommendations; ongoing deliberation on the key research questions; and ongoing co-creation of the Draft Recommendations.

Focus Group Workshop 4

Workshop 4 included acknowledgment of Country; confirmation of Meeting 3 Minutes and Summary of Main Points of Discussion; consideration of Interview Main Points Thematic Summaries¹¹¹; and ongoing co-creation of the Draft Recommendations.

Following the final Focus Group Workshop, the Draft Meeting 4 Minutes and Summary of Main Points of Discussion and the final draft of the *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* were circulated to the Focus Group members for review and confirmation (via email). The *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* document was then finalised and confirmed with the members of the Focus Group prior to delivery to the members of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group at the final meeting. Summaries of the de-identified Focus Group summaries of discussion of meetings are provided in Chapter 5 (5.4).

Survey Questionnaire

Potential Survey participants were contacted via email, social media or in person and were provided with an overview of what the research was about and an informal invitation to participate. Those who indicated an interest in participating were then sent an individualised formal invitation email with further information about the research project and the Survey, together with the *Participant Information Sheet* and an individualised trackable link to the Survey.¹¹² The email included an invitation for participants to contact me if they had any further questions or would like any advice or assistance. Confirmation of informed consent, including decisions regarding data storage and access; options regarding quotation, identification of data, acknowledgement in the outputs of the research; and an opportunity to

¹¹⁰ De-identified.

¹¹¹ De-identified.

¹¹² The formal invitation email also included an individualised explanation about the reason for inviting the participant.

discuss the research and their participation in it after completion of the research were incorporated within the Survey Questionnaire.

The Survey Questionnaire was distributed to fifty-one people. Of these, thirty-nine participants commenced the Survey (response rate = 76.47%), and thirty-eight participants submitted the Survey (response rate = 74.51%). Two participants completed the demographic questions only (5.26% of the sample size of 38). Thirty-four participants completed both the demographics and some or all opinions questions (89.47% of the response sample of 38).

The Survey data analysis process comprised statistical analyses of the demographic and closed-ended question responses using SPSS software,¹¹³ and thematic content analysis of the open-ended opinion question responses using Excel and on-paper.¹¹⁴ The thematic analysis employed a hybrid approach comprising a “top down” (deductive) approach whereby the researcher brings a series of “concepts, ideas or topics” to the coding of the data, combined with a “bottom up” approach (inductive) in which codes and themes are derived also from the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58).¹¹⁵ The analysis followed the 6-phase framework explicated by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), which is recursive rather than linear (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86).¹¹⁶ An initial set of codes was created drawing on themes developed for the Thematic Framework working document (deductive aspect),¹¹⁷ and codes were then added derived from the data (inductive aspect). In developing the themes and subthemes, the analysis was informed by but not confined to the initial codes and the added codes were determined iteratively as the analysis developed.

The Survey analyses were then provided to the members of the Focus Group. The quantitative data was provided in the form of 1. Survey Demographic Statistics 2. Survey Opinions Frequency Statistics, and 3. Survey Opinions Frequency Means Descending Order tables. The qualitative data was provided in the form of a *Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis* (Appendix S), which comprised a whole-of-Survey thematic summary of the opinions responses.¹¹⁸ The results were then considered by the members of the Focus Group in further considering the key research questions and the recommendations for the School. The de-

¹¹³ This included assistance from Professor Alice Richardson, Director of the ANU Statistical Consulting Unit.

¹¹⁴ This drew on Braun & Clarke (2006, 2012).

¹¹⁵ The goal is to prioritise “participant meaning”, which is therefore experiential in its orientation and essentialist in its theoretical framework, assuming a knowable world and “giving voice” to experiences and meanings of that world, as reported in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 59).

¹¹⁶ This comprises: 1. Familiarizing yourself with the data 2. Generating initial codes 3. Searching for themes 4. Reviewing themes 5. Defining and naming themes 6. Producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012, pp. 60–69).

¹¹⁷ Deductive themes comprised: Values and principles; Aspirations and goals; Outcomes; Engagement; Access; Inclusion; Relevance and responsiveness; Diversity; Teaching and learning programs; Student support; Staffing and employment; Institutional environments, spaces and places.

¹¹⁸ Participants were also offered copies of the background de-identified raw data.

identified Survey analyses tables and Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis are provided in Chapter 5 (5.2).

Interviews

Potential interview participants were contacted via phone and email and provided with an overview of what the research and the interview were about, and a formal invitation to participate, together with the *Participant Information Sheet* and *Consent Form*. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed conversational way in which interviewees had scope to shape the interview.

The interview data comprised audio-visual recordings, transcripts of interviews, and de-identified summaries of transcripts. The summaries of interview comprised a key points thematic analysis based on a content analysis of the transcripts.¹¹⁹ Draft de-identified Main Point Thematic Summaries of interview were created and provided to the interviewees for review and confirmation. Confirmed summaries were then provided to the Focus Group co-research participants for use in further considering the key research questions and developing the recommendations for the School. Provisions for decisions regarding data storage and access, and options regarding quotation, identification of data, and acknowledgement in the outputs of the research were included in the *Consent Form*. Summaries of the de-identified Main Point Thematic Summaries of Interview are provided in Chapter 5 (5.3).

4.3.7 Research phases, sequence of methods, and data types

Table 4.1 outlines the phases of the research, sequence of methods, and types of information/data, encompassing pre-data collection and post-research phases as inherent to a holistic approach to co-design.¹²⁰

Table 4.1

Research phases, sequence of methods, and information/data types

Research phase	Method and description	Information/data type
Phase 1 – Pre data collection	First Nations engagement and consultation with First Nations stakeholders	Contextual
	Collation/analysis of background information from international conventions and articles, national statements, and institutional First Nations policies and plans	Background/contextual

¹¹⁹ This also drew on themes developed for the Thematic Framework working document.

¹²⁰ In practice this was an iterative process.

Research phase	Method and description	Information/data type
	Collation/analysis of base line national and institutional statistical data	Background/contextual
Phase 2 – Pre data collection	“Whole-of-School” pre-research briefings (x2)	
Phase 2 – Co-design Structural components	Establishment and meetings of the PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group Development of the ethics application, including letters of support; confirmation of key documents; discussions/contribution to the thematic framework working document Establishment of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group <u>Meeting 1</u>: Introduction, and discussion about the research project and key research question/s, the thematic framework working document, and participants for the Focus Group Workshops; review and confirmation of key research documents Establishment of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group	
Phase 3 – Co-design Data collection, analysis and synthesis; co-creation of the recommendations	Focus Group Workshops 1 & 2 Introduction and information about the co-design process; review and confirmation of the key documents for the research; consideration of the key research question/s, thematic framework working document, survey questionnaire; commencement of co-creation of the recommendations Survey Questionnaire and Interviews Implementation of the Survey and Interview methods. SoM Indigenous Reference Group <u>Meeting 2</u>: Research project update and feedback Focus Group Workshop 3 Survey and Interviews: Consideration of the analyses and synthesis of data from the Survey and Interview methods; consideration of the key research question/s and further co-creation of the recommendations	Qualitative data Quantitative data Qualitative data Qualitative data
Phase 4 – Co-design Co-creation of the recommendations	Focus Group Workshop 4 Further consideration of the key research question/s and finalisation of the recommendations.	Qualitative data
Phase 5 – Co-design Post data collection	SoM Indigenous Reference Group <u>Meeting 3</u> : Delivery of the research recommendations to the ANU School of Music	

Research phase	Method and description	Information/data type
Phase 6 – Co-design Post-project processes	“Whole-of-School” briefing; participant de-briefings; communication and dissemination of the results of the research, including the <i>Research Results and Recommendations Final Report</i> .	

Note. Adapted from Guijt & Mayne (2019).

4.3.8 Roles and responsibilities of participants

The roles and responsibilities of participants are outlined in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A), *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B), *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C), *Participant Information Sheets* (Appendices I, K, N, P), and the SoM Indigenous Reference Group *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)*. They were also highlighted in the initial meetings of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group and Indigenous Co-design Focus Group.

4.3.9 Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music

The recommendations to the ANU School of Music were developed for the ANU School of Music as the principal immediate outcome of the research. The recommendations include a Preamble co-developed together with the members of the Indigenous Focus Group; a summary of the findings of the research; a set of thematically organised recommendations drawn from the research findings, together with three additional recommendations drawn from the background research; and a list of relevant sources/resources. See *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* (Appendix E).

4.3.10 Research Results and Recommendations Final Report

A summary of the research project and its results and recommendations was authored by me in the form of a *Research Results and Recommendations Final Report* for provision to participants and any other interested stakeholders.¹²¹ This included an overview of the project, including its focus, rationale, aims, goals, approach, significance and contribution; and a summary of the results (including types of data) and main findings, and a set of recommendations. The recommendations comprise a generic set of recommendations drawn from the recommendations to the ANU School of Music, and which are potentially applicable

¹²¹ This provision was outlined in the *Participant Information Sheets*, with the document to be made available to all participants via a Dropbox link.

in other Australian tertiary music education and institutional contexts. See *Research Results and Recommendations Final Report* (Appendix F).

4.3.11 Addressing challenges in co-design in the research

Co-design research is recognised as presenting significant challenges.¹²² These include overcoming barriers to co-design, establishing a genuine co-design approach, effectively managing the co-design process, considering relational aspects, and addressing ethical considerations, each of which had significant bearing on the research and are addressed in turn.

Overcoming barriers to effective co-design

In their groundbreaking international survey of co-design, Bradwell and Marr (2008) identify the nine top barriers to co-design as being time constraints; conflicting views and opinions; financial constraints; availability of people; bureaucracy; geographical barriers; knowledge levels of participants; organization of the participative event; difficulty in communicating the need for change; and linguistic and cultural differences; in descending order of significance (p. 43). Resources and capability have also been identified as potential constraints to effective co-design (Sutton-Long et al., 2006, pp. 5, 12, 25).¹²³ In the research the most significant challenges proved to be time demands and managing the multi-component design and nature of the research.

The literature on co-design highlights how time-consuming co-design can be.¹²⁴ Co-design can be logistically complex and labour-intensive and take time and significant preparation (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, pp. 25, 28).¹²⁵ Co-design therefore cannot be rushed (NCOSS, 2017, p. 2).¹²⁶ “*Long time*” is considered central to co-design, for designing research, negotiating methods, and interpreting and presenting data (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 27; Dreise, 2018, pp. 34, 36). In the research, the multi-component design created significant time demands with respect to implementation of methods and the need to properly consider the

¹²² The “best-fit” approach is one that you can conduct with rigour within the time and money available (Vanstone, 2019).

¹²³ This was alleviated to an extent in the research by the supported nature of the research as a PhD project.

¹²⁴ Blomkamp (2018, p. 737); Collaboratory (2022a); Dreise (2018, pp. 38–39); Guijt & Mayne (2019); Government of Western Australia (2024); NCOSS (2017); Schwab (2021); Sutton-Long et al. (2016).

¹²⁵ Co-design requires knowledge and skill and the ability of participants to engage in its complexity (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 24); and can also be “socially complex” given the personal characteristics of stakeholders and their relationships (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 10).

¹²⁶ It is necessary to take time to interrogate the problem and “not jump from problem to solution” too quickly, to ensure the cause is being resolved not the symptoms (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 27).

interests and needs of participants (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737).¹²⁷ It was essential to devote adequate time to each of the key phases and components of the research, which included initial engagement with stakeholders; establishment of the Reference and Focus Groups; managing the logistics of implementing multiple concurrent components; and developing and maintaining effective working relationships with participants. This meant embracing complexity and maintaining a flexible and adaptable approach throughout the research.¹²⁸

Restrictive timeframes can also present a challenge in co-design, stemming mainly from the need to take time in building relationships (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 162); and insufficient time can also cause concern for stakeholders, including in covering required content and ensuring adequate time for the co-design process (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 24). In the research it was essential therefore to devote sufficient time in responding to participant requirements and needs (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 6),¹²⁹ which included in establishing consent, providing information throughout the research, and maintaining communications to facilitate participation.

Linguistic barriers can also present a challenge in co-design research, and it is recognised that standard English may constitute a barrier for those for whom standard English is a second language, including “academic speak”, which can create barriers to understanding (Dreise, 2018, pp. 21–23, 38). Efforts to minimise communication barriers in the research included communicating in person with participants; providing documents that were clearly and concisely written; providing verbal and/or written summaries and diagrammatic/visual representations of key information; providing verbal explanations wherever possible; providing plain English *Participant Information Sheets* and *Consent Forms*; and offering individual clarification and alternative/additional communication opportunities and options.¹³⁰

Establishing a genuine co-design approach

Co-design involves in depth collaboration and involvement of a diverse range of participants which means being ready, willing and able, and having the commitment, resources and permission to work authentically “with” people, in both intent and practice (Hodges &

¹²⁷ Contributing factors to complex situations include “people, process and place” aspects and their interrelationships (Sutton-Long et al., 2016, p. 19); and can also encompass “size complexity” where many stakeholder participants are involved (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 10).

¹²⁸ This recognises review and modification as essential to the co-design process (Dreise, 2018, p. 39; NCOSS, 2017, p. 2; Schwab, 2021, p. 10).

¹²⁹ The 2018 edition of this source (superseded by the 2024 edition) cautioned also that insufficient time for collaboration could be of concern to stakeholders and impede development of ideas and solutions (p. 12).

¹³⁰ This recognises that the better “we can talk about activities”, the better “participants can understand possibilities” (Sanders & Westerland, 2011, p. 4).

Clarence, n.d., p. 6).¹³¹ Of primary importance to a true co-design process is finding the right people to lead the co-design effort, establishing the right conditions for the co-design work, and selecting the best and most acceptable methods for the project (Terrey, 2014).

Determining who to involve in the research was a significant challenge (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 21). It was critical to ensure that the views of the community would be heard, including the provider (i.e. ANU School of Music) and end users (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28); and, also, to identify the appropriate people for the different phases and roles in the research (M. Steen et al., 2011, p. 59). It was essential therefore to consider the interests of a range of differently situated stakeholders and to involve the ‘right mix’ of stakeholders in the different stages and components of the research.¹³² Co-design must also account for the complexity of interests in the ‘places’ in which they are embedded,¹³³ and Indigenous interlocutors must be seen as “legitimate representatives by the wider Indigenous community” (Dillon, 2021, p. 23).¹³⁴ Local knowledge is thus critical to determining who to involve (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 21). This means investing in local people and organisations, customising locally, and inviting the right people around the table (Dreise, 2018, pp. 38, 39).¹³⁵ In the research this meant engaging with stakeholders ‘on the ground’ at the ANU and ANU School of Music and drawing on their knowledge in considering and determining who to involve.

Representation can however be far from straightforward (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 40; Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 13).¹³⁶ Enabling the right level and type of representation in co-design depends upon the extent to which the co-design process is open and inclusive and seeks the expression and integration of a representative and diverse range of views (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738; Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 40; Dillon, 2021, p. 10, referencing Ansell & Gash, 2007, pp. 555–556).¹³⁷ Much of the literature on co-design makes an implicit assumption that community interest is “homogenous and can be easily determined and articulated”, which is problematic in Australian First Nations contexts (Dillon, 2021, p. 10;

¹³¹ This is about “mutuality, collaboration, sharing power together and ongoing learning” (Hodges & Clarence, n.d., p. 7).

¹³² It was also important to maintain a focus on purpose and desired outcomes, which included identifying the level of stakeholder participation that was “*needed*” rather than what might be considered “*desirable*” (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 4; Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 19).

¹³³ “Place” is taken here as referring to a whole system, and where successful partnerships must “fit” with local circumstances (Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 13).

¹³⁴ This means also establishing “who can speak on behalf of community” (Dreise, 2018, p. 39).

¹³⁵ This is dependent on the context of the research (Dreise, 2018, p. 39).

¹³⁶ This can include where participating users of a service are already known to the project team (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 40).

¹³⁷ This recognises that First Nations people “don’t always speak with the same voice” (Calma, 2022), and it is important not to assume that respondents “represent the views of others like them” (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 5).

Dreise, 2018, p. 37). In co-design it is also important to ensure that the process is not “overly influenced by a small group of representatives” (WACOSS, 2016, p. 14), where “the participation of a few has the potential to dictate a design for the many” and co-design can become simply “design by committee” (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 39). A particular challenge in the research was to actively seek and effectively integrate a diversity of views (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738), and to involve a diversity of First Nations participants, both local and national. Selection of participants therefore considered a wide range of stakeholders, and not only those who were likely to be directly affected by the outcomes of the research but also those who could influence policy and strategic outcomes or participate in the post-research implementation phase.¹³⁸ This meant considering the interests also of those who could potentially be impacted by the research outcomes but for one reason or another could not participate directly.¹³⁹

A key contributor to the efficacy of collaborative approaches is the design of the collaborative approach itself (Dillon, 2021, p. 12).¹⁴⁰ This needed to include participation by stakeholders in all phases and components of the research, which in turn depended upon the willingness of stakeholders to become involved. An effective engagement process was therefore critical (WACOSS, 2016, p. 14),¹⁴¹ which needed to include multiple engagement methods delivered at a variety of levels, for the purposes of informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 10). In the research this comprised individual and group stakeholder conversations and meetings, stakeholder group presentations, circulation of briefing documents, and communication with potential participants on an individual basis.

In co-design it is essential to establish shared clarity of vision, purpose, and direction, and agreement among stakeholders about intent and service goals and outcomes before considering the service design aspects (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 17; WACOSS, 2016, p. 8).¹⁴² In the research it was essential therefore to ensure effective communication with participants; provide sufficient information about the project so that the purpose and intent of the research was understood and supported from the beginning (Terrey, 2014); and to also

¹³⁸ This included the ANU School of Music executive and staff and the SoM Indigenous Reference Group.

¹³⁹ For example, First Nations people under the age of 18.

¹⁴⁰ This means considering the number of anticipated participants, how much time is available, the depth of required collaboration, the needs of the participants, the requirements for the solution, and the skills of the facilitator (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 21).

¹⁴¹ This cannot simply be reduced to a set of structured methodologies (Victorian Council for Social Service, 2015, p. 24, referencing Akama & Prendiville, 2013).

¹⁴² This should include clarity about who would be involved and how, and any potential limitations such as what is negotiable or non-negotiable (WACOSS, 2016, p. 8; Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 12).

ensure clarity about expectations and processes (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 22).¹⁴³ This meant determining what information was needed for each stakeholder group at the different points in the research and for each of the research components.

Another challenge in co-design is the need to make sure that the methods and ways of working match the project and are applied appropriately to enable meaningful participation (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 738; M. Steen et al., 2011, p. 59). This meant selecting appropriate methods and applying them in ways that would contribute optimally to realising the aims, goals, and objectives of the project.

Effectively managing the co-design process

Issues identified in the literature as challenges in managing co-design include timelines, establishing trust, potential for unrealistic expectations, limited capacity of participants, political imperatives, stakeholder tensions, and problems obtaining agreement or consensus (Dreise, 2018, pp. 34–36, 38; Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 10). Effective planning, preparation and implementation are therefore essential to successful co-design (Government of Western Australia, 2024). In the research, planning needed to encompass establishing the purpose, approach, scope, and timeframes; feasibility and resourcing; communicating and establishing shared expectations; and attending to details necessary to facilitating stakeholder participation.¹⁴⁴ An essential element was the need to provide information to participants about what the research was about, and “how co-design works” and “what is expected of those taking part” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 28). This meant beginning where people were at, establishing the parameters of the research, making sure that participants understood their roles (and mine), and had sufficient information to facilitate their effective participation (Burkett, 2012, p. 8; CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 19; Dillon, 2021, p. 8; Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 24; Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 6).

It was important that the research was not only well designed but also effectively facilitated (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 733).¹⁴⁵ My role in the participatory group components (Reference Group and Focus Group) was that of co-ordinator/facilitator.¹⁴⁶ The main

¹⁴³ This should be based in a genuine two-way communication strategy to ensure transparency and consistency, and to avoid bias (Government of Western Australia, 2024, pp. 5, 15; CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 10).

¹⁴⁴ Bradwell & Marr (2008, p. 19); Guijt & Mayne (2019, p. 2); Lenette et al. (2019, p. 172); WACOSS (2017, p. 14).

¹⁴⁵ The facilitator needs to demonstrate an “adequate mix of knowledge about the design problem” and have “prior experience in driving groups of people towards coming up with solutions for specific issues” (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 16).

¹⁴⁶ Effective facilitation demands personal self-awareness, self-reflection, curiosity, open mindedness, flexibility, and mindfulness of positionality (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a, 2022b).

challenge for the facilitator is to help participants “understand and achieve their common goals” (CO-CREATE, n.d. 0:06–0:11).¹⁴⁷ In the research this meant establishing the right conditions; defining clear goals and schedules; choosing the most appropriate co-design tools; building a shared understanding of the problem; supporting the participatory process; encouraging creative participation; and seeking inclusive solutions (CO-CREATE, n.d.).¹⁴⁸ It was important also to think ahead and effectively manage any issues as they arose (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 16).¹⁴⁹ Most importantly it was essential to ensure that the “terms of engagement”, including “rights between and among First Peoples themselves” were central (Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 22).

The main task was to facilitate the co-creative process in the participatory components (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 17), which meant supporting participants’ voice and understanding differing views (p. 16), and facilitating a collaborative approach to decision making (pp. 26–27). In the research, development of an effective collaborative process was centrally important, which included supporting common understanding and establishing common ground amongst participants (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a); and also ensuring that participants experienced co-design as a “safe space” where they could speak up and be listened to and safely share their experiences and ideas (WACOSS, 2016, pp. 8–9). This meant ensuring that in striving for consensus, the different opinions of participants were heard (Hunt & Bauman, 2022, p. 17). Opportunities for reflective participant feedback were also incorporated to support responsiveness to stakeholder views as the research unfolded. The most important challenge was to play a completely neutral role, and to establish and maintain integrity and a framework of trust in the co-creative process (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 16).¹⁵⁰

Considering relational aspects

“Relationships of trust” are considered essential to an effective co-design process (Dreise, 2018, p. 35),¹⁵¹ and research must therefore be understood and negotiated “in good faith” (p. 5). This means building and maintaining trust with stakeholders, abiding by key values of “respect, openness, and transparency”, and “co-designing with stakeholders in a

¹⁴⁷ The facilitator has four main functions: encouraging participation, building a shared framework or understanding of the problem, seeking inclusive solutions, and designing solutions based upon shared responsibilities (CO-CREATE, 2019, p. 16).

¹⁴⁸ It also meant establishing meeting protocols and providing explanatory materials and key documents (i.e. document drafts, meeting agendas, minutes, summaries, research data etc.).

¹⁴⁹ This meant responding pro-actively and appropriately, seeking to facilitate a positive experience and productive outcome for all participants.

¹⁵⁰ This meant reflecting on my own personal connection to and views on the research topic and being mindful of the need to balance multiple participant perspectives (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022b).

¹⁵¹ See also, Government of Western Australia (2024, p. 5); Putt (2013, pp. 4, 5).

genuine way” (Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 5). In the research it was essential therefore to take the time needed to build trust and collaborative relationships and to negotiate consent and participation (CollaboratoryPodcast, 2022a; Dreise, 2018, pp. 24–25, 39).¹⁵²

Research between First Nations people and Western academics will only work if both sides “trust each other” and “recognise and respect each other’s positions and world views” (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 27). Projects need to therefore provide “safe theatres for wisdom exchange” that give equal weight to lived and studied experiences (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 27). In the research this meant ensuring that participants could participate “free of fear of judgment or reprisal” and, also considering the potential impacts of power imbalances (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, p. 4).¹⁵³

Research involving deep relationships of trust with co-researchers can present challenges arising from the collaborative and complex nature of co-design and inherent relational dynamics and power inequalities, which must be acknowledged and addressed (Guijt & Mayne, 2019, pp. 4–5; Lenette et al., 2019, pp. 168–169, 174).¹⁵⁴ In participatory research the distinction between researcher and researched is deliberately blurred to maximise participation, however this can alter the nature of the relationships and also create dilemmas for all parties (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1724).¹⁵⁵ In the research it was critical therefore to not only consider my positioning in relation to participants, but to also consider the positioning of participants in relation to one another, including with respect to “pre-existing hierarchical relationships” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 167).¹⁵⁶

Although co-design provides a means for addressing inequalities in collaborative decision making (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 23),¹⁵⁷ and respects equality in the contribution of all those involved (p. 17), in practice, unequal power positions can still pose barriers to partnership, and affect the collaborative process (T. Steen et al., 2018, p. 287).¹⁵⁸ In the research it was therefore important to be proactive in identifying and considering issues that

¹⁵² This needed to also consider existing relationships with and between stakeholders and to engage in ways that would not impair, but rather, maintain or build relationships, taking into consideration the potential for ongoing relationships.

¹⁵³ This can be supported in participatory research by promoting “multi-vocality” (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 173).

¹⁵⁴ Power hierarchies may be considered inherent to the research process itself and need to therefore be managed without compromising academic integrity and rigour (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 170).

¹⁵⁵ For the researcher these can arise for example from the need to balance multiple roles and constraints in the research with the needs of research participants (Kendall et al., 2011, p. 1724).

¹⁵⁶ This included, for example, relationships between staff and students.

¹⁵⁷ This includes by shifting power towards the user and creating a more equal relationship between provider and user (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 23).

¹⁵⁸ This can include, for example, in relation to “formal position, knowledge, expertise, resources or ability to set the rules” (Steen et al., 2018, p. 287).

might arise from differential positioning and unequal power relationships.¹⁵⁹ Matters related to unequal and/or dependent relations in the research were also addressed explicitly in the *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B), *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C), and the *Participant Information Sheets* for the Reference Group and Focus Group (Appendices I, K).

Addressing ethical considerations

The research sought to adhere to “best practice” ethical practice in research involving First Nations people and communities. Ethical conduct in the research was therefore considered fundamental in all aspects of the research (Kovach, 2021, p. 236) and is articulated in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A), *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B), *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C); *Benefits of the Research* (Appendix G), and in the *Participant Information Sheets* (Appendices I, K, N, P) and *Consent Forms* (Appendices J, L, O, Q).

In co-design, risks and ethical dilemmas may arise for both academic and community-based researchers due to the complex realities inherent to the participatory nature of the co-design process, and which may be specific to the context of the research and take many forms (Lenette et al., 2019, p. 175). Risks may arise also from unexpected and unforeseen events that can occur during the collaborative process itself, highlighting the importance of equitable relationships, and the need to address power imbalances, recognise differing experiences, and negotiate different perspectives (Lenette et al., 2019, pp. 168–169, 174–175). It was essential therefore to adhere not only to standard formal ethics requirements, but to treat ethical considerations as central to ongoing relational practice throughout the research. In the research this meant acknowledging individual positioning, respecting individual differences and perspectives, and paying attention to relational dynamics as the research unfolded.

In participatory research there can however be disparities between protocols and principled intent, and the time and resources needed to “build trust, relationships and consent” (Dreise, 2018, p. 24),¹⁶⁰ and in planning and developing the collaborative aspects (Putt, 2013, p. 4). In the research the challenge stemmed primarily from the need to allocate sufficient time to developing and implementing each of the participatory components whilst meeting PhD milestone deadlines.

¹⁵⁹ This required self-reflexivity and consideration of participant dynamics and needs throughout the research.

¹⁶⁰ Consent must therefore be “relationally-driven not transactionally-driven” (Dreise, 2018, p. 39), which means devoting time to building and maintaining relationships.

Many of the most significant ethical considerations were relational. These included the need to safeguard existing relationships and mitigate against potential damage to relationships and networks, including in the future. Managing risk of coercion was another relational challenge, the primary concern being that stakeholders might feel a sense of obligation to participate in the research due to existing leadership/individual/group/peer relationships. In the research this included prior relationships with and between stakeholders, and between me and/or the SoM Indigenous Convenor and potential participants. The recruitment process therefore needed to be a carefully considered one that acknowledged relationality realities, including within established networks, and mitigated pressure to participate.

The Focus Group component presented particular ethical challenges, including in establishing consent and managing confidentiality, anonymity, and risk of harm (Sim & Waterfield, 2019, p. 3003).¹⁶¹ In establishing informed consent it was essential to clarify expectations; the centrality of the role of the Focus Group in the research; the nature of co-design and the co-design process; the protocols for group discussions and collaborative decision making; and the importance of strict confidentiality.¹⁶² Facilitation included being mindful of group dynamics and individual needs and ensuring that all participants had opportunities to express their personal opinion, with a view to minimising potential harm and supporting the well-being of all participants.¹⁶³

The ethics approval process itself posed a significant challenge. Ethics protocols require precise definition and detailed pre-determination and description of the details of the research methodology, methods and implementation procedures, and adherence to these for the duration of the research. However, a feature of co-creative research is its emergent and adaptive nature (Goodyear et al., 2015, p. 3). In the context of complex co-creative research, pre-specification can create a tension for which there may be “no simple or formulaic solution” (Goodyear et al., 2015, p. 3). Whereas in conventional research, ethics is principle-based and focused primarily on ensuring “rule-following” to meet regulatory requirements, participatory research is “value-based” and focused on “relationships and distribution of power between ‘researchers’ and ‘researched’” in which elements of the research may be co-created (Goodyear et al., 2015, p. 3). The challenge in developing the ethics protocol was

¹⁶¹ This recognises also that focus group dynamics and interactions may be unpredictable (Sim & Waterfield, 2019, pp. 3005, 3019).

¹⁶² It was also essential to consider this in terms of “message received” rather than “message sent” (Sim & Waterfield, 2019, p. 3005).

¹⁶³ Potential harms may arise for example from discussion on sensitive topics, personal disclosure in a group setting, unanticipated and challenging interactions, and risks associated with disclosure and ensuring confidentiality (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

therefore to satisfy the need to be definitive and provide sufficient detail while also building in the necessary flexibilities to support the co-creative process as the research unfolded.

Another ethical challenge was the need to uphold the cultural and intellectual property rights of First Nations participants in writing up the results of the research. Although there are a growing number of Indigenous research protocols which can guide the relationship between the researcher and the researched, these tend to lack sufficient detail about “authorship, copyright, and the future use of research materials” (Janke, 2009, p. 5). In the Australian context, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) is primarily regulated through agreements and protocols (AIATSIS, 2020b, p. 8). A significant challenge in the research was therefore to determine and spell out how the cultural and intellectual property rights of First Nations participants would be managed in the written outputs of the research in the absence of definitive guidelines. The approach developed for the research is detailed in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A, pp. 10–11).

4.3.12 Addressing risks in the research

Co-designing in First Nations community-institution contexts involves a significant degree of socio-cultural complexity in which potential risks to participants must be acknowledged and carefully managed. Risks were identified for all components of the research, and participants were all therefore subject to various degrees of potential risk. Risks in the research were identified as a standard condition of the formal ethics approval process and included psychological/emotional risks, risks associated with confidentiality and third-party identification, and for some participants, the potential for economic harm. Other identified risks included those associated with the potential for workload and time pressures, participant expectations, unequal and/or dependent relationships, conflicting views and opinions, social harm, and “cultural safety”. Every effort was made in the design and implementation of the research to minimise and mitigate these risks. Risks in the research were articulated in the *Participant Information Sheets* (Appendices I, K, N, P); and strategies for their management were outlined in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A), *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B), and the *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C).

Risks were principally though not exclusively associated with the collaborative components of the research (Reference Group and Focus Group). Potential risks and/or negative consequences of participation were recognised as being not only more prevalent but also more serious for First Nations participants as a legacy of racism and socio-cultural-

economic exclusion and discrimination. Risk of social harm was also identified as significant given the community-institution contexts of the research and involvement of participants with differing levels of institutional and/or community power and influence, and with whom the ANU might have existing collaborative or commercial arrangements. This aspect of risk was therefore included in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A, pp. 7–8), *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B, pp. 3, 7), *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C, p. 1), and the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* for the Indigenous Reference Group.

Workload and timeline pressures were also identified as potential risks, particularly for participants in the collaborative components (Focus Group and Reference Group).¹⁶⁴ Such risk was therefore taken into account when considering the time demands related to participant involvement. Risks associated with participant expectations were also identified as potentially more significant for participants in the collaborative components and were therefore clarified in meetings of the Focus Group and Reference Group and included in the *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B, pp. 5–6, 8–9). Significant potential risk was also identified with respect to uncertainties associated with implementation of the recommendations in the institutional contexts of the research and was therefore incorporated in the *Participant Information Sheets* for each component in establishing informed consent.

Strategies for minimising and mitigating risk arising from unequal and/or dependent relationships in the research were highlighted in the initial meeting of the Focus Group as a part of establishing informed consent and included in the *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C, pp. 4–5). Key research documents were also explicit in inviting a diversity of perspectives and views and incorporated the principle of respect for the input of all participants as being paramount to the integrity of the research (*Research Agreement* (Appendix A, p. 9); *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C, pp. 2, 5, 7). Risk was also identified with respect to the potential for differences of opinion and/or conflicts to arise, and which could expose participants to emotional risk and even harm. This was identified as being of particular significance for the participants in the Reference Group in considering the recommendations to the School of Music and was therefore addressed in the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* and *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C, p. 5).

¹⁶⁴ This was considered particularly important in the context of high workloads for many First Nations employees and volunteers within institutions and organisations.

Risk of third-party identification was also identified as of particular significance given the community/institution contexts of the research, where there was potential for relational and reputational risk, and impacts on university operations and politics. This risk was therefore included in the *Research Agreement* (Appendix A, p. 4) and in the *Participant Information Sheets* for the collaborative components (Reference Group and Focus Group).¹⁶⁵ Risk was also identified with respect to “cultural safety”. Strategies for minimising and mitigating this aspect of risk included adhering to First Nations protocols in the research; demonstrating respect for First Nations cultures; and supporting a collaborative environment that was spiritually and emotionally safe for all participants, based in recognition of diversity, respect for individual views, and sharing of knowledge and understanding. This risk was included in the *Risk Management Strategy* (Appendix C, p. 5), *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (Appendix B, p. 7), and in the Reference Group *Standard Operating Procedures* (SOP).

4.4 Summary

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology and methods, including a review of sources and literature that informed the methodology and methods and details of implementation of the methodology and methods in the research.

The research employed an Indigenous-centred advanced mixed methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design and was based in an applied participatory action research methodology. Applied research lends itself to transformative change in institutional contexts and participatory methodologies have become a preferred approach to academic research in First Nations research contexts, providing a way to reflect the needs of First Nations people (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018). Participatory action research (PAR) is widely accepted as a means for ethical conduct in applied research and is aligned with the transformative research paradigm (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012) and is consistent with a “decolonial epistemology” in which the focus is on social justice and academic transformation and producing knowledge “*with* people rather than *on* people” (Sardo, 2017, p. 225). A participatory action methodology was therefore integral to facilitating Indigenous self-determination in the research through the participation of First Nations people as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research.

¹⁶⁵ Appendices I, K.

Indigenous research methodologies may be defined as approaches that are based in Indigenous epistemologies, grounded in Indigenous philosophy and knowledges, and are “relational at their core” (Kovach, 2021, p. 12). Indigenous research methodologies are therefore “people- and place-specific” (Tuck & Yang, 2019, p. xi) and the focus is on participation and control by First Nations people (Putt, 2013). Indigenous research methods are distinct from other research methods because of the theories that guide them and the need to ensure that methods are matched with “community needs and understandings of knowledge and knowing” (L. Smith et al., 2019, xi). Tailored interventions and programs co-designed and co-implemented with First Nations peoples are recommended (Raciti et al., 2023).

The research employed a bespoke adaptation of the co-design methodology which centred the perspectives and views of diverse experientially informed First Nations stakeholders both internal and external to the School of Music. The methodology sought to apply key principles in co-design with First Nations people and was adapted to the circumstances and community-institution contexts of the ANU School of Music at the time of the research. Most importantly co-design provided a means for facilitating Indigenous self-determination and ensuring that the views and perspectives of First Nations stakeholders would go to the heart of the research. As such the approach constitutes an innovative approach to improving outcomes for First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

Co-design was conceived as a wholistic process encompassing all phases and components of the research and was aimed at supporting an inclusive and collaborative process, observing ethical protocols and “best practice” in Indigenous research, and ensuring that my role and conduct in the research would not eclipse the role and contribution of First Nations participants. The research also sought to address challenges to effective co-design, including time demands, managing the multi-component design of the research, addressing ethical considerations, and managing socio-cultural complexity and potential risks to participants.

The Indigenous-centred co-design framework privileged First Nations voices and facilitated input, control, and ownership in the research by First Nations participants. The research design comprised four integrated components: the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, and three data collection methods (Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops, a nationally focussed Survey Questionnaire, and Interviews). In combination the three methods contributed to Indigenous self-determination in the research, and to inclusion of a breadth, depth, and diversity of perspectives and views in addressing the key research

questions and the objectives of the research. The research employed a concurrent advanced mixed methods approach in which the different methods (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews) were embedded within an added framework (Co-design Focus Group Workshops) (Creswell, 2013). This provided a means for drawing on the complementary strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods and integration of methods, and for incorporating a diversity of First Nations perspectives and views in the research and a data informed approach to developing the recommendations for the School. The recommendations for the ANU School of Music were derived from a synthesis of the data produced through the three research methods and were the principal immediate outcome of the research. A summary of the research project and its results, together with a more generic set of recommendations, were also created for participants and other interested stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Results provides the data analyses for the three data collection methods (Indigenous Focus Group, Survey Questionnaire, and Interviews).

Chapter 5: Results: Themes and Trajectories

5.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.6.3), the main goal of the research was to develop nationally focussed Indigenous-informed empirical evidence, grounded in the insights and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations Peoples, as a means for enhancing the engagement of Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and improving outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹ The research addressed the two key interconnected questions: 1. What are the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system? 2. How can Australian tertiary music institutions address the identified priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities more effectively?² The results of the research address these questions.³

As described in Chapter 1 (1.6.5) and Chapter 4 (4.3.3), the research comprised a bespoke Indigenous-informed adaptation of co-design in which three Indigenous-centred mixed methods components (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group Workshops) were integrated within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design. This design provided a means for addressing the key research questions by incorporating multiple perspectives inclusive of a breadth, depth, and diversity of views of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds, locations, and communities in addressing the aims and goals of the research, and for enhancing the validity of results through triangulation of methods. This chapter presents the results of the three data collection methods: Part 1 – Survey Questionnaire (5.2), Part 2 – Interviews (5.3), and Part 3 – Focus Group Workshops (5.4).

Part 1 – Survey Questionnaire: The Survey Questionnaire results comprise: 1. Survey Demographic Statistics tables; 2. Survey Opinions Frequency Statistics tables; 3. Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis summary.

¹ This included at the ANU School of Music specifically.

² This included a focus on the work of the ANU School of Music.

³ The research recommendations are provided in Chapter 7 (7.4) Recommendations; and *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* (Appendix E).

Part 2 – Interviews: The Interview results comprise three de-identified Main Points Thematic Summaries.

Part 3 – Focus Group Workshops: The Focus Group Workshop results comprise four de-identified, thematically organised Summaries of Main Points of Discussion.

5.2 PART 1 – Survey Questionnaire

The Survey Questionnaire comprised twenty-one demographic questions⁴; and sixty-four opinions questions, consisting of forty-nine closed-ended questions,⁵ and fifteen open-ended questions.⁶ See *First Nations Music Survey Questionnaire* (Appendix M). The quantitative statistical data is presented first and comprises: 1. Survey Demographic Statistics tables (5.2.1); 2. Survey Opinions Frequency tables (5.2.2); and Survey Opinions Frequency Means Descending Order tables (5.2.2). This is followed by the qualitative opinions data comprising the Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis summary (5.2.3).

5.2.1 Survey demographic statistics

As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.6.5), the research sought to encompass multiple perspectives inclusive of a breadth, depth, and diversity of views of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds, locations, and communities. The demographic statistics provide evidence of the diversity and experientially informed status of the Survey participants, and hence, the contribution of the Survey to the diversity of experientially informed voices and perspectives in the research. The demographic results comprise Tables 5.1–5.28 (statistics), followed by one text-based result.

Demographic questions (21 questions)

The following section presents the participant responses to the Survey Questionnaire demographic questions. Evidence of diversity,⁷ and experientially informed status,⁸ is provided as notes to the tables.

How would you describe yourself?

Table 5.1 shows the self-described Indigenous status of the Survey participants.

⁴ These were analysed statistically using SPSS.

⁵ These were analysed statistically using SPSS.

⁶ These were analysed thematically (after Braun & Clarke, 2012) using Excel and on paper analysis.

⁷ Tables 5.1–5.6, 5.9–5.11, 5.17, 5.19.

⁸ Tables 5.8–5.20 and final text-based response.

Table 5.1*Self-described Indigenous status*

Indigenous status	<i>N</i>	Percent
Aboriginal	35	92.11
Torres Strait Islander	2	5.26
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1	2.63
Total	38	100.00

Note. The 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics census figures report Aboriginal status (91.7%); Torres Strait Islander status (4.0%); and combined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (4.3%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The Survey demographic results are therefore slightly higher for both Aboriginal status (92.11%) and Torres Strait Islander status (5.26%), but lower for the combined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (2.63%).

How would you describe your gender?

Table 5.2 shows the self-described gender of the Survey participants.

Table 5.2*Participants' gender*

Gender	<i>N</i>	Percent
Woman/Female	20	52.63
Man/Male	17	44.73
Prefer not to say	1	2.63
Total	38	100.00

Note. The results indicate a female/male gender disparity of 7.89%. No participants selected the non-binary/third gender/gender fluid/non-conforming option.

What is your age?

Table 5.3 shows the different age groupings of the Survey participants.

Table 5.3*Participants' age grouping*

Age in years	<i>N</i>	Percent
20–29	2	5.26
30–39	15	39.47
40–49	7	18.42
50–59	8	21.05
60–69	4	10.53
70–79	2	5.26
Total	38	100.00

Note. The spread of the Survey participants across age groupings indicates age diversity. There were no participants in the 18–19, 80–89, or 90 or over age groupings.

Where do you currently live?

Table 5.4 shows the current living location of the Survey participants.

Table 5.4*Participants' current living location*

Living location	<i>N</i>	Percent
Capital city	28	73.68
Large country town	4	10.53
Small country town	4	10.53
Remote area community	1	2.63
Overseas	1	2.63
Total	38	100.00

Note. The spread of Survey participants across living locations indicates diversity of current living location.

What state/territory are you currently living in?

Table 5.5 shows the state/territory the Survey participants are currently living in.

Table 5.5*Participants' current state or territory*

State or territory	<i>N</i>	Percent
Australian Capital Territory	7	20.00
New South Wales	9	25.71
Queensland	1	2.86
South Australia	16	45.71
Victoria	2	5.71
Total	35	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. The spread of Survey participants across states/territories indicates diversity of participant current living location with respect to state/territory. No participants reported living in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, or Tasmania. One participant not indicated here reported living overseas (see Table 5.4).

Which best describes the location where you grew up? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.6 shows the location/s the Survey participants grew up in.

Table 5.6*Participants' location(s) growing up*

Location(s)	<i>N</i>	Percent
Capital city	14	37.84
Capital city and large country town	2	5.41
Capital city, large country town, and small country town	1	2.70
Large country town	8	21.62
Large country town and small country town	1	2.70
Small country town	9	24.32
Remote area community	2	5.41
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The spread of Survey participants across locations indicates diversity of participant location growing up. No participants selected the Overseas option.

What language/s do you speak? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.7 shows the language/s spoken by the Survey participants.

Table 5.7*Participants' language(s) spoken*

Language(s) spoken	<i>N</i>	Percent
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language as my first language and English as one of the languages I speak	2	5.41
English as my first language	26	70.27
English as my first language and one of the languages I speak	4	10.81
English as one of the languages I speak	5	13.51
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate that all participants who responded to this question spoke English, of whom 70% spoke only English.

Are you currently or have ever been a practising musician (i.e. performer, songwriter, composer)?

Table 5.8 shows the number of Survey participants who are currently or have been practising musicians.

Table 5.8*Participants who currently or have ever been a practising musician*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	34	91.89
No	3	8.11
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. 92% of the Survey participants had experientially informed status as a practising musician, relevant to the field of the research (tertiary music education).

How did you learn music? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.9 shows how the Survey participants learned music.

Table 5.9*How participants learned music*

Type of learning	<i>N</i>	Percent
Formal program	30	88.24
Self-taught	25	73.53
Family/friends	19	55.88
Church	8	23.53
“Traditional” song and dance	7	20.59
Workshops/events	5	14.71
Youth group	3	88.24
Other	6	17.64

Note. *N* = 34; missing = 4. Formal program = through a formal music education and/or instrumental/vocal lessons; Self-taught = mainly self-taught; Family/friends = from family and friends; Church = through church; “Traditional” song and dance = by participating in “traditional” song and dance within the community; Workshops/events = through participating in workshops or other one-off events; Youth group = through a youth group. The results indicate diversity of music learning background and experientially informed status with respect to music learning background. The majority of participants selected more than one option (76.47%).

All six participants who selected Other selected other options and provided text-based responses, expanding on specific option/s. Three participants expanded on the Self-taught option. One, who selected all the available options, added that they had found they could learn more quickly by learning at their own pace, playing records, recording their own music, listening to radio, television and online music, engaging with software and apps such as Logic, Finale, and Sibelius, and by learning through channels like CAAMA and Imparja. Another, who selected this as one of their options, indicated that they had also learned from Guitar Player magazine; and the other, for whom this was the only selected option, indicated that they had studied through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music. Two participants expanded on the Formal program option. One, for whom this was the only selected option, indicated that they had studied through CASM, Abmusic, and WAAPA; and the other, for whom this was one of their selected options, indicated that they had also learned through studio tuition in a regional area. One participant, who selected the two options, Family/friends and Formal program, explained that they had initially learned through family and friends and then through specialist programs auditioned for through primary and secondary school and then in tertiary education (university).

Where did you undertake the formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.10 shows where the Survey participants undertook their formal music education and/or instrumental/vocal lessons.

Table 5.10

Where participants undertook formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons

Type of music education	N	Percent
University	17	56.67
Indigenous institution	17	56.67
Private teacher (instrumental/vocal lessons)	14	46.67
Secondary school	14	46.67
Primary school	7	23.33
Community organisation	4	13.33
TAFE	4	13.33
Other	5	16.67

Note. N = 30; missing = 8. University = at university; Indigenous institution = at a specialist Indigenous institution (e.g., Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music [CASM], Abmusic, NAISDA, Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts [ACPA], Eora); Private teacher = from a private teacher – instrumental/vocal lessons; Secondary school = in secondary school; Primary school = in primary school; Community organisation = at a local community organisation; TAFE = technical and further education. The spread of participants across a range of types of formal music education indicates diversity of participant formal music education background, and experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context of the research (tertiary education institutions). 57% reported undertaking a formal music education program at a university and/or an Indigenous institution.⁹ 13% had learned in a community organisation and/or through TAFE.¹⁰ The majority of participants selected more than one option (76.67%).

All five participants who selected Other also selected other options, and four provided text-based responses. One participant expanded on their only selection (University) indicating that they had attended the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, and another expanded on their selection (Indigenous institution) explaining that CASM is at a university. One added to their selection, indicating that they regarded all the music education they had received as formal music education although it was not classified as such, and that they believed this would apply to most Aboriginal musicians, observing that home-based music pedagogies

⁹ There was a potential overlap between the choices Indigenous institution and university (i.e. CASM is at a university).

¹⁰ There was a potential overlap between the choices Indigenous institution and TAFE (i.e. Eora is at a TAFE).

were greatly underrated; and another added to their selection, indicating that they had learned through a College of Advanced Education (CAE) [de-identified].

In what ways have you been involved in the music profession/industry or the arts more generally? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.11 shows how the Survey participants have been involved in the music profession/industry or arts more generally.

Table 5.11

How participants have been involved in the music profession/industry or the arts more generally

How involved	<i>N</i>	Percent
Performer	33	89.19
Songwriter/composer	29	78.38
Teacher/lecturer	18	48.65
Producer	13	35.14
Event curation/management	13	35.14
Sound engineer	9	24.32
Radio-TV presenter	9	24.32
Stage management	8	21.62
Promotions	5	13.51
Not involved ^a	2	5.41
Other	6	16.21

Note. *N* = 37; missing = 1. This table indicates diversity of participant music profession/industry background, and experiential experience across a wide range of areas relevant to the field of the research. The vast majority of participants selected more than one option (91.89%).

^a One “Not involved” also selected one of the other options.

One participant selected both Not involved and Performer and is counted in both categories. One of the six participants who selected Other did not select any of the available options but indicated that they had been involved in community choirs and as a cultural/community/advocacy support for music students. One participant, who selected all available choices, indicated that they had also been involved in religious music events and as a student representative at an Indigenous institution [de-identified], and another expanded on one of their selections (Performer) explained that they had performed with other bands as a featured artist and with a family band, adding that they were also a visual artist. One participant expanded on and added to their selections (Performer, Radio/TV presenter), indicating involvement in radio, TV, and film, and as a professional singer and actor (de-identified);

another added to their selections, indicated involvement as a mentor and researcher; and one indicated involvement as a Music Director/Band Director.

Did you complete a formal music qualification from an institution?

Table 5.12 shows how many Survey participants had completed a formal music qualification from an institution.

Table 5.12

Participants with formal music qualification

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	21	56.76
No	16	43.24
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate experientially informed status with respect to music qualification and the institutional context of the research.

What type of institution did you receive your formal qualification/s from? You can choose more than one.

Table 5.13 shows the type of institution the Survey participants received their formal qualifications from.

Table 5.13

Type of institution participants received their formal music qualification/s from

Type of institution	<i>N</i>	Percent
University	13	61.90
Indigenous institution	11	52.38
High school	4	19.05
AMEB	4	19.05
TAFE	3	14.29
Other	4	19.05

Note. *N* = 21; missing = 17. Indigenous institution = specialist Indigenous institution (e.g., Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music [CASM], Abmusic, NAISDA Dance College [NAISDA], Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts [ACPA], Eora); High school = high school where music was one of your subjects; AMEB = Australian Music Examinations Board; TAFE = technical and further education. Over 60% had received a formal music qualification from a university, and over 50% from an Indigenous institution, indicating experientially informed status relevant to the institutional context of the research (noting that CASM is at a university). The majority of participants selected more than one option (66.67%).

The four participants who selected Other also selected other options and provided text-based responses. One participant expanded on their selections (AMEB, TAFE, Indigenous institution, University), explaining that music had not been taught as a subject in the state primary and secondary schools that they had attended, where a few teachers had organised choirs, marching bands and occasional performances, and adding that formal music accreditation was only available from the AMEB via private teachers or private church schools and that they had also sung with a church choir [de-identified]; and another expanded on their selection (University) indicating that they had learned at Southern Cross University. One participant added that they had learned through a CAE [de-identified]; and another that they had learned through the SAE-Diploma of Sound Production.

Have you completed a university bridging program that prepared students for entry into a “mainstream” music degree?

Table 5.14 shows the number of Survey participants who had completed a university bridging program into a “mainstream” music degree.

Table 5.14

Participants who completed a university bridging program into a “mainstream” music degree

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	13	35.14
No	24	64.86
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate qualification and experientially informed status relevant to the institutional context of the research.

Do you have a formal qualification that includes multiple areas of the performing arts (e.g. dance, theatre/drama, music, film, sound engineering, stage management etc.)? – Selected Choice

Table 5.15 shows the number of Survey participants with formal qualifications that include multiple areas of the performing arts.

Table 5.15*Participants with formal qualification in multiple areas of the performing arts*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	9	25.00
No	27	75.00
Total	36	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. The results indicate experientially informed status relevant to the institutional context and field of the research.

All nine participants who selected Yes provided comments about where and in what areas of the performing arts they had received their qualifications. Three participants mentioned the CASM program, one mentioned a Certificate 4 in Music, and another TAFE training. Two mentioned sound engineering; one mentioned music productions; another management; and another, sound management. Other areas included music performance (singing), songwriting, music composition, music analysis and criticism, and acting and theatre.

Have you studied music at a tertiary music institution but did not receive a formal qualification because you did not complete the full study program? – Selected Choice

Table 5.16 shows the number of Survey participants who studied music at a tertiary music institution but did not receive a formal qualification because they did not complete the full study program.

Table 5.16*Participants with no qualification due to not completing the full program*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	15	41.67
No	20	55.56
Prefer not to say	1	2.78
Total	36	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. The results indicate experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context of the research.

Of the fifteen participants who selected Yes, thirteen provided text-based responses. Twelve indicated incomplete study at a university or specialist Indigenous music institution. Seven mentioned university, and of these, one mentioned two universities, and another

mentioned two bachelor level programs which were commenced but not completed. Five participants mentioned CASM (university) and one mentioned TAFE. One participant indicated that they had initially enrolled in a B. Mus. and had withdrawn before the census date but had later gone back to university to complete a B. Mus., Honours, and a PhD. Another indicated that they were still studying at a university.

Do you have a formal qualification in a field of study other than music? – Selected Choice

Table 5.17 shows the number of Survey participants with a qualification in a field of study other than music.

Table 5.17

Participants with a qualification in a field of study other than music

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	24	66.67
No	12	33.33
Total	36	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. The results indicate diversity of participant education background and experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context of the research. One participant indicated they were still studying.

Of the twenty-four participants who responded Yes to this question, twenty-two provided text-based responses. These indicated a range of formal qualifications: Aboriginal Health Worker; Arts, Education, and several other professional areas [de-identified]; Performing Arts, Arts [de-identified]; Design, Education [de-identified]; Health Science [de-identified]; Retail operations [de-identified]; Commerce; Commercial cookery, Cambridge CELTA [de-identified]; Conservation and Land Management; Corporate Management; Education; Education; Film making; Government; Hospitality/management customer service; Indigenous studies; Music Business, Sound engineering, Arts/communications, Library science [de-identified]; currently enrolled Bachelor Psychology [de-identified]; Psychology & Linguistics; Secondary Education; Security; Youth work and community services [de-identified].

Are you currently studying music at an Australian university?

Table 5.18 shows the number of Survey participants currently studying at an Australian university.

Table 5.18*Participants currently studying music at an Australian university*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	3	8.11
No	34	91.89
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate currency of experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context and field of the research.

Are you currently studying in a field other than music at an Australian university?

Table 5.19 shows the number of Survey participants currently studying music in a field other than music at an Australian university.

Table 5.19*Participants currently studying in a field other than music at an Australian university*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	3	8.11
No	34	91.89
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate currency and diversity of experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context of the research.

Have you ever taught music in a tertiary music institution?

Table 5.20 shows the number of Survey participants who have taught music in a tertiary music institution.

Table 5.20*Participants who have taught music in a tertiary music institution*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Yes	10	27.03
No	27	72.97
Total	37	100.00

Note. Missing = 1. The results indicate experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context and field of the research.

Are you currently employed in an Australian university – Yes (please indicate in what capacity) (N = 37, Missing = 1)

Six participants responded Yes to this question, and all provided text-based responses (16.22%). One participant reported being a Choir lead (casual); one was an Associate Professor; two were Lecturers, of whom one was a Lecturer in music; another was a Casual Lecturer and a Research Associate; and another was a Consultant. *Note:* This result indicates experientially informed status with respect to the institutional context and field of the research.

5.2.2 Survey opinions frequency statistics

This section provides the Survey Opinions Frequency Statistics tables for the forty-nine closed-ended opinions questions.¹¹ The questions addressed four key topic areas: 1. Access to Tertiary Music Education; 2. Teaching and Learning; 3. Support for First Nations Music and Culture; and 4. Research Projects, which were presented sequentially. The tables comprise: 1. Survey Opinions Frequency tables (5.2.2)¹²; 2. Survey Opinions Frequency Means Descending Order tables (5.2.2).¹³

Survey opinions frequency tables

This section presents the Survey opinions frequency statistics. The response options were based on a 5-point Likert scale: Essential, Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, and Not Important.

Topic Area 1: Access to tertiary music education (10 questions)

Question: Thinking about how tertiary music institutions could be more accessible for First Nations students, how important would the following be?

Table 5.21 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that offer direct entry to "mainstream" programs (i.e. no bridging requirement).

¹¹ The quantitative data was analysed statistically using SPSS.

¹² These comprised responses to the closed-ended questions for each of the four key topic areas.

¹³ These comprised responses to the closed-ended opinions for the four key topic areas, showing the means and standard deviation for the responses to each question, based on the statistical mean calculated from the 5-point Likert scale, and presented in descending order.

Table 5.21

Programs that offer direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations music students

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Not important	1	2.94
Somewhat important	3	8.82
Important	5	14.71
Very important	10	29.41
Essential	15	44.12
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response with 44.12% considering this to be essential. There was 73.53% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential, and 88.24% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.22 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs for First Nations musicians who do not have a formal music education background.

Table 5.22

Programs for First Nations musicians who do not have a formal music education background

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	3	8.82
Very important	9	26.47
Essential	22	64.71
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response with 64.71% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.23 shows the Survey participants’ responses for bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” music programs.

Table 5.23*Bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” music programs*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	4	11.76
Very important	9	26.47
Essential	19	55.88
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response with nineteen participants 55.88% agreeing these were essential. There was 82.35% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 94.12% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.24 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds (i.e. who may speak English as a second language, may not have finished high school, or who may not read music).

Table 5.24*Programs that are inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	26	76.47
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an exceptionally strong affirmative response, with 76.47% considering this to be essential. There was 100.00% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential.

Table 5.25 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs inclusive of a range of music styles and genres (i.e. reflecting diverse music backgrounds and influences).

Table 5.25*Programs that are inclusive of a range of music styles and genres*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	1	2.94
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	25	73.53
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response with 73.53% considering this to be essential. There was 97.06% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.26 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs offered in regional and remote locations so that people don't have to leave their home community to learn music.

Table 5.26*Programs offered in regional and remote locations*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	4	11.76
Very important	3	8.82
Essential	25	73.53
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response with 73.53% considering it to be essential. There was 82.35% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 94.12% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.27 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that combine on-campus and in-community delivery so that people can experience the benefits of learning on-campus while also remaining based in their home community.

Table 5.27*Programs that combine on-campus and in-community delivery*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	2.94
Important	2	5.88
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	23	67.65
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 67.65% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 97.06% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.28 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that provide support with applications, admissions and orientation.

Table 5.28*Programs that provide support with applications, admissions and orientation*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	3	8.82
Very important	4	11.76
Essential	27	79.41
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 79.41% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.29 shows the Survey participants' responses about whether the ANU School of Music should aim to have First Nations graduates from all around the country and many different communities.

Table 5.29

Should the ANU School of Music aim to have First Nations graduates from all around the country and many different communities?

Response	N	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	4	12.12
Very important	6	18.18
Essential	22	66.67
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response with 66.67% considering this to be essential. There was 84.89% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.30 shows the Survey participants' responses about whether universities should have flexible entry requirements that recognise merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience, not just high school results and pre-determined audition requirements (i.e. play this piece, play this scale/arpeggio, etc.).

Table 5.30

Should universities have flexible entry requirements that recognise merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience?

Response	N	Percent
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	3	8.82
Very important	6	17.64
Essential	23	67.65
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 67.65% considering this to be essential. There was 85.29% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 94.12% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Summary of results for Topic Area 1

Results for the topic area Access to Tertiary Music Education revealed affirmative responses to all ten questions. Results for the option Essential ranged from 44.12% agreement (Table 5.21) to 79.41% (Table 5.28). Results for the combined options Very important-Essential ranged from 82.35% agreement (Tables 5.23, 5.26) to 100% (Table 5.24). Of these,

one question received an exceptionally strong affirmative response (100% agreement), which was for Programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds (Table 5.24). Results for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential ranged from 88.24% agreement (Table 5.21) to 100% (Tables 5.22, 5.25, 5.28). Of these, three questions received a very strong affirmative response (100% agreement): Programs for First Nations musicians who do not have a formal music education background (Table 5.22); Programs inclusive of a range of music styles and genres (Table 5.25); and Programs that provide support with applications, admissions and orientation (Table 5.28). Five questions received a strong affirmative response (94.12% – 97.06% agreement): Bridging programs into “mainstream” music programs (94.12% – Table 5.23); Programs offered in regional and remote areas (94.12% – Table 5.26); Flexible entry requirements recognising merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience (94.12% – Table 5.30); Programs that combine on-campus and in-community delivery (97.06% – Table 5.27); and that ANU should have First Nations graduates from around the country (96.97% – Table 5.29). One question received an affirmative result (88.24% agreement) which was for Programs offering direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations students (Table 5.21), and which received only 44.12% agreement for the option Essential, the lowest in this combined category. There were six questions with responses to the option Somewhat important (Tables 5.21, 5.23, 5.26, 5.27, 5.29, 5.30); and one with a response to the option Not important (Table 5.21).

Topic Area 2: Teaching and learning (23 questions)

Question: Thinking about teaching and learning programs for First Nations musicians, how important would the following be?

Table 5.31 shows the Survey participants’ responses for bridging programs for First Nations students into “mainstream” music programs.

Table 5.31*Bridging programs for First Nations students into “mainstream” music programs*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	4	11.76
Important	5	14.71
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	18	52.94
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an affirmative response, with 52.94% considering this to be essential. There was 73.53% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 88.24% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.32 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that teach Western music and how to read and write music from scratch.

Table 5.32*Programs that teach Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	4	11.76
Important	9	26.47
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	13	38.24
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. Nearly 40% of participants considered this to be essential. There was 61.76% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 88.24% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.33 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.

Table 5.33

Programs that include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	4	12.12
Very important	3	9.09
Essential	25	75.76
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 75.76% considering this to be essential. There was 84.85% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.34 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres.

Table 5.34

Programs that offer performance studies that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	3	8.82
Very important	5	14.71
Essential	26	76.47
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 76.47% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.35 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts.

Table 5.35

Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	1	2.94
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	25	73.53
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 73.53% considering this to be essential. There was 97.06% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.36 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs specifically for First Nations students (e.g. CASM, NAISDA, Eora, ACPA, Abmusic).

Table 5.36

Programs specifically for First Nations students

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	3	8.82
Very important	5	14.71
Essential	24	70.59
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 70.59% considering this to be essential. There was 85.29% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 94.12% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.37 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry.

Table 5.37*Programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	1	2.94
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	26	76.47
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 76.47% considering this to be essential. There was 97.06% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.38 shows the Survey participants' responses for a degree program majoring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.

Table 5.38*A degree program majoring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	2.94
Important	5	14.71
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	21	61.76
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an affirmative response, with 61.76% considering this to be essential. There was 82.35% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 97.06% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.39 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that offer a range of qualifications (i.e. short courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees etc.).

Table 5.39*Programs that offer a range of qualifications*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	6	17.64
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	21	61.76
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 61.76% considering this to be essential. There was 82.35% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.40 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that help students develop their research skills.

Table 5.40*Programs that help students to develop their research skills*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	3	8.82
Important	6	17.64
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	18	52.94
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an affirmative response, with 52.94% considering this to be essential. There was 73.53% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 91.18% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.41 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include a wide range of music performance styles/genres (e.g. jazz, rock, classical, popular, hip hop, reggae, country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander).

Table 5.41*Programs that include a wide range of music performance styles/genres*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	5	14.71
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	22	64.71
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 64.71% of participants considering this to be essential. There was 85.29% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.42 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre (i.e. just jazz, just classical, just pop/rock etc.).

Table 5.42*Programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Not important	1	2.94
Somewhat important	13	38.24
Important	9	26.47
Very important	4	11.76
Essential	7	20.59
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a lower affirmative response, with only 20.59% considering this to be essential. There was 32.35% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 58.82% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.43 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include opportunities to learn "traditional" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance.

Table 5.43

Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	5	14.71
Very important	12	35.29
Essential	15	44.12
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a lower affirmative response, with 44.12% considering this to be essential. There was 79.41% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 94.12% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.44 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that teach sound engineering from scratch.

Table 5.44

Programs that teach sound engineering from scratch

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	2.94
Important	10	29.41
Very important	9	26.47
Essential	14	41.18
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a lower affirmative response, with 44.18% considered this to be essential. There was 67.65% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 97.06% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.45 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that offer separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students for reasons of cultural safety.

Table 5.45*Programs that offer separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Not important	1	2.94
Somewhat important	2	5.88
Important	6	17.64
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	17	50.00
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an affirmative response, with 50.00% considering this to be essential. There was 73.53% agreement across the combined options Very important-Essential and 91.18% across the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.46 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that offer opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on country”.

Table 5.46*Programs that offer opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on country”*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	4	11.76
Very important	6	17.64
Essential	24	70.59
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 70.59% considering this to be essential. There was 88.24% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.47 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that offer opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Table 5.47*Programs that offer opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	2.94
Important	4	11.76
Very important	10	29.41
Essential	19	55.88
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received an affirmative response, with 55.88% considering this to be essential. There was 85.29% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 97.06% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.48 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs taught by First Nations practitioners (i.e. performers, songwriters, composers, sound engineers, researchers etc.).

Table 5.48*Programs taught by First Nations practitioners*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	3	8.82
Very important	7	20.59
Essential	24	70.59
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 70.59% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.49 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners.

Table 5.49*Programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	2	5.88
Very important	4	11.76
Essential	28	82.35
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 82.35% considering this to be essential. There was 94.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.50 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners.

Table 5.50*Programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	1	2.94
Very important	5	14.71
Essential	28	82.35
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 82.35% considering this to be essential. There was 97.06% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.51 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts.

Table 5.51*Programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts*

Response	N	Percent
Important	3	8.82
Very important	6	17.64
Essential	25	73.53
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 73.53% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.52 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs with identified First Nations spaces (e.g. learning hubs, rehearsal spaces, recording facilities, community gathering spaces etc.).

Table 5.52*Programs with identified First Nations spaces*

Response	N	Percent
Not important	1	2.94
Important	2	5.88
Very important	8	23.53
Essential	23	67.65
Total	34	100.00

Note. Missing = 2. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 67.65% considering this to be essential. There was 91.18% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 97.06% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.53 shows the Survey participants' responses about whether the ANU School of Music should be leading the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds.

Table 5.53

Should the ANU School of Music be leading the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds?

Response	N	Percent
Not important	1	3.03
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	2	6.06
Very important	5	15.15
Essential	24	72.72
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This received a strong affirmative response, with 72.72% considering this to be essential. There was 87.88% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 93.94% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Summary of results for Topic Area 2

Results for the topic area Teaching and Learning revealed affirmative responses for nineteen of the twenty-three questions. Results for the option Essential ranged from 20.59% agreement (Table 5.42) to 82.35% (Tables 5.49, 5.50). Results for the combined options Very important-Essential ranged from 32.35% agreement (Table 5.42) to 97.06% (Tables 5.35, 5.47, 5.50). Results for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential ranged from 58.82% (Table 5.42) to 100% (Tables 5.34, 5.35, 5.39, 5.41, 5.46, 5.48, 5.49, 5.50). Of these, ten questions received very strong affirmative responses (100% agreement):

Performance studies inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres (Table 5.34); Opportunities to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts (Table 5.35); Programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry (Table 5.37); Programs that offer a range of qualifications (Table 5.39); Programs that include a wide range of music performance styles/genres (Table 5.41); Programs with opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on country” (Table 5.46); Programs taught by First Nations practitioners (Table 5.48); Programs with mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners (Table 5.49); Opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners (Table 5.50); and Programs with strong First Nation staff and student cohorts (Table 5.51). Eight questions received strong affirmative responses (93.94% –

97.06% agreement): ANU should be leading the way in offering programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from diverse educational and musical backgrounds (93.94% – Table 5.53); Opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance (94.12% – Table 5.43); Programs specifically for First Nations students (94.12% – Table 5.36); Opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (96.97% – Table 5.33); A degree program in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (97.06% – Table 5.38); Programs that teach sound engineering from scratch (97.06% – Table 5.44); Opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (97.06% – Table 5.47); and Programs with First Nations spaces (97.06% – Table 5.52). Four questions received an affirmative response (88.24% – 91.18% agreement): Bridging programs into “mainstream” music programs (88.24% – Table 5.31); Programs that teach Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch (88.24% – Table 5.32); Programs that help students develop research skills (91.18% – Table 5.40); and Programs that offer separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students (91.18% – Table 5.45). One question received a low level of overall agreement, with less than a quarter of participants (20.59%) selecting the option Essential, which was for Programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre (Table 5.42). There were also three questions where less than half of the participants selected the option Essential: Programs that teach Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch (Table 5.32); Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance (Table 5.43); and Programs that teach sound engineering from scratch (Table 5.44). There were twelve questions with responses to the Somewhat option (Tables 5.31, 3.32, 5.33, 5.36, 5.38, 5.40, 5.42, 5.43, 5.44, 5.45, 5.47, 5.53); and four questions with responses to the option Not important (Tables 5.42, 5.45, 5.52, 5.53).

Topic Area 3: Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (10 questions)

Question: Thinking about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture by tertiary music institutions, how important would the following be?

Table 5.54 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians.

Table 5.54

Programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	2	6.06
Very important	11	33.33
Essential	20	60.60
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This received a strong affirmative response, with 60.60% considering this to be essential.

There was 93.94% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.55 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs with a focus on creative outcomes.

Table 5.55

Programs with a focus on creative outcomes (i.e. composition, song writing, music production)

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Very important	10	30.30
Essential	22	66.67
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 67.67% considering this to be essential. There was 96.97% agreement for the combined option Very important-Essential. There were no responses for the option Important.

Table 5.56 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres.

Table 5.56

Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	3	9.09
Very important	10	30.30
Essential	20	60.60
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 60.60% considering this to be essential. There was 90.91% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.57 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts.

Table 5.57

Programs that include opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts (i.e. music, dance, theatre, film, music production etc.)

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	4	12.12
Very important	11	33.33
Essential	17	51.52
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 51.52% considering this to be essential. There was 84.85% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.58 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs that include opportunities to learn "traditional" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments.

Table 5.58

Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	3	9.09
Important	2	6.06
Very important	9	27.27
Essential	19	57.58
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 57.58% considering this to be essential. There was 84.85% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 90.91% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.59 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that include opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.

Table 5.59

Programs that include opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	6.06
Important	6	18.18
Very important	7	21.21
Essential	18	54.55
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 54.55% considering this to be essential. There was 75.76% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 90.91% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.60 shows the Survey participants’ responses for programs that include opportunities to be mentored by leading First Nations practitioners.

Table 5.60*Programs that include opportunities to be mentored by leading First Nations practitioners*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	2	6.06
Very important	6	18.18
Essential	25	75.76
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 75.76% considering this to be essential. There was 93.94% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.61 shows the Survey participants' responses for programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making.

Table 5.61*Programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Important	4	12.12
Very important	6	18.18
Essential	23	69.70
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 69.70% considering this to be essential. There was 87.88% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.62 shows the Survey participants' responses for "mainstream" programs that are more inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds.

Table 5.62

“Mainstream” programs that are more inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds

Response	N	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.13
Important	2	6.25
Very important	8	25.00
Essential	21	65.63
Total	32	100.00

Note. Missing = 4. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 65.63% considering this to be essential. There was 90.63% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.88% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.63 shows the Survey participants’ responses for Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians (like CASM, Abmusic, ACPA, NAISDA, Eora).

Table 5.63

Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians

Response	N	Percent
Important	4	12.50
Very important	4	12.50
Essential	24	75.00
Total	32	100.00

Note. Missing = 4. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 75.00% considering this to be essential. There was 93.94% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 100.00% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Summary of results for Topic Area 3

Results for the topic area Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Culture revealed affirmative responses to all ten questions. Results for the option Essential ranged from 51.52% agreement (Table 5.57) to 75.76% (Table 5.60). Results for the combined options Very important-Essential ranged from 75.76% agreement (Table 5.59) to 96.97% (Table 5.55). Results for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential ranged from 90.91% agreement (Table 5.58) to 100% (Tables 5.54, 5.56, 5.60, 5.61, 5.63). Of these, five questions received a very strong affirmative response (100% agreement): Programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians

(Table 5.54); Opportunities to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music (Table 5.56); Mentoring by leading First Nations practitioners (Table 5.60); Dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces (Table 5.61); and Indigenous-led cultural programs (Table 5.63). Three questions received a strong affirmative response (96.88 – 96.97% agreement): “Mainstream” programs more inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds (96.88% – Table 5.62); Programs with a focus on creative outcomes (96.97% – Table 5.55); and Opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts (96.97% – Table 5.57). Two questions received an affirmative response (90.91% – 93.94% agreement): Opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances, and instruments (90.91% – Table 5.58); and Opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language (93.94% – Table 5.59). There were five questions with responses to the option Somewhat important (Tables 5.55, 5.57, 5.58, 5.59, 5.62); and no questions with responses to the option Not important.

Topic Area 4: Research programs (6 questions)

Question: Thinking about the research priorities and needs of First Nations People and communities, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture by tertiary music institutions, how important are the following?

Table 5.64 shows the Survey participants’ responses for creative music making projects (i.e. performance, composition, song writing, recording, music production).

Table 5.64

Creative music making projects

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	1	3.03
Very important	11	33.33
Essential	20	60.61
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 60.61% considering this to be essential. There was 93.94% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.65 shows the Survey participants' responses for working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives (e.g. festivals, performances, in-school projects, community music groups/bands etc.).

Table 5.65

Working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives

Response	N	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	3	9.09
Very important	8	24.24
Essential	21	63.64
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 63.64% considering this to be essential. There was 87.88% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.66 shows the Survey participants' responses for working with First Nations song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations "traditional" music and culture.

Table 5.66

Working with First Nations song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations "traditional" music and culture

Response	N	Percent
Somewhat important	2	6.06
Important	2	6.06
Very important	8	24.24
Essential	21	63.64
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 63.64% considering this to be essential. There was 87.88% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 93.94% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.67 shows the Survey participants' responses for helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music.

Table 5.67*Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	6.06
Important	4	12.12
Very important	2	6.06
Essential	25	75.76
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a very strong affirmative response, with 75.76% considering this to be essential. There was 81.82% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 93.94% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.68 shows the Survey participants' responses for providing support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia.

Table 5.68*Providing support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	1	3.03
Important	2	6.06
Very important	10	30.30
Essential	20	60.61
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 60.61% of participants considering this to be essential. There was 90.91% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 96.97% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Table 5.69 shows the Survey participants' responses for developing music initiatives to help "close the gap" (e.g. health and well-being initiatives, education/training programs, employment opportunities, working with young people, elderly, marginalised groups etc.).

Table 5.69*Developing music initiatives to help “close the gap”*

Response	<i>N</i>	Percent
Somewhat important	2	6.06
Important	1	3.03
Very important	11	33.33
Essential	19	57.58
Total	33	100.00

Note. Missing = 3. This question received a strong affirmative response, with 57.58% considering this to be essential. There was 90.91% agreement for the combined options Very important-Essential and 93.94% for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential.

Summary of results for Topic Area 4

Results for the topic area Research Programs revealed strong affirmative responses to all six questions (93.94%-96.97% agreement). Results for the option Essential ranged from 57.58% agreement (Table 5.69) to 75.76% (Table 5.67). No question received a very strong affirmative result (100% agreement). Results for the combined options Very important-Essential ranged from 81.82% agreement (Table 5.67%) to 93.94% (Table 5.64). Results for the combined options Important-Very important-Essential ranged from 93.94% agreement (Tables 5.66, 5.67, 5.69) to 96.97% (Tables 5.64, 5.65, 5.68). Of these, three questions received a response with 96.97% agreement: Creative music making projects (Table 5.64); Working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives (Table 5.65); and Support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas (Table 5.68). Three questions received a response with 93.94% agreement: Working with First Nations song owners and community members to revitalise and sustain First Nations “traditional” music and culture (Table 5.66); Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music (Table 5.67); and Developing music initiatives to help “close the gap” (Table 5.69). All six questions included responses to the option Somewhat important; and there were no questions with responses to the option Not important.

Survey opinions frequency means descending order tables

This section presents the Survey opinions frequency means descending order statistics for the closed-ended opinions responses for each of the four topic areas: 1. Access to Tertiary Music Education; 2. Teaching and Learning; 3. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Music and Culture; and 4. Research Programs.¹⁴ The tables are based on the responses to the closed-ended questions for each of the topic areas, showing the means for the responses to each question ranked from maximum to minimum means values in descending order, based on the 5-point Likert scale.¹⁵ The standard deviation is also provided for each question.¹⁶

Topic Area 1: Access to tertiary music education (10 questions)

Question: Thinking about how tertiary music institutions could be more accessible for First Nations students, how important would the following be?

Table 5.70 shows the Survey participants' responses for questions about how tertiary music institutions could be more accessible to First Nations students (frequency means in descending order).

Table 5.70

Ways tertiary music institutions can be more accessible for First Nations students

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Programs that are inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds (i.e. who may speak English as a second language, may not have finished high school, or who may not read music).	34	4.76	.431
Programs that provide support with applications, admissions and orientation.	34	4.71	.629
Programs that are inclusive of a range of music styles and genres (i.e. reflecting diverse music backgrounds and influences).	34	4.71	.524
Programs that combine on-campus and in-community delivery, so that people can experience the benefits of learning on-campus while also remaining based in their home community.	34	4.56	.746
Programs for First Nations musicians who do not have a formal music education background.	34	4.56	.660
Programs that are offered in regional and remote locations so that people don't have to leave their home community to learn music.	34	4.50	.929
Should the ANU School of Music, as a part of the Australian National University, be aiming to have First Nations graduates from all around the country and many different communities?	33	4.48	.834

¹⁴ These tables show the relative strength of agreement for all the questions across the topic area, which may be used to compare agreement between questions both within and across topic areas.

¹⁵ Mean = the average of the spread of responses to the question across the 5-point Likert scale, where 5 (*Essential*) is the highest value and 1 (*Not important*) is the lowest value.

¹⁶ Standard deviation = the amount of variation of values around the mean, where a lower standard deviation number indicates values that are closer to the mean, and a higher deviation indicates values that are spread out across a wider range.

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Should universities have flexible entry requirements that recognise merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience, not just high school results and pre-determined audition requirements (i.e. play this piece, play this scale/arpeggio etc.)?	34	4.47	.896
Bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” music programs.	34	4.32	.912
Programs that offer direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations music students (i.e. no bridging requirement).	34	4.03	1.114

For the Access to Tertiary Music Education topic area there were thirty-four responses for nine of the questions ($N = 34$; Missing = 2); and thirty-three responses for one of the questions ($N = 33$; Missing = 3).

The maximum and minimum mean range was 4.76–4.03, indicating a high degree of consistency of response for this topic area. The highest mean was 4.76, which was for programs that are inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds. This was closely followed by programs that provide support with applications, admissions, and orientation, and programs that are inclusive of a range of music styles and genres, with the same mean of 4.71. The lowest two means were for access to “mainstream” programs, the second to lowest being for bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” music programs (4.32), and the lowest being for programs that offer direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations students (4.03). The maximum and minimum standard deviation range was 1.114–.431, indicating a relatively high degree of standard deviation for this topic area.¹⁷

Topic Area 2: Teaching and learning (23 questions)

Question: Thinking about teaching and learning programs for First Nations musicians, how important would the following be?

Table 5.71 shows the Survey participants’ responses for questions about teaching and learning programs for First Nations musicians (frequency means in descending order).

¹⁷ The lowest standard deviation was for the question with the highest mean, and the highest was for the question with the lowest mean.

Table 5.71*Teaching and learning programs for First Nations musicians*

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners.	34	4.79	.479
Programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners.	34	4.76	.554
Programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry.	34	4.74	.511
Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts.	34	4.71	.524
Programs that offer performance studies that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres.	34	4.68	.638
Programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts.	34	4.65	.646
Programs taught by First Nations practitioners (i.e. performers, song-writers, composers, sound engineers, researchers etc.).	34	4.62	.652
Programs that offer opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on country”.	34	4.59	.701
Programs that include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.	33	4.58	.830
Programs with identified First Nations spaces (e.g. learning hubs, rehearsal spaces, recording facilities, community gathering spaces etc.).	34	4.53	.861
Should the ANU School of Music, as a part of the Australian National University, be leading the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds?	33	4.52	.972
Programs that are inclusive of a wide range of music performance styles/genres (e.g. jazz, rock, classical, popular, hip hop, reggae, country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander etc.).	34	4.50	.749
Programs specifically for First Nations students (like CASM, NAISDA, Eora, ACPA, Abmusic).	34	4.50	.896
Programs that offer a range of qualifications (i.e. short courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees etc.).	34	4.44	.786
A degree program majoring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.	34	4.41	.857
Programs that offer opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.	34	4.38	.817
Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance.	34	4.18	.904
Programs that help students to develop their research skills.	34	4.18	1.029
Bridging programs for First Nations students into “mainstream” music programs.	34	4.15	1.077

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Programs that offer separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students, for reasons of cultural safety.	34	4.12	1.094
Programs that teach sound engineering from scratch.	34	4.06	.919
Programs that teach Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch.	34	3.88	1.066
Programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre (i.e. just jazz, just classical, just pop/rock etc.).	34	3.09	1.215

Note. CASM = Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music; ACPA = Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts.

For the Teaching and Learning topic area there were thirty-four respondents for twenty-one of the questions ($N = 34$; Missing = 2); and thirty-three respondents for two of the questions ($N = 33$; Missing = 3).

The maximum and minimum mean range was 4.79–3.09, indicating a reasonably high degree of consistency of response for this topic area. The highest mean (4.79) was for programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners, which was the top mean of all four topics. This was closely followed by programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners (4.76), and then just below that, by programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry (4.74). The lowest mean (3.09), the lowest for all four topic areas, was for programs where you learn mainly about just one particular music style/genre. The maximum and minimum standard deviation range was 1.215–.479, indicating a relatively high degree of deviation for this topic. Both the mean and standard deviation had a larger range of maximum and minimum values when compared with the topic area Access to Tertiary Music Study.¹⁸

Topic Area 3: Support for First Nations music and culture (10 questions)

Question: Thinking about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture by tertiary music institutions, how important would the following be?

Table 5.72 shows the Survey participants’ responses for questions about support by tertiary music institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (frequency means in descending order).

¹⁸ The lowest standard deviation was for the question with the highest means, and the highest was for the question with the lowest means.

Table 5.72*Ways tertiary music institutions can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture*

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Programs that include opportunities to learn from and be mentored by leading First Nations practitioners.	33	4.70	.585
Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians (like CASM, Abmusic, ACPA, NAISDA, Eora).	32	4.62	.707
Programs with a focus on creative outcomes (i.e. composition, song writing, music production).	33	4.61	.659
Programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making.	33	4.58	.708
Programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians.	33	4.55	.617
“Mainstream” programs that are more inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds.	32	4.53	.761
Programs that include opportunities for First Nations students to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres.	33	4.52	.667
Programs that include opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments.	33	4.33	.957
Programs that include opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts (i.e. music, dance, theatre, film, music production etc.).	33	4.33	.816
Programs that include opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.	33	4.24	.969

Note. CASM = Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music; ACPA = Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts.

For the Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Culture topic area there were thirty-three respondents for eight of the questions ($N = 33$; Missing = 3); and thirty-two respondents for two of the questions ($N = 32$; Missing = 4).

The maximum and minimum mean range was 4.70–4.24, indicating a high degree of consistency for this topic area. The highest mean (4.70) was for programs that include opportunities to learn from and be mentored by leading First Nations practitioners. This was closely followed by Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians (4.62), followed by programs with a focus on creative outcomes, with an only slightly lower mean of 4.61. The lowest mean (4.24) was for programs that include opportunities to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language. The maximum and minimum standard deviation range was .969–.585, indicating a relatively low degree of deviation for this topic. Both the mean and

standard deviation had a smaller range of maximum and minimum values when compared with the topic areas Access to Tertiary Music Study and Teaching and Learning.¹⁹

Topic Area 4: Research programs (6 questions)

Question: Thinking about the research priorities and needs of First Nations People and communities, how important are the following?

Table 5.73 shows the Survey participants' responses for questions about the research priorities and needs of First Nations People and communities (frequency means in descending order).

Table 5.73

Research priorities and needs of First Nations people and communities, in descending order

Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music.	33	4.52	.939
Creative music making projects (i.e. performance, composition, song writing, recording, music production).	33	4.52	.712
Providing support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia.	33	4.48	.755
Working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives (e.g. festivals, performances, in-school projects, community music groups/bands etc.).	33	4.48	.795
Working with First Nations song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations "traditional" music and culture.	33	4.45	.869
Developing music initiatives to help "close the gap" (e.g. health and well-being initiatives, education/training programs, employment opportunities, working with young people, elderly, marginalised groups etc.).	33	4.42	.830

For the Research Programs topic area there were thirty-three respondents for all six questions ($N = 33$; Missing = 3).

The maximum and minimum mean range was 4.52–4.42, with a relatively small degree of difference between maximum and minimum values of only .10, indicating a high degree of consistency for this topic area. The highest mean (4.52) was for the two questions Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music, and Creative music

¹⁹ The lowest standard deviation was for the question with the highest means, and the highest was for the question with the lowest means.

making projects. This was closely followed by support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia, with a slightly lower mean of 4.48. The lowest mean (4.42) was for developing music initiatives to help “close the gap”. The maximum and minimum mean range for this topic area (4.52–4.42) was the smallest of all four topics. The maximum and minimum standard deviation range for this topic was .939–.712, indicating a relatively low degree of deviation. Both the mean and standard deviation had a smaller range of maximum and minimum values when compared with the topic areas Access to Tertiary Music Study, Teaching and Learning, and Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Culture.²⁰

5.2.3 *Survey opinions thematic analysis*

The following section presents a summary of the thematic analysis of the responses to the fifteen Survey Questionnaire open-ended opinion questions. The analysis comprised a three-step process. The first step comprised a thematic analysis of the opinions responses,²¹ resulting in development of four themes and eight subthemes:

Theme 1: Rights and social justice

- Subtheme 1: Recognition and respect
- Subtheme 2: Principles and values

Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

- Subtheme 1: Health and well-being
- Subtheme 2: Connections and connecting

Theme 3: Facilitating access

- Subtheme 1: Spaces and places

Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

- Subtheme 1: Facilitating participation and success
- Subtheme 2: Supporting students
- Subtheme 3: Aspirations, goals, and outcomes

The second step comprised application of the themes and subthemes to the fifteen open ended question responses. Finally, these were compiled as an integrated whole-of-survey opinions thematic analysis. Wherever possible, wording and expression in the thematic analysis aims to reflect that of the participants to maintain integrity of intent and meaning.

²⁰ The highest standard deviation (.939) was for the first question with the highest means (4.52); and the lowest standard deviation (.712) was for the second question with the same high mean (4.52).

²¹ This drew on Braun & Clarke (2012).

Notably, some participants gave the same or a very similar responses to multiple questions, therefore similar responses appear under more than one theme/subtheme.²² A summary of the results of the whole-of-survey opinions thematic analysis is presented here. See *Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis* (Appendix S).

Summary of Survey Questionnaire opinions thematic analysis

Theme 1: Rights and social justice

This theme highlighted support for Indigenous rights and social justice as being essential to improving outcomes for First Nations people and communities in the tertiary music education system and identified ways in which tertiary music institutions could support Indigenous rights and social justice. These encompassed support and advocacy for Indigenous rights, inclusive of Indigenous self-determination and educational and cultural rights; the importance of First Nations representation and leadership; and support for First Nations-led initiatives. Other key results included ensuring equal opportunity and non-discrimination; dealing with racism; and providing funding and resources to support First Nations musicians, programs, and community.

Theme 1 Subtheme 1: Recognition and respect

Recognize and celebrate the contributions of First Nations musicians, composers, and artists within the institution and the broader music community. (Troy Russell)

Respect, inclusion & understanding of our ways of learning. (Mark Munk Ross)

This subtheme highlighted recognition and respect as being essential to improving outcomes for First Nations people and communities in the tertiary music education system and identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could demonstrate this. Key results included the importance of recognition and respect for First Nations protocols; First Nations people's knowledge, expertise, and contribution; and First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, sharing, and expressing. Other key results included the importance of consultation and collaboration; recognition of diversity of First Nations

²² The themes and subthemes are interconnected, therefore responses in one theme may be relevant also in another.

backgrounds, traditions, lived experience, and artistic expressions; support for First Nations priorities and programs; and cultural awareness and cultural inclusivity.

Theme 1 Subtheme 2: Principles and values

Understanding cultural protocols and respecting these. (Survey participant)

Empowerment and self determination to create a supportive culturally affirming space. (Mr Grayson Rotumah)

This theme highlighted principles and values that were considered essential or important to First Nations people in the work of tertiary music education institutions. These included the principle of First Nations First; acknowledgment of custodianship of Land; and understanding and respect for First Nations protocols, customs, and backgrounds. Other key principles included honesty, integrity, and respect; listening and learning; kindness and cultural sensitivity; and support for well-being in tertiary music education institutions.

Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

This theme highlighted the critical role of culturally inclusive and responsive practice in responding effectively to the priorities and requirements of First Nations people in the tertiary music education system and identified a range of effective practices. Key results included understanding and valuing the cultural perspectives of First Nations musicians, and First Nations cultural knowledges and ways of knowing, learning, and being, inclusive of diverse First Nations music traditions and artists. Key recommendations included building programs around First Nations people; having First Nations culture at the core of policies and programs, run by First Nations people; and culturally responsive curricula inclusive of First Nations culture, music/song, history, language, dance, and music practices and traditions, both “traditional” and contemporary.

It was considered important that curricula recognise the interconnectedness of First Nations knowledge systems; connect students with their own cultural heritage; and provide opportunities for learning in First Nations cultural contexts, including on Country. Other recommendations included recognising the knowledge of Elders and senior musicians; involving traditional custodians and employing First Nations musicians and support staff; having culturally responsive teaching inclusive of the aspirations and needs of First Nations students; and validating First Nations music experience through new program design.

Theme 2 Subtheme 1: Health and well-being

Having cultural safe spaces and people working in the space [who] have an understanding of our culture and situations. (Survey participant)

Have pastoral/cultural care programs for First Nations students who may need time to digest and care for themselves emotionally and culturally. (Jude Barlow)

This theme highlighted the importance of support for the health and well-being of First Nations people in the work of tertiary music education institutions and identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could facilitate this. Key results included ensuring “cultural safety” by providing culturally safe and inclusive environments, and having programs focussed on healing, cultural connection, creativity, and expressing and sharing culture. Recommendations included having First Nations musicians as teachers and mentors; learning about mental health in the music industry; and treating First Nations staff with respect and cultural safety.

Theme 2 Subtheme 2: Connections and connecting

Connection to country and Elders embedded in courses and support frameworks authentically; connection to other First Nations students and support networks; connection to local mob. (Elinor Archer)

Provide mentorship programs that connect First Nations musicians with established professionals in the music industry, fostering valuable relationships and opening up opportunities for career advancement. (Troy Russell)

This theme highlighted the importance of connections and connecting in responding effectively to the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the tertiary music education system and identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could facilitate this. Key results included the importance of connections to Land, Country, culture, and heritage; engaging, connecting, and working with First Nations communities, especially those local to institutions; and supporting First Nations community programs. Other key results included consultation, partnerships, and research with First Nations Elders, organisations, and artists; and working with the school sector.

Recommendations included opportunities to create on Country; work with musicians from different fields and backgrounds; and build relationships with and learn from other First Nations musicians. Also important were connections with other First Nations students, Elders, and community members; links with the music industry, and opportunities for career development; and collaboration and cultural exchange, including opportunities for non-Indigenous people to engage with and learn from First Nations people.

Theme 3: Facilitating access

This theme highlighted the importance of access and opportunities for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system and identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could facilitate these. Key recommendations included targeted outreach; support for community and school-based programs; providing information on what is available,²³ and how it could benefit students; and addressing barriers to access and equity,²⁴ including for regional and remote students. This encompassed providing opportunities; ensuring flexible and supportive intake policies and programs²⁵; and being inclusive and accommodating of the aspirations, goals, and needs of First Nations musicians. Other recommendations included providing flexible learning options²⁶; pathways leading to qualifications; supporting students who did not have a formal music education²⁷; providing course credit for prior study and experience; and offering free programs, and a First Nations degree program.

Theme 3 Subtheme 1: Spaces and places

Indigenous people have a strong connection to culture through music so having a safe and culturally rich space to explore and connect further is super important. (Zak)

Create a supportive, inclusive space via implementation of culturally appropriate (sensitive/responsive) curriculum that includes music traditions and practices, including language. This will assist students to feel more connected to their own

²³ This included through advertising and promotion.

²⁴ This included barriers related to geographic location and financial constraints.

²⁵ This included alternative pathways and entry systems (i.e. not just ATAR or HSC), and entry level programs with no prior formal training requirement.

²⁶ This included on campus and distance learning options, multiple exit streams, micro-credentials, small online courses, intensives, and accelerated programs.

²⁷ This included, for example, in learning music theory.

heritage and creates a special and unique space for musical creativity and expression.
(Mr Grayson Rotumah)

This theme highlighted “spaces and places” as being important for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system and identified ways to implement these in tertiary music education institutions. This encompassed a wide variety of “spaces and places” ranging from access and teaching and learning opportunities and environments (including study programs) to physical spaces and facilities. Key insights included the need for a culturally appropriate definition of First Nations space; having access to dedicated First Nations spaces²⁸; ensuring a supportive environment for First Nations students; and ensuring that First Nations spaces were controlled by First Nations people and were inclusive of cultural diversity. Such spaces should have positive outcomes for students and for all First Nations people; and be non-tokenistic, and places for two-way learning.

It was important that spaces were inclusive, welcoming, and empowering; and that they were culturally rich and safe places for creation and expression. Recommendations included on Country learning; a physical space for gathering; free spaces and access to facilities and support²⁹; dedicated performance spaces and venues³⁰; and support for, and expansion of existing First Nations programs. Several programs were cited as examples of excellence.

Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

This theme identified priorities in teaching and learning for First Nations people in the tertiary music education system, and ways in which tertiary music institutions could support these. Key priorities included gaining knowledge, skills, and tools; facilitating achievement of individual aims, goals, and dreams; building capacity and confidence; and supporting career readiness. This included nurturing students’ vision and creativity; helping students gain an understanding of themselves as an artist and explore their artistic voice; and having teachers that help students achieve their goals and aspirations. Priorities included programs that take into full account First Nations students’ musical skills and heritage³¹; and prior learning, qualifications, experience, and achievements. This needed to recognise that cultural

²⁸ This was inclusive of admission spaces and degree programs.

²⁹ This included for example, recording studios and producers.

³⁰ This included for showcasing First Nations music.

³¹ This was inclusive of linguistic heritage.

understanding was different for each individual, and as therefore needing to be led by the individual.

First Nations employment was a high priority. This should be non-tokenistic and include a long-term commitment to First Nations roles; employment of high profile First Nations artists and industry specialists; involvement of Elders and culture owners in teaching,³² and employment of First Nations people in cultural support roles. Other priorities included having opportunities to work with musicians from different fields; seeing how others work; learning from non-Indigenous people; and experiencing mainstream and being able to progress into the mainstream.

Key recommendations included implementing a holistic cultural approach, and having a curriculum inclusive of First Nations music, music history, artists, and achievements, encompassing diverse representation. This included prioritising First Nations music, drawing on First Nations ontologies and epistemologies,³³ with opportunities to learn “traditional” music,³⁴ and also studies in Western and other music styles. Other curriculum priorities included learning the foundations of music³⁵; gaining a better understanding of one’s own family history, culture, stories, and songlines; and having research development opportunities, with options for students to research music, culture, and language of their own choice, including specialising in their own cultural heritage. Recommendations included “Western music” industry-based programs,³⁶ encompassing songwriting, creation of original material, performing, and recording³⁷; and opportunities for real world industry learning and application. This included opportunities for involvement in local, national, and international global events. Other priorities included having access to free education³⁸; studio time; First Nations library resources; and a First Nations degree program.

Pedagogical priorities included First Nations students learning together; autonomy in how music is learned, allowing for multiple ways of learning and expressing,³⁹ including those embedded in cultural practice,⁴⁰ and with opportunities for cultural immersion; and

³² This included in teaching “traditional” music.

³³ This encompassed First Nations knowledges and languages.

³⁴ This included that of students’ own people.

³⁵ This included learning music theory and how to read and write music, play musical instruments, and songwriting, performing, and recording.

³⁶ This included with lots of practical and project-based outcomes.

³⁷ This included also notation, publication, and distribution of First Nations repertoire.

³⁸ This included, for example, on songwriting and recording.

³⁹ This requires flexibility and adaptability in teaching.

⁴⁰ This included those not focussed on Western systems, and those inclusive of First Nations “traditional” approaches to teaching and learning.

community education, including learning on Country.⁴¹ Recommendations included one-to-one learning; small classes⁴²; practical group lessons; staff walking alongside and performing with students; and promotion of cross-cultural learning.

Theme 4 Subtheme 1: Facilitating participation and success

Supporting First Nations' Peoples to study music on our own terms, with greater levels of flexibility, and in culturally responsive ways. (Survey participant)

By listening and assessing what their needs are as each person is different. Providing opportunities when they become available. (Mark Munk Ross)

This theme identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could facilitate the participation and success of First Nations students. Key results included providing access to opportunities and to the full range of tertiary music courses; offering programs inclusive of all styles and levels; and having learning environments that embrace and support First Nations ways of knowing, expressing, and sharing.

Priorities included learning environments that are respectful, supportive, enriching, and empowering; and where the unique perspectives, capacities, contributions, and achievements of First Nations people are recognised. Recommendations included providing impactful and ongoing support; understanding that holding space for First Nations students does not necessarily require changes to existing programs; and accepting that First Nations musicians and students can be involved at the highest levels of Western classical music without being consigned to the Indigenous space.

Key curriculum priorities included provision of a range of options⁴³; offering programs that were music industry and cultural performing arts industry connected; adapting programs and teaching styles to be more flexible⁴⁴; providing opportunities for sharing with others while still maintaining a focus on First Nations; and having a degree program specialising in First Nations music. Recommendations for facilitating participation included connecting with students and demonstrating an understanding of students' lived experiences;

⁴¹ This included learning from remote area communities.

⁴² This would facilitate a tailored approach for each individual student.

⁴³ This included foundation programs, certificates, diplomas, degrees, short courses (with credit), workshops, and project-based study options (e.g. albums, tours, staging, recording releases etc).

⁴⁴ This would recognise for example that academic language may be superfluous and discouraging, and allow for alternative styles of learning, including recognition of First Nations cultural transmission processes (music, art, dance, language, talking, and listening).

supporting students' aspirations, goals, and dreams⁴⁵; accommodating family responsibilities and cultural obligations; and helping students understand how a program could make a difference to their music making. Recommendations for facilitating learning included assisting students to understand their individual learning ability and style; assessing learning needs on an individual basis; and providing tailored learning pathways.

Other priorities included learning with other First Nations people; having multiple First Nations teachers and staff; having educators from diverse backgrounds, and educators with an affinity and experience of First Nations music and people⁴⁶; having access to mentoring and tutoring by senior people and First Nations people with lived experience⁴⁷; and having a strong community network base.

Theme 4 Subtheme 2: Supporting students

By providing those safe spaces with key principles of transparency, respect, and diversity for First Nations musicians and facilitating their learning and skill. By empowering students and advocating for their rights. (Kiah Kurtzer)

By always supporting them and making sure they have a better understanding of the lessons being taught. Encouraging them to bring the best out of themselves. Also helping them understand how to build a steady career. (Robert K. Champion)

This theme identified ways in which tertiary music education institutions could support First Nations music students. Key results included implementing holistic approaches to education; providing advice, guidance, and support; accommodating First Nations student backgrounds, circumstances, and needs; and being understanding and flexible. Priorities included being proactive across the full range of student support needs⁴⁸; facilitating access to mentoring, tutoring, and liaison workers; having ready access to instructors, mentors, counselling, and health support workers; and providing reading, writing, and language supports.

Other priorities included recognising racism in First Nations peoples' lives⁴⁹; supporting student self-care; and facilitating connections with other students and broader supports.

⁴⁵ This included by facilitating career building.

⁴⁶ This included by providing staff training.

⁴⁷ This included artists, Elders, and knowledge holders; and through partnership with non-Indigenous staff.

⁴⁸ This was inclusive of academic, career, financial, food, accommodation, health and well-being needs, and pastoral/cultural care.

⁴⁹ This included counselling staff about racism and ensuring support was not subject to racism by staff.

Recommendations included ensuring staff are the right people⁵⁰; providing mentoring by First Nations cultural Elders, established artists, and First Nations course advisors; and facilitating a close relationship with the First Nations Support Unit within the institution.

Theme 4 Subtheme 3: Aspirations, goals, and outcomes

A learning environment that allows us to thrive and champions our ways of knowing, expressing and sharing. (Survey participant)

To learn the tools, build capacity and knowledge that will enable them to share their musical and creative gifts in all environments. (Survey participant)

This theme identified aspirations, goals, and outcomes that were important to First Nations people in considering undertaking tertiary music study. Key results included the importance of outcomes designed by First Nations people⁵¹; ensuring First Nations staff criteria are based on outcomes designed by First Nations students and community; and having study opportunities that support empowerment and make a difference for the student.⁵² Other priorities included being able to help revive and preserve threatened languages and culture; advocate for First Nations rights, and represent First Nations culture and oneself; express creativity,⁵³ and make music that was meaningful; fulfil cultural responsibilities and contribute to community⁵⁴; and contribute to the well-being of First Nations people.⁵⁵

Aspirations and goals included becoming a professional musician⁵⁶; gaining qualifications and experience⁵⁷; and having a pathway to a long-term career in music.⁵⁸ Key study goals included making the best of the opportunity and building on personal strengths and skills; developing musicianship and confidence; strengthening links to culture; learning about First Nations culture and language, and about Country and one's own people, cultural

⁵⁰ This did not mean that all staff needed to be First Nations, but staff should be culturally sensitive, know how to support First Nations students, and be committed to nurturing First Nations musicians and supporting First Nations music.

⁵¹ These included outcomes that facilitate 'cultural safety', cultural connection and sharing, and affirm educational experiences and contribute to closing the gap.

⁵² This included developing Indigenous leadership capacity.

⁵³ This included sharing stories, experiences, and feelings through music.

⁵⁴ This included caring for Country, being involved in community activities, and having the ability to implement community projects and teach in the community.

⁵⁵ This included being able to inspire other First Nations people.

⁵⁶ This included developing an understanding of what this looks like and what is involved.

⁵⁷ This included gaining professional opportunities in the music industry.

⁵⁸ This included having a career that is valued and financially viable.

heritage, and music traditions; and learning to research one's own culture, music history, and knowledges.⁵⁹ Key study aspirations included gaining industry experience and connections to the music industry, including the First Nations performing arts and cultural industries; gaining performing and job opportunities, and paid industry work, and financial security; developing skills to go into the mainstream; and establishing a mainstream presence.

5.3 PART 2 – Interviews

The following section presents summaries of the results of the three in-depth interviews. The data comprised participant confirmed de-identified Main Points Thematic Summaries. The following comprise summaries of this data. The three interviewees were a nationally recognised Elder, activist, and musician with significant experience in engaging with universities; and two nationally acclaimed First Nations songwriters and musicians, both of whom had substantial experience studying and working in universities.

5.3.1 Interview 1: Summary of main points thematic summary

The interview was held on 8 November 2022 in person at the ANU School of Music and lasted for one hour and twenty-six minutes. An audio-visual recording of the interview was made on a MacBook Air laptop, and an audio recording was made on an iPhone. A transcript was created by hand from the audio-visual and audio recordings, and a de-identified thematically organised summary of interview was then developed from the transcript and reviewed and approved by the interviewee.⁶⁰ A summary of *Interview 1 – Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix T) is presented here. The interviewee agreed to identification of the interview quotes. The interviewee wished to emphasise that they were not speaking for their community, but from their own experience.

Values and principles

Values are important. It is important to consider how things can benefit people, and to do things properly to get the best results. This is about integrity, sincere effort, and hard work; not wasting money, time and effort; and “value for money” (Uncle Ossie). The way people communicate is also important. This should be respectful, inclusive, and collaborative, and be based in a sense of “doing things together”. “White ‘spaces’ should not impose solutions – and decision making should be in the hands of First Nations people”. In terms of priorities, it

⁵⁹ This included to help preserve and pass on, and by developing First Nations repertoire.

⁶⁰ See *Interview 1-Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix T).

is important to consider costs, including human intelligence, finances, resourcing, and equipment, which are necessary to bringing out the best results.

Engagement

“Number one is that the university should go out into the community, engage with the community, and support the priorities of the community”. This is an approach that had been adopted by the ANU School of Music and which was appreciated and should continue. It is important that there are also the resources “to follow through with any recommended changes and/or plans”. “People coming from the community to the university is also important”. The university has a lot of equipment and expertise, including for recording, that is not readily available in communities. Also, knowing that people at the university are understanding, and that they want to learn from you as well as you learning from them, is appreciated, so that it is a “two-way street” for all involved. It is important too that the university apply its expertise to supporting within the university, as well as taking skills, resources, and expertise out into the community, contributing to issues raised, and developing community projects. Invitations and funding to bring people to the university are also valued.

Outcomes

Outcomes are about the value of the product, in this case, beautiful music from the School of Music. Modern equipment (i.e. recording equipment) is important to preserving what is produced, providing an opportunity to go over things until it “fits, hand and glove with what we’re about”. It is appreciated at the ANU when people talk together and do things in a way that the best results come out. However, “if your budget doesn’t allow you to do certain things, you just can’t do them”, but there are also ways around this. Expenditure should demonstrate “value for money”, be directed towards the right area, be spent properly, and bring about “the results that we require”.

Access and inclusion

Both access and inclusion are important. Programs need to be more inclusive, including of First Nations musicians who have not finished school or may not know how to read and write music, or read and write well. People should not have to “change” in order to benefit from what university music programs can offer – universities can use the gifts and talents of the people they already have, to achieve this.

Diversity

Being inclusive of diversity is important. This means recognising diversity of languages and cultural traditions; living locations (including rural and remote); educational and musical backgrounds; age; and family responsibilities. It is important to recognise student needs, including those who might not have had a “mainstream” or formal music education, and who otherwise would not be able to gain access to study programs and benefit from what they have to offer.

Teaching and learning programs

It is essential to consider the needs of those who might wish to stay in the community but who would like to benefit from university music programs. This could include by designing programs for delivery in community, including through use of modern technology; and helping young people to develop their skills and knowledge, including through music performance. In community work it is important to assess what is needed; how things could best be done; and who is best suited to do that work.

If there was to be a very special program for Aboriginal input, “what would the cost be? And could the university sustain that sort of idea, because when you’re learning, you’re in a classroom that’s not divided, you know, you’re not black or white ... you’re not Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, you’re all one, learning the same things, you’re learning for the quality of your life in the future ... so I’d have to say that if you had a separate class for Aboriginal people, what would the cost be? Is it sustainable? Is it desirable to have a – and it might already exist – I don’t know?” Everything comes down to money. If there were enough money, then it would be a priority to have targeted programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. If there was a combined class of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, the whole class would be taught the Aboriginal way, and another class the English-Anglo way, not separating students, so that students who do not know Aboriginal people would have a better understanding of Indigenous people and culture. You are trying to teach the best product, and so it’s practical and better to teach everyone the same product. However, if you were teaching Indigenous culture in the same classroom, you would “piece-meal” it to make it more digestible.

Student support

“We need to be thinking and talking about how we can improve programs, so that we can succeed”. It shouldn’t be just left to ‘trial and error’ – we want to get the best we can in

the time that we have with our students. There may be specific things needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particular to their interests and needs. A mix of programs, mainstream and targeted, might be useful. In the case of targeted programs for Indigenous students (i.e. cultural programs to develop Indigenous music and teach Indigenous music cultures), you would have an Indigenous teacher as there would be much more response from the students. The teacher would be saying “well that’s the way *we* do things” rather than “that’s the way *they* do things”. This is about supporting Indigenous students and an Indigenous cultural world view. We need to consider the “humanness” of our programs.

Staffing and employment

It is important to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Elders, who have expertise and knowledge, and who understand Indigenous culture. It is also important to think about “how Aboriginal people can be supported in the education system to gain the benefits of education, whilst at the same time not losing focus on culture”. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers can bring values and culture into universities, including “traditional” cultures. The qualification for working in universities is being Aboriginal, people who have qualifications in the Aboriginal world. They do not have to be able to speak English well, be able to read and write well, or have a formal qualification. However, they should be a “mature” person and have things to teach young people. They should not be employed just because they are Aboriginal, they should have wisdom and life experience and have been through the “trials and errors of life”. Employing the right people is “imperative” for students. In assessing someone it is important to consider their capabilities and suitability for the position and role. They might not necessarily be those with the “highest qualification”, but they should be people who will look out for the students. This can be a matter of success or failure. The priority is “to bring out the best results”.

Support for culture

There are two main Aboriginal musical instruments, the gum leaf and the guitar. Aboriginal people love guitar music – “they love to hear the guitar and love to play the guitar”. On the question of mainstream versus targeted programs for First Nations people, the interviewee observed that they had learned from young that there were two cultures in Australia, one that was “it’s me, it’s me, it’s me” whereas Aboriginal culture was “it’s us, it’s us, it’s us”. Aboriginal people had a “caring and sharing character” that a lot of non-Aboriginal people did not have “so those two cultures were always in conflict”.

Considering whether there should be special projects/programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the interviewee explained that in the past they had argued that programs should be “Aboriginalised” to take into account the “special cultural way of doing things”. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should not have to “forget about their culture”, as you would be “destroying our culture in the process” and “taking away [a person’s] potential to contribute”.

5.3.2 Interview 2: Summary of main points thematic summary

The interview was held on 27 August 2024 via Zoom and lasted for two hours and twenty-nine minutes. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop and were used together with Word Transcribe to create the transcript, from which a de-identified thematically organised summary of interview was developed, which was then reviewed and approved by the interviewee.⁶¹ A summary of *Interview 2 – Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix U) is presented here. The interviewee agreed to identification of interview quotes.

Values and principles

What is paramount is recognition of and respect for Aboriginal knowledge and the power of “black knowing” (Joe Geia). This means having a voice and being heard. Respectful ethical behaviour in community research is also critical, which needs to place a high value on relationships. Music, dance, and art were our ways of communicating; and documentation of our history “is in our song, it’s in our art, it’s in our dance”. “In the music is the moral. In the music is the story. In the Dreamtime story is the moral. That’s who we are!” Music is a universal language, and Aboriginal language is in the music, so the music becomes a universal language.

Engagement

It is very important that tertiary music institutions go out into communities and do things that are useful and good for communities, like recording and working with community. It is also important that community comes to the university, to do recording and creative things like that; and for institutions to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians develop skills, gain access to the music industry, and all those things. Institutions should also engage with schools; and support music outcomes in communities to inspire, encourage and support young people,

⁶¹ See *Interview 2 – Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix U).

“strengthening their spirit” and giving them “something that will inspire them and change their direction”. Being on stage and performing alongside a professional Aboriginal band for example can give them confidence and support from within the community. It is important also that universities develop long term, ongoing relationships with communities and “leave an impact”; and non-Aboriginal people need to spend time really getting to know Aboriginal people in communities and understanding their living circumstances.

Outcomes

Important outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander musicians are development of professional expertise and industry experience. Music is a “healer” too, with significant benefits for health and well-being, for example in addressing youth suicide. Music can also bring happiness, cheer people up, and relieve boredom in isolated communities. And if people love history, music can help them to reminisce, it can be good for Aboriginal people “to go back, in his song, back to the Dreaming”. Music can also play a positive role as a “soother” in multicultural contexts like universities. Tertiary music institutions have a role to play in supporting these outcomes.

Access and inclusion

As Aboriginal people “we needed that white man education to be called educated”, but “intellect” can also come from meeting people, Elders, and other Aboriginal people, and from talking and sharing songs and so on. It is important to recognise that Aboriginal people have other valuable knowledges too (i.e. bush skills, herbal medicine etc.), things that are now in high demand by white people. Many Aboriginal people also have trade skills even though they might not have a “tertiary trade certificate”.

Some may see conservatoriums as being “for the jazz, the classical” and not for “the ones who sit around the campfire and play”. Opening up access and opportunities means getting to know Aboriginal people and having an understanding of their lives and interests. And, when Aboriginal people arrive at the university door, what they need to see is “the most interesting thing”, something that really “grabs that attention”. This might be an “excursion” to a community (like Cherbourg), where they can see for themselves the situation of that community.

Diversity

Universities should be places of cultural safety for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whatever their background.

Teaching and learning programs and support for culture

Specialised programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are important and needed, however, they should not be set apart from the university environment. Aboriginal students should have access to facilities, resources, and opportunities. It is important to recognise that academic language may be incomprehensible to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, so in the beginning, having separate programs could be useful. Our language and our dance come from the Land. We need learning that takes place on Country, “out in the bush” where “it’s like that black fellas in the Dreaming area”. Aboriginal students might have a different relationship with Country however, one that is more respecting.

Learning by experience is important. Universities need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to gain experience in professional and industry spaces. A particular problem for Indigenous musicians is the lack of Aboriginal people in sound production, management, and as agents. Training programs are needed to support these areas. Having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers/lecturers is also very important, and also Aboriginal leadership/mentorship. Positive results have come from Aboriginal tertiary students having an opportunity to hear and learn from experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians who can “tell that story like that black storyteller”, and which can support student writing.

As Aboriginal people, we “share our language, out on the Land” but “we can’t see it in the institutions yet”. When we sing a song, we are using that as an opportunity “to tell our story”. And “there’s always some band singing in language”, which has brought recognition to Indigenous musicians. Universities can support this. Learning traditional music is also important, however this needs to include careful explanation so that students can really understand (e.g. the relationship between Aboriginal language, didgeridoo playing, and bird call).

Music students also need to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, composers, and songs; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and literature are important too in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It can be unhelpful when students are directed towards black experiences in other countries as the first option. There are plenty of relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sources and literature.

Student support

Students want to feel they are in the right place, that's there's a good fit. Having access to facilities and resources (e.g. recording studios, instruments) is important too; and having Aboriginal lecturers/mentors. It is important that students are supported to write on their own terms, and in their own voice; and writers' retreats with other Aboriginal students can be very productive. Indigenous Student Support Units are very important too in providing connection with other Aboriginal people and in helping students feel more comfortable.

Staffing and employment

Aboriginal staff bring valuable cultural knowledges and understanding, history and historical perspectives, and Aboriginal ways of knowing to the learning environment. Aboriginal lecturers can speak from experience and bring a spiritual aspect. There is also value in guest lecturing, but this shouldn't be like "sprinkling salt on food". It is important too to support visiting lecturers, which includes ensuring good communication, and providing opportunities to mingle and meet other Aboriginal people, connect with others, and have experiences that are "exciting", meaningful and worthwhile. It is important that visiting lecturers do not feel like outsiders, and universities need to consider the impacts of historic power imbalances in supporting positive relationships.

Spaces and places

Institutions are "a ground" and the campus is a campus for that open minded student where "everybody's in that frame of mind". Having facilities and resources to support Aboriginal musicians and music students is very important, and cultural spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can learn and gather are also important. Cohorts of Aboriginal students working together with an Aboriginal lecturer can provide spaces of cultural safety.

5.3.3 Interview 3: Summary of main points thematic summary

The interview was held on 9 December 2024 via Zoom and lasted for fifty-two minutes. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop and were used together with Word Transcribe to create the transcript. From this, a de-identified thematically organised summary of interview was created, which was then reviewed and

approved by the interviewee.⁶² A summary of *Interview 3 – Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix V) is presented here. The interviewee agreed to identification of interview quotes.

Rights and social justice

“Self-determination is valuable across this space” (Kaleena Smith). Resourcing is also a major issue and is essential. This should be allocated in line with need and investment should be “meaningful and strategic” and create “real pathways” and “tangible outcomes” for students. Resourcing decisions should be based on Indigenous led review/audits and consultation with First Nations people. There is a need for a paradigm shift. To have these spaces “everything needs to change”. “Let’s break the system down and restructure and start again, and I mean create a whole new framework”. The value of music programs needs to be recognised, and the fact that First Nations musicians are “a major contributor to the economic landscape”.

Principles and values

There is a “disconnect” between what universities would like to do and what community wants. Consultation with community is essential and can provide “a framework for best practice” and “culturally safe spaces for First Nations people in institutions”. There also needs to be a clearer definition of “Indigenous excellence”, one less based in “what the West views as success” and that is more aligned with “First Nations cultural values”. We need to stop thinking in terms of economics and “start thinking about where mob actually want to be”.⁶³ This needs to connect with the “realistic aspirations of community”. Options need to align with the interests of First Nations creatives. Consultation and review/audits to find out what First Nations aspirations are could lead to programs and courses that First Nations people are enthusiastic to participate in.

Recognition and respect

“For real change and real innovation, you need to listen”. “You need to act, and then you actually need to implement and develop that in consultation, in collaboration”. There needs to be “real input from those who have knowledge – and I’m talking about creatives”. Universities also need to “critically examine their motivations for wanting greater First Nations participation”. If the goal is “simply to increase enrolment numbers or meet KPIs”,⁶⁴

⁶² See *Interview 3 – Main Points Thematic Summary* (Appendix V).

⁶³ “Mob” is a term used amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a group and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people connected with a particular place/Country.

⁶⁴ Key Performance Indicators.

rather than to genuinely enrich the experiences and futures of First Nations students, then that's deeply problematic". It "shifts the focus away from meaningful inclusion and self-determined outcomes" and "reduces participation to a metric". It should be about making sure that "mob have access to whatever they want to do" and creating "a welcoming system".

Facilitating access

It is important to think about entry points. Focussing on increasing numbers exponentially is unrealistic and focuses on numbers not outcomes. KPIs do not reflect success. The relationship between universities and secondary schools is also important. Investment in music programs in primary and secondary schools can support First Nations creatives, providing skills for career development and a framework for supporting aspirations through university study. Otherwise, how can First Nations students get into these programs? Universities need to then provide the skills that will allow them to recognise and fulfil their objectives and career aspirations. However, university programs can be limiting, and expense can be a deterrent for programs that don't fit the First Nations person's aspirations.

Rights and recognition

There's a lack of collaboration. It's "okay, you're going to learn our ways, but we're not gonna learn yours". First Nations musicality is not validated and is often overlooked or undervalued because the dominant idea of music is based on Western traditions. There is pressure to fit in with a "Western construct" in order to succeed, rather than making space for First Nations ways of learning, making, and sharing music. The model doesn't fit everyone, "it's our way or the highway", and many won't want to even step into places like universities, which may be of no interest to First Nations creatives. The problem is "there's no alternative being offered". These learning models "leave out cultural context and don't reflect First Nations knowledge systems, practices, or ways of making and sharing music".

Aspirations, goals, and outcomes

Considering the objectives of university study is important. This could be altruistic, but a lot of people want to become musicians and make it a career. Diversifying staffing and having people from different creative backgrounds is critical to a well-rounded vision of musicality. A more inclusive approach should "recognise and value contemporary music practices, including those rooted in community-based, culturally informed, and genre-diverse traditions". This makes space for First Nations and other underrepresented voices to thrive in systems that have historically excluded them. Jazz and classical music in Australia is often

“rooted in privilege” and come from a different world than mob in community, who are “picking up a guitar, singing, learning language, and expressing culture through music in their own ways”. Both approaches are valuable and important, but only one tends to be legitimised in universities, overlooking “the richness and significance of First Nations contemporary and cultural music practices”. If not “people will feel that these spaces aren’t meant for them, and they’ll disengage”.

Priorities in teaching and learning

University programs need to be industry-integrated, and include learning in real-world environments and mentoring by industry and professional people. Partnerships, collaborations, and strong networks are key. Embedding these elements will help students make educated decisions about their careers and develop their creative practice and essential skills like negotiation, business acumen, and strategic thinking. This is about taking a holistic approach to education, and valuing relationship building and cultural context as much as technical expertise.

To increase the capacity of First Nations people in these spaces “let’s talk to mob” and ask “What do you want to do. What kind of music do you like?”. If there’s a gap in terms of what is available, then that is an issue. There need to be people with lived experience in these spaces. Universities need to “shift their spaces”, which have previously been “places of privilege” that feel “exclusionary or disconnected from [peoples] lived experiences and cultural identities”.

The curriculum needs to include learning to perform and engage with First Nations music and culture, and provide support for creating songs in language and conducting research on personal history and the history of communities and music. Learning traditional music is important too, as is the “timeline of changes” – the historical events that have impacted First Nations musicians and music. Indigenous self-determination is also incredibly important in these spaces. The idea that we “enter these institutions only to learn other people’s ways can feel deeply disheartening”. Universities have a responsibility to “support mob in any kind or aspect of their music that they want to be and do”.

Example of excellence

The Eora centre had great programs. It celebrated creatives and was facilitated by teachers who were working musicians. Everything was connected to real world scenarios, solutions, and history. It was laid back, very collaborative, and provided opportunities. Students had time to figure out who they were, as artists and musicians. The programs were

genuinely student-centred, class sizes were small, and there was an emphasis on one-on-one learning and individualised and personal support. Creating an environment where “students have agency and feel seen can make all the difference in their confidence and engagement”.

Spaces and places

The Yil Lull Studios at ANU with Will Kepa is amazing. And Eora is a great space. In the 1990s it was predominantly mob, it was “community” and “that’s where we feel safe”. That’s what we want, and it’s really important that these spaces exist, and that we create community in these spaces. Culturally safe spaces are really valuable. It is important to also define what is meant by cultural safety, and what that looks like.

Health and well-being

It’s like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and everything you need to be a fully functioning healthy person. We need to look at that, because music “saves people”. When the powers that be in institutions don’t have an understanding of the value of this, that’s probably where you need to start.

5.3.4 Summary of Interviews – Main Points

Principles and values

Indigenous self-determination is very important. Decisions should be in the hands of First Nations people and solutions should not be imposed. Values are also important, which is about integrity and respect. This means communicating in ways that are inclusive and collaborative and, also, ensuring ethical behaviour in community research. It is important to consider how things can benefit people, and to do things properly, which means considering costs, financing, and resourcing. Resourcing is essential. Investment should be strategic and meaningful, and expenditure should demonstrate value for money and be directed towards results required by First Nations people. Universities need to also engage with community and develop long term ongoing relationships, really getting to know people and supporting the priorities of community, including by taking resources and expertise out into the community. Institutions should support music outcomes in communities that inspire and support young people and invest in music programs in primary and secondary schools. People coming to universities is also important and funding to support this is valued.

Access and inclusion

Access and inclusion are both important, which means recognising diversity, including of musical and educational backgrounds, and respecting Aboriginal cultural traditions and knowledges. This is about having a voice and being heard. Achieving real change means listening, acting, and implementing in consultation and collaboration with First Nations people. Entry points are important too, and opening up access and opportunities means getting to know Aboriginal people and understanding their lives and interests. Universities should be welcoming, and places of cultural safety for all First Nations people. First Nations people should not have to forget about their culture or change to benefit from what universities can offer. It is important to also recognise student learning needs, including of those who otherwise might not be able to gain access to study programs. This means considering the needs of those who might wish to stay in the community but would like to benefit from music programs.

Paradigm shift

There is a need for a paradigm shift and creation of a whole new framework, and also for a clearer definition of “Indigenous excellence” more aligned with First Nations cultural values. Consultation with community is essential, and options need to be aligned with the interests and aspirations of First Nations creatives. Space needs to be made for First Nations ways of learning, making, and sharing music. Specialised programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are important; however, these should not be set apart from the university environment, and students should have access to facilities, resources, and opportunities. If there were enough money, targeted programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would be a priority. Things should however not be left to trial and error. There may be specific things needed to support First Nations students, particular to their interests and needs.

Programs and staffing

A mix of programs, mainstream and targeted, might be useful. For targeted cultural programs it would be important to have an Indigenous teacher, which can support Indigenous students and an Indigenous world view. It is important to support First Nations people in the education system without losing focus on culture. This means recognising the cultural knowledges, perspectives, and ways of knowing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bring to universities; and employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who

have wisdom and life experience and will look after students. Having the highest qualification is not necessary. What is important is diversifying staffing, and having First Nations leadership, mentorship, and lecturers, including teachers who are working musicians.

Inclusive learning opportunities

First Nations students need opportunities to gain experience in real world professional and industry music learning environments, and to be mentored by industry and professional people. Teaching programs need to include learning to perform, be inclusive of First Nations contemporary music and cultural music practices, and engage with First Nations music and culture, including through learning on Country. Learning “traditional” music is also important, as is support for creating songs in language and conducting research into personal history and the histories of communities and music. Opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, composers, and songs, and having access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sources and literature are also important.

Spaces, health, and well-being

Tertiary music institutions have a role to play in recognising the power and positive role of music in contributing to First Nations health and well-being. Programs need to celebrate First Nations creatives and be genuinely student centred and ensure that students have agency and feel seen. First Nations cultural spaces are important too, and cohorts of First Nations students working together with an Aboriginal lecturer can provide spaces of cultural safety. First Nations spaces are important and create a sense of community, which is what is wanted. Indigenous support units are also important in helping students feel more comfortable.

5.4 PART 3 – Focus Group Workshops

This section presents the results of the four Focus Group Workshops. The data comprised participant confirmed de-identified Summaries of Main Points of Discussion for each of the four workshops. The following comprise summaries of this data. Quote attribution is as per participant agreement.

5.4.1 *Summary: Workshop 1 – main points of discussion*

The workshop was held on 14 December 2023 via Zoom and lasted for two hours. Three participants attended the workshop and there were three apologies. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop, and were used, together with Word

Transcribe, to create the transcript and summary. The summary was then reviewed and confirmed by the participants and de-identified.⁶⁵ A summary of *Workshop 1 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix W) is presented here.

Summary

The project is needed as there are still problems in universities that need to be addressed. This includes the impacts of discrimination and racism, which can prevent people from “having a proper go” (Focus Group participant). Awareness by non-Indigenous staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is also a significant issue. This includes understanding cultural protocols around grieving and Sorry Business; the Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma; and the impact of things that took place in the past, including on current and future generations. Cultural awareness training should not just be a “one stop” kind of thing that happens once, it should be an “ongoing situation”, like a “partnership” (Alinta Barlow). Protocols change and First Nations people are diverse and have different needs, and this is not addressed otherwise. Also, people don’t know what to do with the information they learn, so the “how to” aspect of implementing cultural awareness needs to be addressed too, as a continuous process.

There is an assumption that Aboriginal people are “culturally aware” and have “got it all together” (Focus Group participant). A lot of people are still finding out their heritage, but they love of music and its “a part of their journey of learning”, and once they get strong in music maybe they’ll start looking into their own culture (Focus Group participant). Thinking about how music institutions can support the aspirations and goals of First Nations people, it is important to also take into consideration the introspective aspect of music for a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it’s a “part of who we are, it’s not just about having a performance” (Alinta Barlow).

Also, what you write about can change over time, you start writing about “meaningful things”, like the stories of your great grandparents and the things that impact your daily life, which can come out of being stereotyped and discriminated against (Focus Group participant). It’s about “the journey”, about “how we also develop, and our cultural knowledge as well” (Focus Group participant). When you create a piece of music and you keep performing it and telling other people about the story of it, it becomes so much more meaningful for you. “That’s powerful, and it’s about helping to create your own perspective of your story” (Focus Group participant). You start thinking “am I telling this story or are my ancestors working

⁶⁵ See *Workshop 1 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix W).

through me to tell this story?” and “you unearth things” (Focus Group participant). Also, considering the implications of this for music education, there is a cultural arts course where you have to develop your understanding of your own Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage. If this is a necessity when doing cultural arts, it makes you think about why this isn’t a part of music education if you’re a First Nations person, because music is a “cultural art” too (Alinta Barlow).

5.4.2 Summary: Workshop 2 – main points of discussion

The workshop was held on 2 February 2024 via Zoom and lasted for two hours. Three participants attended the workshop and there were two apologies. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop, and were used, together with Word Transcribe, to create the transcript and summary. The summary was then reviewed and confirmed by the participants and de-identified.⁶⁶ A summary of *Workshop 2 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix X) is presented here.

Summary

Addressing the research question

“You have to be able to see what you can be” (Focus Group participant). ANU has a Summer School for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10–12; however, this doesn’t currently include the School of Music. When people come to the university there needs to be opportunity for us to talk about who we [at the university] are and what we do, otherwise it’s a missed opportunity. Students need to see there’s a space and a place for Aboriginal people and researchers here, to work on community priorities, otherwise there’s potentially no relevance for them. It is important for people to be exposed to what is possible, including at the School of Music. “With more information, more ideas and possibilities, comes more choice” (Rachel). There is something similar at Sydney University, where the Conservatorium goes out to the community. This was such a good program, they had opera workshops, which can open peoples’ eyes. People need to be able to have those experiences. You’ve got to be able to “touch it”, create something, so you can believe in yourself, and this needs to be “hands on” (Focus Group participant).

The Space to Create ANU recording program is fantastic, meeting artists from around Australia. Options to see what it’s like in the music industry are important too, and opportunities for young people who love music to visit universities and see what their options

⁶⁶ See *Workshop 2 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix X).

are, and to be able to see themselves studying music. This is about addressing barriers to access and creating opportunities. We need to find those people out there who love music and let them know they can do it. There's currently a cohort study underway in which 12,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are asked what people do culturally that "keeps their spirits strong, and that keeps them safe and well", and this just upends the "deficit" discourse (Rachel). Music plays a big part in connection to Country, how often we yarn with Elders, all these little things we might take for granted, "music was always in there" (Rachel).

When we're creating more space for engagement and access, we need to answer the 'so what' question for people. What will that mean for you, for your family, what are the possibilities? How do you earn a living but "also keep your spirit strong" (Rachel). If you're passionate about it, you can build a career you love. There needs to be a very clear pathway as to where you could go if you were to do music in tertiary education, and there needs to be "a cultural pathway" as well (Alinta Barlow). This is still seen as a "nice to have" but you can't get that from a "guest lecture", it needs to be "the foundation" (Rachel). This is about "meeting people where they're at", instead of making assumptions about what people will benefit from, it's about "more possibility, more choice" (Rachel).

Any School, or someone teaching students, has to understand that their ignorance can harm people through not having an understanding of their role in trauma recovery and healing. Meeting people "where they are at" is a huge part of that, and "creating safety as people create and as people come together, our people that is, mob making those decisions for themselves" (Rachel). Evidence shows that this can be done, everyone has a role in "making people feel safe and not perpetuating further harm" (Rachel). We really can't afford to "just do the same thing over and over" (Rachel). People working at ANU, as Australia's national university, have a role to play in healing. This includes "restoring how we practise music, restoring how we create, in those ways, and supporting whatever we want to create, in those ways" (Rachel). What has been most effective has been simply telling people what they can do "to prevent further harm and contribute to somebody's healing" (Rachel). From the perspective of a teacher and working with teachers who don't have "cultural competency", teaching also needs to be "more inclusive of different levels, and more inclusive of different backgrounds" (Alinta Barlow).

There is a lot that could be implemented from the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning, which supports healing through things like connecting to Country, Land, and community, and which could be implemented in the music curriculum. Often you might do a lot of the well-being and 8 Ways of Learning sorts of things, but not necessarily strategically, although it

does support that. There is so much more that comes out in music, people talking and information that's been hidden coming out, and then that "increases peoples' connectivity and well-being because they're starting to develop that connection with culture and to storytelling" (Focus Group participant). That would really connect with a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Storytelling has always been a part of things and "stories carry power", so story telling with music is a big part of it too (Focus Group participant). There are all sorts of ways for people to play music, and these need to be honoured and given their place. There's not one way to create music, there's a "common way", but different ways need to be honoured too (Focus Group participant). This connects with well-being, it gives people strength and pride, and universities need to "build on that, and acknowledge it, embrace it" (Focus Group participant).

Universities could also sponsor people out in the community to do some of the teaching work, community musicians who have the necessary skills for teaching the foundations of music (e.g. music theory) before people even start thinking about going to university. This would not be Grade 1 Musicianship etc, because that is so "Western", you can be having fun while also teaching people. This would be about empowering community musicians to be employed out in the community and build this approach.

Draft recommendations

In further considering the matter of non-Indigenous staff cultural competency training, the aim would never be to require that non-Indigenous people are "culturally competent" because "that can never be" (Rachel). What is possible is practising "anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and being healing informed, and being culturally responsive", and taking on "culturally responsive practice" (Rachel). People need to know that their "biases and discriminatory conditioning harms" (Rachel). We want to be in spaces where our "safety is upheld, where our cultures are celebrated, and privileged", "there's not a better way of doing music, it's just different" (Rachel). "Our First Worlds should be restored, because we know that that makes us our resourceful selves for taking on any other world" (Rachel).

That's what it is hoped non-Indigenous people can grasp, but they will never be "competent" because "they've never been raised like us, they haven't gone through what we've gone through and continue to go through" (Rachel). What can happen is that they pull themselves up and go alright "I'm going to address my biases, and I'm going to make sure I'm not doing any further harm", it's the very least we could ask for at this point, because enough was enough a long time ago (Rachel). This is about "anti-discrimination, anti-racism,

and truth telling”, and taking on “healing informed practice” and “culturally responsive practice” every day in their jobs (Rachel).

This could be outlined in the Preamble to the Recommendations as basic principles that underpin everything. It could be explained that First Nations Peoples have cultural rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that institutions should uphold and honour those, especially Australia’s national institutions. “We have a right to be free to practice culture and have no one limit that” (Rachel). The Preamble could spell out the cultural rights of First Nations Peoples, including to self-determination, and the Recommendations would then sit in the context of this bigger picture. “Everyone’s got the right to practice their cultural rights” (Focus Group participant). The university would be “empowering it and creating the space for this to happen”, which would be a “win win” situation, with universities positioning themselves as empowering this and “walking *with* Aboriginal people to help create the opportunity to practice cultural rights” (Focus Group participant). There’s “a role to play for everyone, the load has to be shared now” (Rachel). A paradigm shift is much needed and long overdue. The Preamble would have one section on rights and another on the expression of rights and what this means, which would set the baseline upon which the Recommendations would rest and a foundation from which everything could then grow.

5.4.3 Summary: Workshop 3 – main points of discussion

The workshop was held on 26 February 2025 via Zoom and lasted for two hours. One participant attended the workshop and there were three apologies. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop, and were used, together with Word Transcribe, to create the transcript and summary. The summary was then reviewed and confirmed by the participant and de-identified.⁶⁷ A summary of *Workshop 3 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix Y) is presented here.

Summary

Recommendations to the ANU School of Music

The *Preamble* looks fine. It would be best if the quote were attributed to the Focus Group to keep it simple, and to denote a representative collective stance, which would strengthen the statement. A final statement could relate the Recommendations to what the university wants, connecting commitments by the university with mutual benefits to the

⁶⁷ See *Workshop 3 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion* (Appendix Y).

university and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A “honey and carrots” approach was preferred with wording such as “Universities *can* ...” rather than “Universities *need to* ...”, which would position the recommendations as helping the institution to achieve its targets (Focus Group participant).

Survey Questionnaire results

Feedback on the Survey Questionnaire results documents was that everything seemed to be included (i.e. reflecting the data as a whole), and nothing had jumped out. The view was that it would be great if the data could be utilised for further research, which was confirmed as being a great outcome and one of the reasons for doing the research. The Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis made sense, especially when you looked at the headings. If universities are going to do it, then make sure these things are included, otherwise it will be a “cornflakes packet one” (Focus Group participant). It’s not just about music, it’s about “a holistic perspective of it that can really benefit Indigenous rights and social justice” (Focus Group participant).

The Survey analysis documents will be going to the Indigenous Reference Group prior to going to the School, providing another layer of opportunity for informed First Nations consideration. This process sounded good, and the view was that it was important not to have too many people inputting into the structure/content towards the end of the process; the structure looks sensible and the whole thing doesn’t have to be perfect, it just needs to be done, and others can then leverage off it. It will have created a place for others to stand on, and for further research. This was especially so with respect to the “cultural safety” side of things (Focus Group participant).

One thing that had jumped out of the Survey results was the number of people who had not finished their course, it had been “a *part* of their journey, to get to where they are now” (Focus Group participant). Unlike the majority of tertiary music students, a lot of Aboriginal people have not had long-term engagement in formal music education/training since they were young, which had been recognised in the structure of the CASM Programs, where there was a community musicians access point which consolidated formal academic learning, and which included multiple entry and exit options.

5.4.4 Summary: Workshop 4 – main points of discussion (1)

The workshop was held on 30 July 2025 via Zoom and lasted for one and a half hours. One participant attended the workshop and there was one apology. Two members attended the second Workshop 4 (see below). Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop, and were used, together with Word Transcribe, to create the transcript and

summary. The summary was then reviewed and confirmed by the participants and de-identified.⁶⁸ A summary of *Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (1)* (Appendix Z) is presented here.

Summary

Draft final recommendations

Comments on the Recommendations were that what is recommended could be applied in other contexts, not just universities, and that it was important that the project had landed at the university because it would support everyone else asking for the same thing, but who don't have time to do a PhD. The emphasis on rights and self-determination was important because if any institution or workplace were to adopt the recommendations all their interactions with certain spaces would be "safer" and be "about our wellbeing, and the restoration of our wellbeing" (Rachel). The Recommendations are a reminder about rights, as outlined in UNDRIP, which leaders who have gone before had fought for, so we should still "point to it, reference it, highlight it" (Rachel). The big theme is about "enjoying our rights" and the Recommendations explain "how", telling the School of Music "what their role is in us enjoying our rights" (Rachel). Theming of the Recommendations was considered helpful.

A question was raised concerning the handing over of the Recommendations to the School of Music (i.e. via the Indigenous Reference Group). It was noted that there is an emphasis in the Recommendations on First Nations needing to be leading. However, having an Indigenous Reference Group which holds no power and is not a decision-making body is an issue. In terms of the "how", calling it a Reference Group means that nothing would necessarily need to be done differently. So, the question was "should it be more than a Reference Group?" (Rachel). If you're truly wanting to be led "then there's a mechanism that provides for self-determination at the School, and it's the governance group" (Rachel). The School of Music would then be "leading the way" (Rachel).

Recommendation 19 recommends that the School of Music support and build on existing First Nations programs and provide national leadership in charting the way forward. What exists currently is the Indigenous Reference Group. Recommendation 20 then refers to the need for implementation to be "in collaboration" with the Indigenous Reference Group, and as needing to be Indigenous led. Something could be said which would elevate the Reference Group to a governance group. The view was already expressed in the

⁶⁸ See *Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (1)* (Appendix Z).

Recommendations that the process should be Indigenous led, so there was no need to “recreate wheels, just elevate the Reference Group” (Rachel). The following statement was added to the Implementation strategy section: *In charting the way forward this should build on the current strengths of the existing ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, which should be elevated to a governance body in the School.* This would then be discussed with the other members of the Focus Group prior to inclusion in the final document. The Recommendations were then confirmed.

5.4.5 Summary: Workshop 4 – main points of discussion (2)

The workshop was held on 1 August 2025 via Zoom and lasted for one hour and twenty minutes. Two participants attended the workshop and there was one apology. Audio-visual and audio Zoom recordings were made on a Windows laptop, and were used, together with Word Transcribe, to create the transcript and summary. The summary was then reviewed and confirmed by the participants and de-identified.⁶⁹ A summary of *Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (2)* (Appendix AA) is presented here.

Summary

Draft final recommendations

Feedback on the Recommendations was that there is “a lot in it”, key points being the references to “being out in the community” and the Recommendations as being something you can “actually utilise” (Focus Group participant). The Recommendations were seen as being useful also for other universities. The researcher relayed the fact that the *Preamble* had previously been confirmed by two members. The *Preamble*, including referencing of the quote, and amendment of wording from “people” to “Peoples” was confirmed. The number of Recommendations, and the approach to the thematic structure, contextualisation of the Recommendations, and wording were confirmed.

The researcher relayed comments and proposed amendments from Workshop 4 (1), which had drawn attention to the emphasis on Indigenous rights and to the wording of Recommendation 20 (Implementation Strategy), including what was meant by it and the need for clarity. The concern was that if a Reference Group does not have formal power, it’s views can be dismissed because it is not a decision-making body. If the Recommendations say that self-determination needs to be everywhere, then there is an issue with having a Reference Group with no formal decision-making power. The proposal had been to add a sentence,

⁶⁹ See *Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (2)* (Appendix AA).

building on Recommendation 19. The researcher read out the proposed addition from Workshop 4 (1). This was considered to be “excellent” and “very clear” (Alinta Barlow). The addition was confirmed. With respect to the importance of the national university in leading the way, the comment was “well it needs to be said, they need to hear it, to be honest” (Alinta Barlow).

5.5 Summary of results

The research results for the Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, and Focus Group Workshops address the two key research questions, providing comprehensive and detailed insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music institutions can address these more effectively. The results comprise: Survey Questionnaire (demographic statistical results, statistical results for the forty-nine closed-ended opinions questions, and a Survey opinions thematic analysis summary for the fifteen open-ended questions; Interviews (summaries of Main Points Thematic Summaries); Focus Group Workshops (summaries of Summaries of Main Points of Discussion).

The Survey Questionnaire demographic results (5.2.1) provide evidence of the contribution of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations participants to the research, including as specifically relevant to the field of the research (tertiary music education) and the institutional context of the research (tertiary education institutions). The results for the Survey Questionnaire opinions questions (5.2.2) provide detailed insights addressing four key topic areas: 1. Access to Tertiary Music Education 2. Teaching and Learning 3. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Culture, and 4. Research Programs; each of which comprised a set of closed-ended questions (quantitative data) and a related open-ended question (qualitative data).

The results for the forty-nine closed-ended opinion questions are presented as frequency statistics (Survey opinions frequency tables; Survey opinions frequency means descending order tables) and include a summary of results for each topic area (see 5.2.2). The results for the fifteen open-ended opinion questions are presented as a summary of the *Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis* (Appendix S) (5.2.3). The thematic analysis revealed four main themes and eight subthemes: Theme 1 (Rights and social justice) – Subtheme 1 (Recognition and respect), Subtheme 2 (Principles and values); Theme 2 (Culturally inclusive and responsive practice) – Subtheme 1 (Health and well-being), Subtheme 2 (Connections and connecting); Theme 3 (Facilitating access) – Subtheme 1 (Spaces and places); Theme 4

(Priorities in teaching and learning) – Subtheme 1 (Facilitating participation and success), Subtheme 2 (Supporting students), Subtheme 3 (Aspirations, goals and outcomes).

The results of the three in-depth interviews (qualitative data) are presented as summaries of the individual participant confirmed Main Points Thematic Summaries (Appendices T, U, V) (5.3.1 – 5.3.3). The interviews identified priorities considered important for First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system. Topics discussed encompassed principles and values; recognition and respect; funding and resourcing; institutional engagement; access and inclusion; support for culture; aspirations and outcomes; diversity; teaching and learning; student support; staffing; health and well-being; and spaces and places. The Summary of Interviews – Main Points (5.3.4) provides a thematically organised summary of the interviews.

The results of the four Focus Group Workshop discussions (qualitative data) are presented as summaries of the participant confirmed Summaries of Main Points of Discussion for each workshop (Appendices W, X, Y, Z, AA) (5.4.1 – 5.4.5). The workshop discussions identified priorities considered important for First Nations people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system and contributed to development of the Recommendations to the ANU School of Music. Topics discussed encompassed discrimination and racism; non-Indigenous staff cultural competency; aspirations and goals; access and engagement; curricula and culturally responsive and healing informed practice; cultural rights; and the Recommendations to the ANU School of Music.

Chapter 6 (Findings and Discussion) provides an integrated summary and discussion of the research findings, with a focus on insights offered by a synthesis of the results of the three methods (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group Workshops). This shows the way in which the combined results of the three methods complement one another to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding. The chapter also outlines the limitations of the research and proposes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion: Towards Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Practice

6.1 Introduction

The results presented in the Chapter 5 addressed the two key research questions, providing comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions can address these effectively, grounded in the perspectives and views of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders.

Chapter 6 answers the two key research questions, providing a synthesis and discussion of the findings of the research with a focus on integration of the insights offered by the results of the three research methods (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group Workshops), and showing how they complement one another to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding. The Survey results provided statistical evidence of the strength of agreement to forty-nine closed-ended questions and qualitative evidence based on the responses to fifteen open-ended questions. The Interviews and Focus Group Workshops results provided further qualitative evidence. In combination, the quantitative results shed light on statistical patterns and trends, while the qualitative findings provided deeper insights into the lived experiences, perspectives, and views of the participants. The chapter concludes with comments on the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of findings

The research identified key principles and values considered essential to the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions in the First Nations space. These comprised First Nations rights and social justice, encompassing Indigenous self-determination and educational and cultural rights; equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and antiracism; the contribution of First Nations people; adequate funding and resourcing; and recognition of First Nations cultures, knowledges, and practices.

Culturally inclusive and responsive practice was found to be essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music

education system. This included recognition of the diversity of First Nations Peoples, including cultural, musical, and educational backgrounds; support for the health and well-being of First Nations people, including with respect to “cultural safety”; the importance of connections and connecting in supporting the cultural and educational priorities and career aspirations of First Nations musicians; and support for First Nations research priorities, including Indigenous self-determination in research.

The research identified key contributing factors to the underrepresentation of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system and ways in which tertiary music institutions could facilitate greater access. These included by promoting awareness of study options; addressing access barriers; facilitating genuine pathways; and providing inclusive and culturally responsive offerings. Supportive environments and culturally rich First Nations “spaces and places” were also found to be essential, including in creating “cultural safety” and a sense of community. This included dedicated First Nations cultural spaces and programs.

The research also identified key First Nations priorities in teaching and learning, which need to take into full account the cultural heritage and musical and educational backgrounds of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity. Priorities included access to available programs and to dedicated cultural programs with a focus on First Nations learning priorities and needs. The presence of First Nations staff and involvement of First Nations community members were also found to be essential to progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the tertiary music education system. Increasing First Nations staffing and supporting First Nations staff were considered essential.

Targeted strategies to facilitate the participation and success of students were also found to be essential. These included providing empowering and supportive learning environments; having flexible, student-centred programs that were responsive to individual student learning interests and needs; and involving First Nations teachers, mentors, and community members. Support for the identified aspirations and goals of First Nations students was also essential, which would be different for each student; and study programs needed to support attainment of knowledge, skills, capabilities, and professional expertise, including through real-world and industry-integrated learning opportunities. Targeted student support was also considered essential, which needed to be empowering and based in proactive, holistic, individualised support across the full range of student learning and support needs.

Above all tertiary music education institutions needed to support Indigenous self-determination, and offer inclusive, responsive and supportive programs, inclusive of a diversity of First Nations backgrounds, interests, aspirations, and needs.

6.3 Findings and discussion

The findings and discussion are presented thematically and comprise Theme 1. Principles and values (Subthemes: Indigenous rights and social justice; Recognition and respect); Theme 2. Culturally inclusive and responsive practice (Subthemes: Diversity; Health and well-being; Connections and connecting; Research priorities); Theme 3. Facilitating access (Subtheme: Spaces and places); and Theme 4. Priorities in teaching and learning (Subthemes: Staffing; Facilitating participation and success; Supporting students; Aspirations and goals).¹ Interconnections between themes and subthemes are referenced in the footnotes.

6.3.1 Theme 1: Principles and values

Yindyamarra – a Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri word meaning respect and honouring. More broadly it implies kindness, and graciousness; Winnangaay – a Ngunnawal word meaning to look, listen and learn; Naraganawali – a Ngunnawal word meaning well-being, being well together. (Jude Barlow – Survey)

The research identified key principles and values considered essential to addressing First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs in the Australian tertiary music education system. These fell into two main categories: Indigenous rights and social justice; and Recognition and respect.

Indigenous rights and social justice

The research found that support for Indigenous rights and social justice was considered essential to addressing the interests of First Nations people and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. This encompassed Indigenous self-determination; educational and cultural rights; the contribution of First Nations people; equal opportunity and non-discrimination; and funding and resourcing, which are addressed in turn.

¹ Themes were drawn from the Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis (all themes), the Survey Questionnaire (Staffing and Research Priorities), and the Thematic Framework working document (Diversity).

Indigenous self-determination

White “spaces” should not impose solutions – and decision making should be in the hands of First Nations People. (Uncle Ossie – Interview)

Indigenous self-determination offers “the best chance for genuine and effective measures to support the success of First Nations people” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 237).² The research found that Indigenous self-determination was considered essential to addressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. This corroborates the findings of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord Final Report, which affirmed the importance of “a strong commitment to the fundamental principle of self-determination” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 246) and to policymaking in “full and genuine partnership” with First Nations people (p. 242).³

The findings affirmed that First Nations representation needs to “extend beyond tokenism” to deliver a truly effective mechanism for First Nations people’s “active involvement in decision making” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 247).⁴ Key findings were that Australian tertiary music education institutions need to recognise and support Indigenous self-determination as core business and actively promote First Nations leadership and representation in all aspects and at all levels of decision making.⁵ As First Nations scholars have argued, this will mean considering how the higher education sector can “move beyond tokenistic Indigenous advisory/consultation models, and commit to stronger levels of Indigenous governance within and across universities” (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 4). Tertiary music institutions therefore need to be proactive in advocating for recognition of rights, and take action to bring about change, supporting the contention that for there to be real change in higher education institutions, First Nations people need to be in decision making roles and empowered to “influence the status quo” (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2).

The critical importance of Indigenous self-determination in Australian tertiary music education institutions was evident in the responses to the Survey Questionnaire where there

² This is consistent with Closing the Gap priority reforms which commit the parties to tangible actions where “self-determination is supported, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience is understood and respected” (Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 6).

³ This recognises that First Nations people should be “the custodians of policies, programs and funding that support their participant and progress” and have the freedom to “engage in education and to direct what, how, when and where education takes place” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 246). See also, Glynn-McDonald (2022a); Universities Australia (2023a).

⁴ This includes “in university governance and leadership positions” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 35).

⁵ This means ensuring that “Indigenous voices are represented in key institutional bodies and processes” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 54).

was very strong support for Indigenous-led cultural programs in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (Table 5.63).⁶ It was also evident in the responses to the open-ended question on what an “ideal” tertiary music program for First Nations people would look like, with many participants citing Indigenous-led programs; and in the question on recommended programs for First Nations people, where the majority of respondents cited Indigenous-led programs.⁷

Empowerment and self-determination were considered essential to creating “a supportive culturally affirming space” (Mr Grayson Rotumah – Survey). The findings identified Indigenous-led curriculum developed and taught by Indigenous educators and musicians as necessary to ensuring that the curriculum “accurately reflects and respects the diverse musical traditions and cultural perspectives of First Nations peoples” (Troy Russell – Survey). Recommendations included Indigenous-led curricula developed and taught by Indigenous educators and musicians; co-designing programs together with First Nations musicians, professionals and community; and involving First Nations musicians and community members in the assessment of the value of programs. This last point corroborates the findings of another broader study which argued that “keeping community as a focal point is important in evaluation discussions” (Smith et al., 2018, p. 73).

The findings support the call not only for greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples and musics in tertiary music institutions, but advocacy for Indigenous self-determination as “the central mandate of Australian music institutions” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 78).⁸ As First Nations educators have argued, it will only be through “unwaveringly centring Indigenous voices, sovereignty and scholarship consistently across all policy/practice/research that we may see outcomes change” (Shay et al., 2023, p. 82). For Australian tertiary music institutions, the findings confirm the need for proactive efforts to progress Indigenous self-determination “as core business” (Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020 p. 70) and to ensure that First Nations people have a “genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them” (Closing the Gap, 2020). For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights and recommendations that can support the School in progressing “systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives” (ANU, 2024b, p. 4).

⁶ See also: Theme 3: Subtheme 1 Spaces and places.

⁷ See also: *Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis* (Theme 3: Subtheme Spaces and places).

⁸ See also, Bracknell (2022); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

Educational and cultural rights

First Nations Peoples have cultural rights outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. So, any institution should uphold and honour those, especially Australia's national institutions. We have a right to be free to practice culture and have no one limit that. (Rachel – Focus Group)

Indigenous rights encompass educational and cultural rights (United Nations, 2007, p. 8).⁹ This has significant implications for tertiary music education institutions with respect to advancing social equity (Heard et al., 2023, p. 567) and the dual concerns of music sustainability and social justice (Grant, 2022, p. 118).

A key finding was the importance of culturally responsive curricula that “cater to the unique needs and aspirations of First Nations musicians” and “reflect the diverse musical traditions and contributions of First Nations peoples” (Troy Russell – Survey). The main argument was that everyone has the right to practice cultural rights, and that First Nations people have the right to freedom of expression in creating and playing music, and to study music on their own terms.¹⁰ As an Indigenous scholar in another broader study also argued, “This isn’t about equity. This is about the rights of Indigenous peoples under the UN Declaration. Simple as that” (Ursula, in Smith et al., 2018, p. 61). In the research, universities were seen as having an opportunity to support First Nations rights by “walking *with* Aboriginal people” in creating opportunities to practice cultural rights (Focus Group participant).

These findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, drawing attention to their special role and responsibilities in supporting the “freedom of [cultural] expression” of First Nations people (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7) and strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as “fundamental to improved life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (Closing the Gap, 2020, p. 4).¹¹ The research found that success in higher education was considered vital also to “sustainable music and cultural development” (Diat Alferink – Survey). The findings lend weight to the call for a critique of “who and what” Australian music institutions and scholarship are

⁹ See also, The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education (1999); National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) (2023).

¹⁰ This also supports the argument that “as an expression of culture, Indigenous composition requires a high degree of autonomy within the community-institution setting” (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024, p. 122).

¹¹ See also, Commonwealth of Australia (2023); Australia Council for the Arts (2018); Grant (2022); Sunderland et al. (2023).

sustaining (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, pp. 71–72, 76, 79),¹² and for more “equitable relationships between Indigenous music-makers and music institutions” (p. 77). They also highlight the need for increased investment in First Nations cultural maintenance and expression, and for First Nations-led and “culturally based solutions” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, p. 5).

Contribution of First Nations people

The more First Nations excellence and faces within these institutions, the better the outcomes for our mob. (Elinor Archer – Survey)

The presence and influence of First Nations Peoples is essential to the assertion of First Nations rights and Indigenous agency and authority in tertiary music institutions (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024, p. 122). The research found that the contribution of First Nations people in the work of Australian tertiary music institutions was highly valued and considered essential to beneficial outcomes for First Nations people.¹³

Participants highlighted the valuable expertise, skills, cultural knowledges and understanding, historical perspectives, lived experience, and “Aboriginal ways of knowing” that First Nations people bring to the learning environment (Joe Geia – Interview).¹⁴ The importance of First Nations contribution was evident in the very strong affirmative responses to the Survey questions on the importance of Indigenous-led cultural programs (Table 5.63); programs taught by First Nations practitioners (Table 5.48); programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners (Table 5.50); and programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners (Tables 5.49, 5.60).

First Nations people were seen as playing critical roles in leadership, teaching, mentoring, and support; in developing and implementing curricula inclusive of First Nations music, musicians, and cultures; and in First Nations research. As leading Indigenous scholar, Professor Steve Larkin has explained, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and perspectives in addition to the academic and professional skills of our field of study” (Larkin, 2011, p. 6). Other valued arenas of contribution included in-residence programs for Elders and First Nations musicians; guest lecturing by Elders and

¹² See also, Bendrups et al. (2013); Bracknell (2015); Schippers (2007, 2016); Shippers & Grant (2016).

¹³ See also: Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

¹⁴ This may be considered critical in a higher education context which still “undervalues Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and relationships” (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 4).

First Nations knowledge holders and musicians; and First Nations collaborations with non-Indigenous musicians and staff and students.

The valued contribution of First Nations people extended also to collaboration with First Nations communities, where long-term community-institution relationships and partnerships were considered essential. Recommendations included discussions with First Nations Elders, leaders, and community members to establish student and community learning priorities and needs; strong connections with First Nations communities and organisations to better understand their needs, aspirations, and cultural practices; creation of ‘on Country’ and ‘in community’ learning opportunities for First Nations students; and facilitation of community-based education and music making initiatives.¹⁵ These findings confirm the value of “true partnerships between universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities both within and outside universities as essential to delivering the best outcomes” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 14).

The findings confirm the “vital and critical contributions” of First Nations people in Australian universities (Department of Education, 2024, p. 206). This has significant implications for Australian tertiary music institutions, including with respect to attracting students (NIAA, 2023, p. 6),¹⁶ and in developing curricula and pedagogy better suited to education for First Nations students (Biddle, 2010, p. 29).¹⁷ For the ANU School of Music, the findings confirm the need to promote the leadership and involvement of First Nations people in all arenas and at every level of institutional activity, including through genuine community-institution partnerships and Indigenous-led initiatives.¹⁸

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination

First Nations musicians desire equal access to education, resources, and opportunities, ensuring they can pursue their musical aspirations without facing barriers related to their Indigenous identity. (Troy Russell – Survey)

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination were found to be critical to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Key findings were the importance of equal access to education, resources

¹⁵ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme 3 Connections and connecting; and Theme 3: Subtheme 1 Spaces and places.

¹⁶ The presence of First Nations staff also makes the field more visible and accessible (C. Sainsbury, personal communication, December 14, 2024). See also, Andersen et al. (2008); Liddle (2016).

¹⁷ See also: Theme 4: Subtheme 1 Facilitating participation and Success.

¹⁸ See also, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSHEC) (2023); Universities Australia (n.d.-b.); University of Melbourne (2023).

and opportunities¹⁹; culturally inclusive and responsive curricula and pedagogy²⁰; inclusive hiring practices for First Nations staff²¹; and gender equality. Non-discrimination was considered essential. This included accepting Indigenous identification; promoting equal representation²²; ensuring equality of treatment²³; recognising diversity²⁴; and supporting anti-discrimination and anti-racism.

The findings highlighted the importance of equality of treatment for First Nations staff and students.²⁵ This means understanding and accommodating First Nations students' cultures, aspirations, interests, and needs; and taking into account institutional and personal circumstances, and cultural and family responsibilities.²⁶ This finding confirms the importance of “an environment that understands the obligations of culture, family and community” which is known to contribute to much better outcomes for Indigenous students (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2).²⁷ The findings also attest to the importance of deliberative approaches to equity for First Nations students, which, in the context of diversity of student backgrounds and individuality of circumstances, needs to be determined on a student-by-student basis (Rochecouste et al., 2017). The research found it was also important that First Nations staff were paid for their cultural knowledge and work, and for the extra load they carry.²⁸

Concerns about racism and discrimination in Australian universities have been widely reported (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 46). A recent study found that Indigenous participants believed universities were “built on traditional western notions of knowledge production and reproduction”, and that the structures, practices and informal corporate culture of the university were “inherently ethnocentric and/or racist” (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 124).²⁹ In the research the impacts of discrimination and racism were seen as preventing First Nations

¹⁹ See also: Theme 2: Facilitating access.

²⁰ See also: Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning.

²¹ See also: Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

²² See also: Theme 1: Principles and values.

²³ See also: Theme 4: Facilitating participation and success.

²⁴ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Diversity.

²⁵ This means recognising that equality of treatment does not infer sameness of treatment but means looking at “what individual people and communities need in order to achieve equity” (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b).

²⁶ This includes Sorry Business, the “period of cultural practices” that takes place after someone’s death (Glynn-McDonald, 2022b).

²⁷ See also, Larkin (2011).

²⁸ This is recognised in the ANU Enterprise Agreement 2023–2026 (Australian National University, 2023a).

²⁹ While less obvious than other forms of overt racism, disregarding Aboriginal culture “alienates Indigenous students and impacts their ability to succeed academically by the very fact that knowledges are western-framed” (Wilks et al., 2020, p. 34).

people from having “a proper go” (Focus Group participant).³⁰ Racism can take many forms, including “conscious or unconscious bias” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 243), and universities are advised to avoid making assumptions about First Nations students (Larkin, 2011, p. 5). In the research this included assumptions about the interests and capabilities of students; levels of cultural knowledge; and what students would benefit from. This means recognising for example that First Nations students may not necessarily include cultural elements in their research; can achieve at the highest levels without being “relegated to the Indigenous space” (Rob – Survey); and may wish to be defined by their “academic, music and performance skills”, with their Indigenous status being secondary (Rob – Survey).

What is known is that racism, discrimination, and marginalisation are contributors to low outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association (NATSIPA) and Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), 2023, p. 22). Exclusion is institutional in nature, and it is important therefore that “unconscious forms of discrimination and exclusion” are uncovered and “assumptions about race and racism” are acknowledged, in order to develop more inclusive practices (Larkin, 2011, pp. 8–9). The research found it was critical that non-Indigenous people understand that their biases and discriminatory conditioning can harm, but that it is also possible to practice “anti-racism” and “anti-discrimination” (Rachel – Focus Group).³¹ It was also important that the load carried by First Nations people in managing racism in their lives was recognised. The research also identified the critical importance of non-Indigenous staff cultural awareness, which could be supported through cultural safety training (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., pp. 47–48).³² Respondents in another study underlined the distinction that “cultural awareness” was about the individual, whereas “cultural competency” was about the system, with cultural competency training needing to be “ongoing and tied to the embedding of Indigenous Knowledges across a university” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 71).³³

The research findings sit in the context of longstanding underrepresentation by First Nations musicians in the Australian tertiary music education system (Bendrup et al., 2013, p.

³⁰ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Health and Well-being; and Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

³¹ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Health and Well-being; and Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

³² This corroborates recent research which found that cultural competency training for staff and students was needed “to ensure faculties and classrooms are culturally safe spaces for Indigenous students” (Fredericks et al., 2022, p. 2).

³³ ‘Cultural competency’ may be defined as: *Student and staff knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of Indigenous protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in Indigenous contexts congruent to the expectations of Indigenous Australian peoples* (Universities Australia, 2011, p. 171).

156; Bracknell, 2015, p. 201; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 77),³⁴ and a reality in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music making continue to be situated on the periphery of the work of tertiary music and institutions (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 70). Indigenous higher education needs to be treated as “core university business, not an equity issue” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 1), requiring a whole of university commitment “both philosophically and practically” (p. 3).

The findings draw attention to the need for Australian tertiary music education institutions to address the “marginalisation and inequalities that reduce wellbeing and opportunity” and support equity for First Nations people within tertiary education (Department of Education, 2024, pp. 11, 60, 213). It is incumbent upon tertiary music education institutions to therefore take proactive steps to develop Indigenous-specific strategies that address discrimination and racism (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 46), and to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff.³⁵ The research found that this needed to include counselling staff about racism and ensuring that First Nations student support was not subject to racism by staff, corroborating Fredericks et al. (2022), which found that Indigenous students continue to experience racism in the classroom and that “more needs to be done to address this” (p. 1). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights that can support the School in “promoting positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies” (ANU, 2024b, p. 14) and in realising the “commitment to justice and equality” (p. 4).

Funding and resourcing

Our Universities need to step up. Will it cost them? Yes, but it will also benefit the institutions and the wider staff and student bodies. (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey)

The research found that targeted funding and resourcing for First Nations programs and initiatives was critical to achieving equity and addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Funding and resourcing were considered major issues. This was seen in terms of “more funding to create more opportunity” (Gemma Theatre – Survey). The concern was that “if your budget doesn’t allow you to do certain things, you just can’t do them” (Uncle Ossie –

³⁴ See also, Department of Education (2023a) (2021 student statistics); Department of Education (2022) (2021 staff statistics).

³⁵ This accords with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948) and the *UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education* (UNESCO, 1960).

Interview). A strong critique of tertiary music institutions was that they had become too focused on profits, and that decisions about what is taught and what is not taught were based more on financial viability and profitability than on “the values of First Nations musicians and music” (Corey Theatre – Survey). A leading Indigenous scholar in another study observed also that “universities are happy about equity if somebody else is funding it” (Lester-Irabinna Rigney, in Smith et al., 2018, p. 51). Another study found also that “while some universities are investing expertise and resources into delivering high-level outcomes ... others are not investing in developing a successful model that contributes to this space” (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 87). In the research it was considered important that tertiary music institutions think less in terms of economics and more about “where mob actually want to be”, and ensure that investment is “meaningful and strategic”, which means also considering an alternative perspective that recognises First Nations musicians as “a major contributor to the economic landscape” (Kaleena Smith – Interview). This would then translate into “an increased rate in engagement and completion of courses!” (Brooke Rigney – Survey).

The research found that expenditure should demonstrate “value for money” and be directed towards “the results that we require” (Uncle Ossie – Interview), highlighting the critical importance of First Nations decision making in determining funding and resourcing priorities. It was considered also essential that First Nations programs are well-funded, and that existing First Nations programs are protected from cuts, downsizing, closure, or assimilation. Expansion of existing First Nations institutions was also seen as important, and that there was investment of funding and resourcing to create sustainability. Priorities included facilities and resources for First Nations musicians and music students³⁶; funding for First Nations musicians, lecturers, and community members to support First Nations music and culture; and bringing First Nations people to institutions and taking institutional resources and expertise out into First Nations communities. Recommendations included diverting resources to First Nations music programs and engagements, including to support employment of First Nations culture owners to promote “cultural enrichment” for First Nations students (Survey participant).³⁷

These findings support the call for a commitment by institutions to sustained material investment “commensurate to need” in achieving equity as a priority (Danenberg, 2023, p. 25,

³⁶ This included access to free education programs and free to use spaces such as recording studios, and access to resources, musical instruments, and recording studios/producers.

³⁷ This could include via funding pools such as HEPPP (The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program), which is an Australian Government funding program to support First Nations outcomes in universities. See Department of Education (2025b).

quoting Professor Steve Larkin). They also corroborate the need for targeted initiatives (Department of Education, 2024, p. 21),³⁸ and for “needs-based funding” to support the success of First Nations students (pp. 3, 11, 23).³⁹ Another study found also that additional financial assistance and resourcing was important for First Nations students in remote areas, in supporting access, transition and success in higher education (Bandias et al., 2014, p. 192). For Australian tertiary music institutions, the findings have very significant implications with respect to ensuring adequate funding and resourcing to address identified First Nations priorities and needs,⁴⁰ and in ensuring that Indigenous initiatives to advance the interests of First Nations people are “appropriately resourced” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 40). This will be essential to achieving equity “as an overdue and urgent national priority” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 2).⁴¹

Recognition and respect

They should be listening first and foremost, they should sit back and learn about communities and their needs. (Jude Barlow – Survey)

Recognition and respect for First Nations people, cultures, and knowledges were found to be fundamental to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Cultural respect and inclusion were both considered essential. This meant recognising and respecting First Nations cultural knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and expressing, inclusive of diversity.⁴² Acknowledgment of custodianship of Land and respect for and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols were also essential.⁴³ Recognition and celebration of the contribution of First Nations musicians, composers, and artists within

³⁸ See also, Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. 74, 78); Naylor et al. (2013, p. 5).

³⁹ This recognises that people from groups underrepresented in higher education, on average, “require greater support to succeed” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 3).

⁴⁰ This includes in supporting First Nations staffing; facilitating First Nations student access, participation, and success; developing and implementing culturally inclusive and responsive curricula; establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with First Nations communities; and in engaging with external education providers and professional and industry sectors. See also: Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice, and Subtheme Connections and Connecting; Theme 3: Facilitating access, and Subtheme Spaces and places; Theme 4: Priorities in Teaching and learning, and Subthemes Staffing, and Facilitating participation and success.

⁴¹ This should recognise the need for deployment of resources beyond specialist funding streams like ISSP, which represents only a “minimal commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 23). ISSP (Indigenous Student Success Program) is an Australian Government funding program which provides supplementary funding to universities to offer support services to First Nations students (National Indigenous Australians Agency, n.d.-c.).

⁴² See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Diversity.

⁴³ This accords with the ANU *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026* (Australian National University, 2024b, p. 16).

institutions and in the broader music community were also seen as essential to creating an “inclusive, diverse and supportive environment” (Troy Russell – Survey). Participants referred to the importance of consultation and collaboration; honesty, integrity, and transparency; being listened to and understood; and communication that was respectful and inclusive, and based in a sense of “doing things together” (Uncle Ossie – Interview).

First Nations musicians want to feel welcomed and accepted in tertiary music institutions, and to have their “cultural backgrounds, musical traditions, and creative expressions” respected, understood, and valued (Troy Russell – Survey). A key argument was that First Nations musicians should not have to “leave their culture and lived experience at the door” to enter the institutional space and contribute and succeed (Brooke Rigney – Survey); and students should not have to change or “forget about their culture” to benefit from what music programs could offer (Uncle Ossie – Interview). Rather, the rigid expectations of institutions needed to be “decolonised” so that First Nations musicians could create and learn without having to “mask or put down culture” (Survey participant). Another recent study recommended also that cultural transformative practice should be reflected and embedded into university practices and policies to ensure that the university is providing “a culturally affirming educational environment” that reflects the intent of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 87).

These arguments rest in a position that recognises First Nations music as being as important as Western music, and that there are different ways for people to play and create music, all of which need to be “honoured and given their place” (Focus Group participant). This supports the contention that First Nations students should not have to “check their (own) cultural predispositions at the university’s gate” to successfully partake of what universities have to offer (Kirkness and Barnhard, 1991).⁴⁴ Instead, institutions should be asking what they are doing to become “inclusive to all students, staff, and the wider community”, thereby shifting the onus for change from students to the institution (Naylor & Misfud, 2019, p. 7).

These findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, highlighting the critical importance of inclusive policies and practices that recognise and respect First Nations musicians, music, and culture. This means engaging with First Nations voices and perspectives “on a deeper level” to not only increase the numbers of First Nations students entering the system, but to ensure that the “value of First

⁴⁴ Devaluing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in universities has also been identified as perpetuating a “deficit approach” to First Nations students (Larkin, 2011, p. 8).

Nations knowledge is recognised and incorporated into all institutional systems” (Department of Education, 2023b, p. 98).

For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights and strategies that align with institutional commitments to “respecting, celebrating and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” (ANU, 2021, p. 5), and to ensuring that the “knowledge, cultural expression and lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians [is] acknowledged and celebrated” (ANU, 2024b, p. 15).

6.3.2 Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

The education system has been built around Western pedagogies and approaches to learning and teaching and as such is already at odds with Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing. (Brooke Rigney – Survey).

The research found that culturally inclusive and responsive practice was fundamental to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.⁴⁵ What was clear was that First Nations people want to be able to gain the benefits of a tertiary music education without having to lose sight of culture.

It has been argued that there is a form of “intellectual exclusion” in Australian universities in which the dominant epistemology in teaching, assessment and research serves to devalue Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodologies and ways of knowing (Larkin, 2011, p. 9).⁴⁶ This affirms the need for inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and practices in curricula and teaching practices (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 94–102; Fredericks et al. 2022, p. 1). It also lends weight to the importance of recognising the right of Indigenous Peoples to be educated in their own languages, culture, and history as articulated in the *Barunga Statement* (AIATSIS, 2022). The research confirmed the essential importance of culturally inclusive and responsive practice in Australian tertiary music education institutions, which was summed up by one of the interviewees:

It is important to think about how Aboriginal people can be supported in the education system to gain the benefits of education, whilst at the same time not losing focus on culture. (Uncle Ossie – Interview)

⁴⁵ See also: Theme 3: Facilitating access.

⁴⁶ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander changemakers in higher education are also “still battling a system that does not understand the importance of Indigenous knowledge from a foundation of self-determination” (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC), 2023, p. 1).

The central importance of culturally inclusive practice was evident in the responses to the Survey questions on inclusion of First Nations music, cultures, and languages in the curriculum, where there was very strong support for programs offering performance studies inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres (Table 5.34), and for programs with opportunities to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles and genres (Table 5.56). There was strong support also for programs with opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (Table 5.33); to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (Table 5.47); and to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance (Table 5.43). Opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments (Table 5.58), and to learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language (Table 5.59) were also supported.

In combination, these findings highlight the importance of culturally responsive and inclusive curricula and pedagogy for First Nations students, consistent with embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives in curricula (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 94-97, 102). They also suggest the need for targeted approaches to addressing the interests of First Nations students, highlighting differences between Indigenous studies for all students and education for First Nations students (Mackinlay & Dunbar Hall, 2003; Ma Rhea & Russel, 2012; Nakata, 2006, 2017; Newsome, 1999, 2016; Page et al., 2017). The interrelationships and balance between these priorities are key matters that tertiary music education institutions will need to grapple with.

Participants referred to the importance of curricula that were inclusive of First Nations musical traditions, techniques, culture, histories, musicians/artists, and musical instruments, encompassing diversity; and which provided “opportunities to learn about and engage with Indigenous music” and, also, ensured “diverse representation” (Troy Russell – Survey). This would ensure that the education provided was “relevant and engaging” (Troy Russell – Survey). It was important too to recognise the interconnectedness of First Nations knowledge systems and the interrelationships between song, story, art, dance, and language; and, also, the “richness and significance of First Nations contemporary and cultural music practices”, including “those rooted in community-based, culturally informed and genre-diverse traditions” (Kaleena Smith – Interview). This could be supported by implementing a “holistic cultural approach” and recognising that “music is art, dance and ceremony” (Survey participant).

The research found that tertiary music institutions needed to have a direct affiliation with Indigenous communities and customs, and especially “music, dance, and language”,

which would be beneficial for students to “connect with their Indigenous culture, enrich their understanding and appreciation and marry the traditional with the contemporary” (Survey participant). Approaches to teaching also needed to be culturally inclusive and responsive, acknowledging and valuing “the unique cultural perspectives of First Nations musicians” (Troy Russell – Survey). This means recognising First Nations creative and cultural processes, and cultural transmission practices, including music, dance, language, art, talking, listening, and storytelling.

Of significance were the many Survey responses that highlighted First Nations-centred and First Nations-led programs. These encompassed Indigenous controlled programs; programs specifically for First Nations students; programs based in First Nations culture and embedded in First Nations cultural practices, and ways of teaching and learning; and programs led by First Nations experts and Elders, including for all students.⁴⁷ There were considered to also be opportunities for institutions and non-Indigenous people to learn from First Nations people, including through “cross-learning” by creating educational programs “based upon our ways of teaching and learning” (Brooke Rigney – Survey).⁴⁸ Participants referred also to the importance of “unpack[ing] western colonised systems” (Elinor Archer – Survey); “ngarrama – deconstructing colonial lesson patterns” (Survey participant); creating “a whole new framework” (Kaleena Smith – Interview); and “validating music experience through new program design” (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey).

There is a risk that Indigenous matters may be viewed solely through the prism of access and equity (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2). In combination, the findings suggest the need for a paradigm shift in tertiary music institutions consistent with calls to “decolonize music education and decentre the study of Western classical music” in Australian music institutions (Bracknell, 2022). A critical perspectives approach would examine institutions rather than the individuals within the institution, challenging a deficit approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and shifting the perspective from “pathological *people* to pathological *institutions*” (Larkin, 2011, p. 9). As leading Indigenous scholar Professor Tracey Bunda has argued, “We do need to be able to have that larger dialogue about what this actually means within Indigenous ways of knowledge. We need to be able to think outside of what we have at the moment” (Smith et al., 2018, p. 57). The findings support a strength-

⁴⁷ See also: Theme 3: Subtheme Spaces and places (Tables 5.63 and 5.36).

⁴⁸ This would also recognise that inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in curricula can help professionals better meet the needs of First Nations people, communities, and organisations (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 94–95).

based approach which would “recognise and elevate the unique knowledge and knowledge systems held by Indigenous communities” (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2). To ensure success however, universities will need to have Indigenous curriculum content that is “meaningful, appropriately developed and appropriately resourced”, and such efforts should be Indigenous led (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 55).⁴⁹

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, and music making continue to be situated on the “fringe” of Australian music institutions (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020), and First Nations pedagogies and epistemologies “remain at the periphery of academic practice” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 101).⁵⁰ There is a danger that universities may be viewed as non-Indigenous spaces where the traditional knowledge and cultures of students from a non-Western background are not valued (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 101).⁵¹ It is therefore incumbent upon tertiary music institutions to embrace “alternative pedagogies and different ways of thinking and doing” to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Larkin, 2011, p. 9).⁵² For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights and strategies that can support the School in driving “systemic change” through Indigenous-led initiatives, and in “ensur[ing] that the knowledge and traditions of First Nations people are integrated into the institution” (ANU 2024b, p. 4).⁵³ A strong First Nations workforce “will help achieve this goal” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 11).

Diversity

Without a deep understanding and respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of First Nations peoples, it is impossible to create an inclusive and equitable environment. (Troy Russell – Survey)

The research found that recognition of diversity of First Nations cultural and educational backgrounds and music and music making practices was essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations people in the Australian

⁴⁹ This recognises the right of Indigenous Peoples to “create appropriate structures for the transmission of culture, knowledge and wisdom” (The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education, 1999, Article 3.5).

⁵⁰ See also, Babcock (2000); Newsome (1999, 2016); Turner (1999).

⁵¹ This has very significant implications with respect to First Nations access, teaching and learning, staffing, research, and support for First Nations musicians, music, and culture by tertiary music institutions.

⁵² This does not necessarily mean “a total rejection of Western theory, research or knowledge”, but rather, “promotion and encouragement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives”, and recognition of “equivalence between different forms of knowledge” and the value they can bring “to enrich all areas of scholarship” (Larkin, 2011, pp. 9–10).

⁵³ This will mean also conceptualising intersections between Indigenous and Western systems of knowledge differently and finding “better methodological approaches for negotiating them” (Nakata, 2006, p. 274).

tertiary music education system.⁵⁴ Recognition of the significance of cultural and educational diversity in supporting the equitable access, participation and success of First Nations musicians in the Australian tertiary music education system has been little addressed in the literature.⁵⁵ The research findings contribute to addressing this gap.

Recognition of First Nations diversity means recognising diversity of cultural traditions and languages, and music and education backgrounds. Bracknell and Barwick (2020) note the “diversity of Indigenous people and culture” (p. 72) but report that nearly all music schools in Australian universities continue to prioritise training in European art music practices (p. 75). The diverse musics and music making practices of First Nations Peoples are notably underrepresented (Babcock, 2000; Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020). This highlights the fundamental importance of educational policies and practices in Australian tertiary music education that are more inclusive of First Nations musics and music making.

The essential importance of inclusive practice was confirmed in the responses to the Survey Questionnaire where there was very strong support for programs that offer performance studies inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres (Table 5.34), and programs inclusive of a wide range of music performance styles/genres (Table 5.41). Of significance was the lower level of support for programs where students learn mainly about just one music style/genre (i.e. just jazz, just classical, just pop/rock) (Table 5.42), which is still a common model in Australian tertiary music education. Notably, this received the lowest level of support for any question, drawing attention to the importance of programs inclusive of a range of music styles/genres in addressing First Nations priorities, and in facilitating greater access (Table 5.25).⁵⁶

The research found it was essential that tertiary music education programs were inclusive of diversity of First Nations cultural and educational backgrounds. This was evident in the very strong support for programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds in facilitating access to tertiary music education (Table 5.24); and the strong support for “mainstream” programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds in supporting First Nations music and

⁵⁴ See also: Theme 1: Subtheme Educational and cultural rights; Theme 3: Facilitating access; Theme 4: Priorities in Teaching and Learning.

⁵⁵ Links have been identified however between First Nations music stylistic diversity and barriers to access and inclusion in the Australian tertiary music education system (Newsome, 1999, pp. 96, 99–101). See also, Newsome (2004, 2008).

⁵⁶ See also: Theme 3: Facilitating access. Examples of bachelor level music programs inclusive of a range of music styles/genres include those offered through the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) and SAE University College.

culture (Table 5.62). Of special significance was the strong support for the ANU School of Music to lead the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds (Table 5.53).

These findings were complemented by the responses to the open-ended Survey questions which highlighted the importance of respect for and acceptance of the “diversity of backgrounds of First Nations students” (Rob – Survey). Participants commented on the need for understanding and respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds, histories, and artistic expressions of First Nations people, and for curricula that reflect “the diverse musical traditions and contributions of First Nations peoples” (Troy Russell – Survey). This means recognising and accepting the “diversity of lived experience, culture, and ways of sharing culture” including “modernity and contemporary concepts within Aboriginal culture” (Brooke Rigney – Survey). It was essential too that cultural understanding was recognised as being “different for each individual” and as therefore needing to be “led by the individual” (Survey participant), and also that First Nations spaces include voices from First Nations people “inclusive of (the) cultural diversity” (Kiah Kurtzer – Survey). The importance of recognition of First Nations diversity was also a key finding of another broader study, significant implications being the need to avoid stereotyping and respond to a range of First Nations student support needs (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2085).⁵⁷

The findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music institutions, confirming the importance of more equitable engagement with Indigenous music-makers (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 77), and enhanced responsiveness to the cultural and educational diversity of First Nations musicians consistent with a higher education system that is “characterised by quality, diversity and equity of access” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 44).⁵⁸ This means also understanding that what “culturally based” or “culturally appropriate” looks like in practice will be context dependent, and that what is suitable for one person or community may not be so for another (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018, p. 24).

For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights that can support the School in ensuring that student and staff cohorts “represent the diversity of our nation” (ANU, 2024b, p. 19), and that learning respects and values diversity, where “all

⁵⁷ See also, Oliver et al. (2013, pp. 23, 30); Rochecouste et al. (2017, p. 2093).

⁵⁸ This is also consistent with recognition of the right of Indigenous peoples to “the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations”, which shall be appropriately reflected in education (United Nations, 2007, p. 14).

Australians [can] come together to engage with their chosen disciplines in culturally rich learning and research environments” (p. 5).⁵⁹

Health and well-being

We want to be in spaces where our “safety” is upheld, where our cultures are celebrated and privileged. (Rachel – Focus Group)

The research found that support for First Nations health and well-being was essential to addressing the priorities and aspirations of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

The importance of support for the health and well-being of First Nations people in the work of Australian tertiary music institutions has been little addressed in the literature,⁶⁰ however, as outlined in Chapter 2 (2.4.5), it is well documented that cultural determinants are central to the health and well-being of First Nations people (Sunderland et al., 2023).⁶¹ To thrive in higher education First Nations students and staff need to feel “culturally safe”, which means being in an “inherently safe and respectful environment” (NIAA, 2023, p. 4). Universities can ensure “culturally safe” environments by providing “culturally safe spaces, culturally appropriate curriculum, support services and investment in First Nations academics and staff” (NIAA, 2023, p. 6).⁶²

The research found that “cultural safety” was considered essential to the well-being of First Nations people in engaging with Australian tertiary music education institutions.⁶³ This was summed up by one of the participants, who argued that “universities should be places of cultural safety for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whatever their background” (Joe Geia – Interview).⁶⁴ Participants referred to the importance of culturally safe and inclusive environments within institutions where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students felt “welcomed, respected and supported” (Troy Russell – Survey),

⁵⁹ This is consistent with creating an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to “create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions”, paying attention also to “the special circumstances and needs of various social groups”, including Indigenous peoples (UNESCO, 2005, p. 18).

⁶⁰ Holistic approaches to “the empowerment, health and well-being” of Indigenous students have however been identified as important in tertiary music education (Newsome, 2016, p. 131).

⁶¹ Participation in arts and culture is also recognised as supporting outcomes across the Closing the Gap framework (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018). See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Research priorities.

⁶² Embedding and practising meaningful cultural safety also addresses Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3 outcome (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 4).

⁶³ The term “cultural security” may be preferred, denoting “application of cultural understandings to produce effective practice” and inferring “a level of systemic and policy action support” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 27), which may be considered relevant to the meaning of “cultural safety” as referred to here.

⁶⁴ See also: Theme 3: Subtheme Spaces and places.

including in “mainstream” environments. Tertiary music institutions needed to therefore also recognise the value of the arts and music for First Nations health and well-being, and the healing power of music for First Nations people. This could include through research into the “therapeutic effects” of First Nations music on “mental health, well-being, and cultural identity” and in healing and reconciliation (Troy Russell – Survey); and by recognising the role of music as a “soother” in multicultural contexts like universities (Joe Geia – Interview).

Students want their cultural knowledge and ways of creating music to be valued, and to feel encouraged and empowered and have an opportunity to achieve and thrive. This means having a “culturally rich space” within which to explore (Zak – Survey), and opportunities to connect with and express culture, and share knowledge, language and stories. It also means “creating safety as people create and as people come together, our people that is, mob, making those decisions for themselves” (Rachel – Focus Group). It was important also that there was recognition that First Nations people walk in “two worlds” (Survey participant), and, also, a greater awareness of the Stolen Generations and an understanding of the impacts of “intergenerational trauma” (Focus Group participant). Access to pastoral/cultural care programs was considered to also be very important for First Nations students, who “may need time to digest and care for themselves emotionally and culturally” (Jude Barlow – Survey). The research found it was important too that First Nations staff were recognised for their role in creating “culturally safe” environments, and staff should also be treated with respect and cultural safety.

To provide “cultural safety” an organisation must be “culturally competent” (NIAA, 2023, p. 4). The research found that everyone working in tertiary music education institutions had a role to play in this, and that cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff was essential.⁶⁵ This needed to “go beyond basic understandings” (Survey participant) and be an ongoing and “continuous process” (Alinta Barlow – Focus Group).⁶⁶ The aim would however never be to require non-Indigenous people to become “culturally competent” because “that can never be” (Rachel – Focus Group). This recognises that non-Indigenous people can never become “culturally competent” because “they’ve never been raised like us, they haven’t gone through what we’ve gone through and continue to go through” (Rachel – Focus Group). What was possible though was for staff to become “healing informed” and to take on “culturally responsive practice” to prevent “perpetuating any further harm” (Rachel – Focus Group):

⁶⁵ See also, Kinnane et al. (2014); Universities Australia (n.d.-b).

⁶⁶ See also, Kinnane et al. (2014).

Our First Worlds should be restored, because we know that that makes us our resourceful selves for taking on any other world. That's what it is hoped non-Indigenous people can grasp. (Rachel – Focus Group)

Ensuring culturally safe environments for First Nations Australians must therefore be a priority for higher education (NIAA, 2023, p. 6).⁶⁷ As an Indigenous scholar in another study argued, “No matter how many different policies we have of engagement, and getting the students in, if we’re not making the learning environment safe for them, in terms of seeing themselves reflected positively in the curriculum ... we’re not actually going to change very much (Zac, in Smith et al., 2018, p. 58). When universities become places that are “more welcoming of different perspectives and experiences, they will “become ‘culturally-safe’ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (Larkin, 2011, p. 9). This will mean ensuring that Australian tertiary music education institutions are places where First Nations staff and students “can actively participate and be proud to excel in an environment that celebrates their cultural identities, knowledges, histories and ways of knowing, being and doing” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b, p. 48).

Connections and connecting

Number one is that the university should go out into the community, engage with the community, and support the priorities of the community. People coming from the community to the university is also important. (Uncle Ossie – Interview)

The research found that connections and connecting were essential to addressing the priorities and aspirations of First Nations people and communities in Australian tertiary music education institutions.

Leading First Nations scholar Professor Gary Thomas has argued that the “practice of connection and connectedness” can support conditions in which learners, educators, policy makers, researchers and communities can meet the challenge of the “imperative for Indigenous Education” (Thomas, 2015, p. 1). There is a substantial body of scholarly literature on engagement between tertiary music education institutions and First Nations people and communities.⁶⁸ What is known however is that the degree to which relationships between universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are meaningfully developed varies, and that further work is required to meet a standard that would be

⁶⁷ This needs to recognise however that there is no “one size fits all” approach to every community or every situation (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 4). See also, Raciti et al. (2023).

⁶⁸ See Chapter 2 (2.4.1).

considered “robust, respectful and collaborative” (Universities Australia, 2021, p. 12). This means “redefining community engagement from Indigenous standpoints” (J. Smith, Larkin, et al., 2017, p. 42). A recent study with First Nations students found also that “nurturing connections to place (Country) and each other (relationality)” could create the “cultural safety which is needed to enhance participation and success at university” (Raciti et al., 2023, p. 207). The findings confirm these understandings.

Key findings of the research were the importance of connections with Land and Country; strong ongoing relationships with First Nations communities and community members; collaboration with the school sector; networking, collaboration, and partnerships with First Nations musicians, organisations, professions, and industry; and connections between First Nations people and also with non-Indigenous people in tertiary music institutions.⁶⁹

The importance of connections to Country and to First Nations communities was evidenced in the Survey Questionnaire responses where there was very strong support for programs that offer opportunities for First Nations students to learn “on Country” (Table 5.46), and programs that include opportunities to participate in music performance/project/ events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts (Table 5.35). This was reflected also in the comments, where participants highlighted the importance of learning on Country from Elders and community members, and where students could share a sense of Country and links with community; working relationships and partnerships with First Nations communities, including those local to the institution; and connections to heritage and culture, with opportunities for cultural sharing and exchange, and for creating and performing “on Country”.

An example of this type of learning were the annual Anangu Field Studies Trips undertaken by CASM students and staff to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands) in remote northern South Australia, which incorporated several nights of *inma* (song/ceremony) in which students learned some of the most important “traditional” songs and dances of the central desert region, taught by song owners/custodians in a community context; and also participated in performances and school workshops (Newsome, 2008, p. 45).

In the research, ideas for working with community also included “empowering community musicians” with the necessary skills and knowledge “to be employed to teach out in the community” (Focus Group participant); and having discussions with Elders, leaders and community members to help tertiary music institutions understand the cultural learning needs of First Nations students, and community “needs, aspirations and cultural practices” (Troy Russell

⁶⁹ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Research priorities; Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

– Survey). The research found it was also important that tertiary music institutions establish and maintain strong, long-term relationships with communities and spend time “really getting to know Aboriginal people” and doing things that are “useful for communities” (Joe Geia – Interview). This meant facilitating music outcomes in community that are “inspiring” and “leave an impact” (Joe Geia – Interview). Engagement should support community priorities, including by establishing how best to do things and ensuring the resources “to follow through with any recommended changes and/or plans” (Uncle Ossie – Interview). Equally important was bringing First Nations people to universities, which could support mutual learning and understanding so that it was a “two-way street” for all involved (Uncle Ossie – Interview).

The findings confirmed the importance also of long-term collaborative relationships between universities and schools in supporting First Nations students and encouraging their transition to university.⁷⁰ This was considered especially important where there was a lack of opportunity or support for First Nations music students and/or music education in schools, which could have potential flow on effects, including with respect to First Nations access and learning support requirements at the tertiary education level.⁷¹ It was suggested that music training could be introduced into the Indigenous community school curriculum, so that Indigenous students could become familiar with it and “follow the pathways to further their music studies and careers through tertiary music institutions (Survey participant).

Networking, collaboration, and partnerships with First Nations artists, organisations, professions, and industry were also considered essential to supporting the career aspirations and prospects of First Nations students, and in developing programs, workshops and performances to “celebrate and promote Indigenous music and culture” (Troy Russell – Survey).⁷² Within institutions, connections between First Nations students, and with First Nations musicians, students, staff, Elders, and community members were also important, as were collaborations and cultural exchange with non-Indigenous students, staff, and musicians, to promote cross-cultural learning, mutual understanding, and respect.

These findings have significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, drawing attention to the need for strategies that facilitate connections, including mutually beneficial relationships between tertiary music institutions and First Nations communities, and especially local communities, in supporting First Nations priorities. For the

⁷⁰ See also, Anderson (2020); Behrendt et al. (2012, p. 27); Kinnane et al. (2014, p. 80); Nakata et al. (2019, p. 3).

⁷¹ See also: Theme 3: Facilitating access; Theme 4: Subtheme Supporting students.

⁷² See also: Theme 4: Subtheme Aspirations and goals.

ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights that can help realise institutional commitments to advancing knowledge through community engagement and “partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (ANU, 2024b, p. 5) and to supporting “the aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities” (p. 6).

Research priorities

Tertiary music institutions should prioritize research projects that advance understanding, appreciation, and preservation of First Nations music and culture.

(Troy Russell – Survey)

The research identified research priorities that were considered important in the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions. Key priorities were First Nations practice-based research; research into First Nations music, culture and history; working with First Nations communities and musicians to support and sustain First Nations music, language and cultural heritage; initiatives to help “close the gap”; and Indigenous self-determination.

These findings reflect current directions in Australian musicological research, and in particular, the focus on practice-as-research and research directed towards supporting and sustaining First Nations cultural heritage.⁷³ However, the findings also sit in the context of a historical colonial legacy in which Australian musicological research is yet to “reckon with its role in the power structures of settler colonialism in which it is embedded” (Harris, 2020, p. 19).⁷⁴ Further steps need to be taken therefore to “foreground and promote Indigenous Australian musical self-determination and sovereignty within our research” (Mackinlay & Barney, 2017, p. 184), including in line with critical imperative practices “shaped by indigenous research agendas” (Evans & Lee, 2022, p. 3).⁷⁵ The findings contribute to achieving these objectives.

The research found that First Nations practice-based research was a priority. This was evident in the strong support for creative music making projects (Table 5.64); working with First Nations community members to develop music events and initiatives (Table 5.65); and providing support for First Nations musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia (Table 5.68). This finding aligns with broader Indigenous music sustainability

⁷³ See Barney (2014a); Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bracknell (2019b); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Corn (2013, 2018); Newsome (2008); Sainsbury (2019); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

⁷⁴ See also, Bracknell & Barwick (2020, pp. 74–75).

⁷⁵ This cites Smith (1999) in Denzin (2005, p. 953). See also, Smith (1999, pp. 115–116).

and diversity agendas,⁷⁶ and is something that tertiary music education institutions are already well positioned to make a stronger contribution to, through new initiatives and more proactive and inclusive approaches within existing performance, composition, practical, technical, and outreach programs. Research directed towards sustaining First Nations cultural heritage was also a priority, evidenced by the strong support for working with First Nations song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations “traditional” music and culture (Table 5.66), and for helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music (Table 5.67). Research supporting improved life outcomes for First Nations people was also a priority, evidenced by the strong support for music initiatives to help “close the gap” (Table 5.69).⁷⁷

Participants referred to the importance of research into First Nations music and culture, encompassing cultural heritage, music, musicians, and language; dance, story, musical instruments, and digital music technologies; and the historical and cultural contexts of First Nations music and music making. Suggestions included research into the “similarities and differences [in First Nations culture, language, music and dance] across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations” (Survey participant); the “role of music in expressing Indigenous identity and addressing social issues” (Troy Russell – Survey); and “First Nations musicians working and creating in cultures other than First Nations” (Rob – Survey).

Priorities for research included increasing knowledge and understanding of First Nations music and culture; supporting, reviving and preserving First Nations cultural heritage to pass on to future generations; and Indigenous-led research, including research by First Nations students. Other important priorities included researching community knowledge and working with First Nations communities to record community musicians and collect and document “traditional” and contemporary First Nations music, including through creation of “recordings, sheet music and oral histories” (Troy Russell – Survey); developing Indigenous music archives and making them accessible; and developing and disseminating First Nations music resources and repertoires, including through “linguistic reconstruction and First Nations song revival”, production of notated songbooks, and commissioning, recording and publication of First Nations vocal music, including in First Nations languages (Survey participant); working with communities to revive and teach First Nations culture; and investigating best practice for teaching and learning First Nations music. This included

⁷⁶ Bracknell (2015); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Grant (2022); Schippers (2016); Schippers & Bendrup (2015); Schippers & Grant (2020). See also Chapter 2 (2.5).

⁷⁷ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Health and well-being.

investigating “culturally responsive approaches, Indigenous-centred curricula, and the role of Elders and community members in music education” (Troy Russell – Survey). Respectful and ethical behaviour in community research settings was also identified as essential.⁷⁸

Support for research by students was also considered important, evidenced by the support for programs that help students develop their research skills (Table 5.40). It was important too that First Nations students had the freedom to research whatever was “culturally, artistically and professionally” important to them (Brooke Rigney – Survey), which could include family history research on songs and dances “to keep [the] songlines” alive (Eleanor – Survey). It was considered important also that First Nations students were equipped to “specialise in, preserve, revive and promote their [own] heritage music and language” if they wished (Survey participant), which could include “research[ing] their own stories to put into music” (Robert K. Champion – Survey). Another recent study involving First Nations leaders in universities found also that the “attraction, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students” required attention (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 86).⁷⁹

The research found it was important that First Nations research projects were Indigenous designed and led. This would ensure that First Nations people were no longer “the subject but the authority” (Survey participant); and would support First Nations “autonomy in the music industry, tertiary space and academic space” and contribute to “controlling the narrative and reclamation” (Rhyann Clapham – Survey). Research instigated by First Nations researchers should be highly valued and supported, and projects with First Nations endorsement should also be prioritised, especially those with a performance and/or other industry orientation, “for musicology has had its fair turn already” (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey).

These findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into First Nations research priorities, with significant implications for research policy and practice in Australian tertiary music education institutions. The findings confirm the importance of Indigenous self-determination in research (AIATSIS, 2020a) and strategic approaches by universities to “supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and their research” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 117).⁸⁰ For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer useful evidence-based insights and strategies aligned with institutional commitments to

⁷⁸ This is consistent with the National Health and Medical Research Council (2023) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and the AIATSIS *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020a).

⁷⁹ An HDR (Higher Degree by Research) student is a student enrolled in a post-graduate study program which involves undertaking independent supervised research.

⁸⁰ See also, Department of Education (2024); Bracknell (2015); Turner (1999); University of Melbourne (2023).

furthering “impactful, collaborative, Indigenous-led research and policy development” (ANU, 2024b, p. 5).

6.3.3 Theme 3: Facilitating access

Opening up access and opportunities means getting to know Aboriginal people and having an understanding of their lives and interests. (Joe Geia – Interview)

The research identified ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions could facilitate access by First Nations people to the Australian tertiary music education system. There is a substantial body of literature on the need to address barriers to access and participation by First Nations people in Australian higher education,⁸¹ however there is little scholarly literature addressing ways to further progress this in the Australian tertiary music education system.⁸² The research contributes to addressing this gap.

What is known is that higher education has a critical role to play in “closing the gap” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 11),⁸³ and tertiary music education institutions have a special role to play in facilitating fulfilment of First Nations cultural rights and supporting First Nations musicians, music and music making.⁸⁴ Given the ongoing underrepresentation of First Nations students and staff in Australian tertiary music education institutions (Cakitaki et al., 2022), facilitating greater access to the opportunities and benefits afforded by tertiary music education needs to be a high priority. This was summed up by one of the participants who argued that tertiary music institutions should be “providing opportunities for mob that do not have the opportunities to be in those spaces” (Mark Munk Ross – Survey). An earlier study also drew attention to the need for targeted programs for underrepresented First Nations cohorts in universities, including students from remote areas, students with disabilities, young men, young women as single carers, and prisoners (Kinnane et al., 2014, pp. 61–64, 122). Another study involving Aboriginal students (and staff) in remote and very remote area communities urged universities to support “culturally secure and culturally informed pathways, education provision, and university-community relationships” (Wilks et al., 2020,

⁸¹ See Chapter 2: Underrepresentation and inequity in the Australian higher education system (2.6.2); and Barriers to access and participation in the Australian tertiary music education system (2.6.3).

⁸² Cultural exclusivity, a lack of culturally inclusive offerings and curricula, and inadequate Indigenous employment strategy have been identified as matters requiring attention (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020), as have institutional barriers, including cultural exclusivity, lack of culturally inclusive curricula, and prohibitive entry prerequisites (Newsome, 1999).

⁸³ See also, Bandias et al. (2014); Behrendt et al. (2012); Bradley et al. (2008); Gore et al. (2017a); Hunter & Schwab (2003); Closing the Gap (2020); Pechenkina et al. (2011); Productivity Commission (2024); University of Melbourne (2023).

⁸⁴ See also, Closing the Gap (2020); UNESCO (2005); United Nations (2007).

pp. 35–36), and to embrace students’ strengths and “work in and with their communities” (p. 25).

The research identified contributing factors to underrepresentation and ways institutions could be more proactive in facilitating access. The most significant finding was the link between access and inclusion.⁸⁵ The research found it was essential that tertiary music institutions were inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of musical and educational backgrounds, and were responsive to the learning priorities, needs, and circumstances of First Nations students. Identified inhibiting factors were perceptions of institutional exclusivity; limited availability of suitable education programs; overly restrictive prerequisites and application requirements; financial constraints; and geographic isolation. Other significant factors were a lack of knowledge about what was available and how tertiary study could benefit First Nations musicians,⁸⁶ and inadequate music education and preparation for tertiary music study in schools.⁸⁷ A senior national Indigenous policy maker has advised also that Indigenous students “need to have the capacity and the information necessary to be able to make decisions early on as school students so that they know what is on offer at university and can make informed choices” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 83).

Tertiary music institutions were perceived as spaces “for the jazz, the classical” and not for “the ones who sit around the campfire and play” (Joe Geia – Interview). Institutions needed to “shift their spaces which have previously been places of privilege...[and] that feel exclusionary or disconnected from their [First Nations] lived experiences and cultural identities (Kaleena Smith – Interview).⁸⁸ It was suggested that the lack of suitable programs could be addressed by having courses and programs that were culturally inclusive and corresponded with the interests and aspirations of students.

The research identified a range of ways in which tertiary music education institutions could facilitate access, the most significant being by providing accessible learning environments and flexible study options that “accommodate the diverse needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students” (Troy Russell – Survey). As referred to earlier in the chapter,⁸⁹ this was evident in the very strong support for programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds

⁸⁵ See also: Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice.

⁸⁶ See also, Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. 51–54).

⁸⁷ See also, Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. 17–35).

⁸⁸ These views corroborate the claim that Australian music institutions are “overwhelmingly experienced as white and exclusionary spaces” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 78).

⁸⁹ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Diversity.

(Table 5.24), the strongest result of all the closed-ended Survey questions. It was evident also in the very strong support for programs for First Nations students who do not have a formal music education background (Table 5.22); programs inclusive of a range of music styles and genres (Table 5.25); and programs offering a range of qualifications (Table 5.39), each of which would make a significant contribution to opening up access. Suggestions included part-time study; online courses; short intensives; programs with multiple levels and entry and exit streams; micro credentials; and accelerated programs. What is known is that programs with a range of qualifications can offer multiple benefits, including in providing “a more flexible and responsive skills system” incorporating early exit and articulation pathways from degree programs (Department of Education, 2024, p. 18) and re-entry pathways (p. 97); and, also, credit for previous study and transfer between programs and across the university and TAFE sectors (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 46-48).

The research identified distance learning options as essential to overcoming geographic barriers. This was evidenced by the strong support for programs offered in regional and remote locations (Table 5.26), and for programs combining on-campus and in-community delivery (Table 5.27), both of which could provide flexible study options for those who are not able or who do not wish to leave their home communities.⁹⁰ Another broader study reported also that blended delivery models and bloc release teaching were of benefit to First Nations students studying in remote regions, as well as to those with dependents or employment responsibilities (Kinnane et al., 2014, pp. 91, 115). Other recommendations in the research included no requirement entry level courses “for students who have no formal music training” (Bethany-Rose Marshall – Survey), and which could also be offered in community and/or schools (i.e. certificate or foundation courses); and a First Nations music degree offering (Table 5.38).⁹¹

Of significance was the strong support for bridging programs for First Nations musicians into “mainstream” programs in supporting access (Table 5.23), and the support for bridging programs also in supporting teaching and learning (Table 5.31). A longstanding example is the Foundation Program offered through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at Adelaide University. The finding on bridging programs is consistent with reported support by both universities and students for enabling programs as a way to help

⁹⁰ This may be considered critically important given the overrepresentation of young First Nations people in regional areas who are not engaged with post-school education (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 6); and which could include new models of delivery and collaboration (Department of Education, 2024, pp. 265, 257).

⁹¹ See also: Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning.

First Nations students gain access to university (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 50). Such programs need to be tailored however to the learning aspirations, interests, and needs of First Nations music students; integrated within the academic structures of the institution; and led by experientially informed First Nations musicians/academics. Interestingly, the research found that support for direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations students (i.e. without a bridging requirement) (Table 5.21) was slightly lower than for entry into “mainstream” programs with bridging programs (Table 5.23), suggesting the latter as being a higher priority. What is known is that one of the most important ways of increasing enrolments, particularly for under-represented groups, is through enabling courses, which, although fee-free, need to be “funded at a level that reflects the full cost of delivery” (Department of Education, 2024, pp. 3-4).

Many participants commented on the importance of genuine pathways into tertiary study, including those “that allow for alternative expression of knowledge and skills” (Elinor Archer – Survey).⁹² This was evident in the strong support for flexible entry options recognising merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience (Table 5.30), and the support for alternative entry systems not reliant solely on ATAR or Higher School Certificate (HSC).⁹³ Recommendations included recognition of prior music learning and course credit for prior study and musical experience. Proposed alternative entry systems included “video vs written applications; referees from the community; [and] prior practice over audition systems” (Survey participant). Support for admission processes was also considered important, evident in the very strong support for programs providing support with applications, admissions and orientation (Table 5.28). Other recommendations included personal points of contact, which could potentially be located also in schools/community, flexible application timelines, and plain language and translated application options. A broader study recommended also that staff involved in enrolment processes need to provide good course and career advice, to help students develop realistic expectations of study (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 8).⁹⁴

⁹² Pathway programs for First Nations students can support a “level playing field” for Indigenous students applying to university (Universities Australia, n.d. b, p. 24); which in the context of the findings would need to be inclusive of the interests, aspirations, and diverse educational, musical and cultural backgrounds of First Nations musicians.

⁹³ ATAR is the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank and HSC is the Higher School Certificate (New South Wales only), both of which are used to determine eligibility for entry to university study.

⁹⁴ This included information about “bridging courses, pathways, undergraduate degrees and ‘taster’ opportunities” (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 8).

The research found there was also a need to increase awareness of the availability and accessibility of programs.⁹⁵ Recommendations included promotion and advertising, and community connections and outreach, corroborating the importance of “community-centred strategies” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 130). Other suggestions included community music education programs and community music activities and events. Opportunities for First Nations people to experience what is available and what is possible were also considered very important, a key argument being that “you have to be able to see what you can be” (Focus Group participant). This could for example include visits to tertiary music institutions to see what is available, and where it would be important to have experiences that are interesting and really “grab you” (Joe Geia – Interview). Visits should also include “hands on” experiences “to show people that they can do things, and to see that someone believes in them (Focus Group participant).

The research found it was important that tertiary music institutions also collaborate with the school sector, corroborating findings of the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 17–35). Another study reported that outreach to schools was effective when introduced early in schooling, and could also provide a means for informing communities about university education and finding out about the needs of community (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 23). In the research, outreach was considered particularly important where there was inadequate support for the musical aspirations and educational needs of First Nations music students in schools, and a lack of information about and preparation for tertiary music education, highlighting the duty of the tertiary sector to support Indigenous students in schools and grow the pipeline of First Nations students from school to university (Behrendt, 2015).⁹⁶

The findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music institutions, highlighting the need for proactive targeted strategies to address barriers to access for First Nations people consistent with a “flexible, responsive and inclusive higher education system” as key to making this happen (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 11). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights and solutions that can support the School in fulfilling its national role as a leader in the recruitment of Indigenous students (ANU, 2021, p. 22). As strongly evidenced in the results, this needs to also include First Nations graduates from around the country and from many different communities (Table 5.29).

⁹⁵ See also: Theme 4: Subtheme Aspirations and goals.

⁹⁶ Connections between universities and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector are also considered critically important (Behrendt et al., 2012; Department of Education, 2024).

Spaces and places

Create spaces and places. First Nations musicians will come if it is done in the right spirit. (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey)

The research found that culturally safe and affirming ‘spaces and places’ were essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. There is little scholarly literature addressing the significance of ‘spaces and places’ for First Nations people in Australian tertiary music education institutions.⁹⁷ However, what is known is that in Indigenous music education it is critical to get “place and space” right, the important question being “who is creating that space” (Sainsbury & Newsome, 2024, p. 112).⁹⁸ It is also important to ensure there is “transparency around the methods used in the design and benefits of First Nations spaces” (Kiah Kurtzer – Survey). Culturally safe spaces and practices are recognised as important to supporting First Nations student outcomes (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2); and having a space on campus that feels “safe” and where students can “create a peer environment” is known to impact on the ability of First Nations students to continue with their studies (Behrendt, 2015).⁹⁹ Participants in another study also identified the need to create “a sense of place and belonging” for students (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 123).¹⁰⁰

A culturally affirming environment has been identified as “crucial to student success” (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 84). Many participants commented on the importance of supportive environments and dedicated “cultural spaces” where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students could learn and gather together and create a sense of “community” (Kaleena Smith – Interview). This included having a “physical space for gathering and cuppa tea” (Rhyan Clapham – Survey). One of the Survey participants summed it up this way:

Indigenous people have a strong connection to culture through music so having a safe and culturally rich space to explore and connect further is super important.
(Zak – Survey)

The research found that institutional ‘spaces’ needed to champion First Nations ways of knowing, expressing, and sharing, and be respectful, welcoming, supportive, empowering,

⁹⁷ See Livingstone et al. (2022); McPherson & Onus (2024); Newsome (2016; 2022); Sainsbury (2022); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

⁹⁸ See also, Sainsbury (2022).

⁹⁹ This reference is specific to Indigenous Support Units (Behrendt, 2015), however, it may also be considered applicable to tertiary music education institutions.

¹⁰⁰ See also, Raciti et al. (2017).

and inclusive of First Nations diversity. The meant ensuring spaces were “inclusive” and felt “comfortable for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Survey participant), including for students who might be the only First Nations student in a course.

It was essential that such spaces were physically and culturally safe, and, also, culturally affirming. Participants emphasised the importance of a curriculum where First Nations students could learn and develop skills in a First Nations cultural context, including together with other First Nations people. This included having “cohorts of Aboriginal students working together with an Aboriginal lecturer” (Joe Geia – Interview). It was essential too that First Nations spaces were controlled by First Nations people; had positive outcomes for students and for First Nations people more broadly; and were non-tokenistic, and places for two-way sharing and learning.

Designated First Nations spaces can provide First Nations students and staff and the non-Indigenous university community with “a culturally and intellectually engaging educational setting” (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 83). The research found that First Nations programs and dedicated First Nations cultural spaces were a high priority. This was evidenced by the very strong support for Indigenous-led cultural programs for First Nations musicians (Table 5.63) and programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making in supporting First Nations music and culture (Table 5.61); and, also, by the strong support for programs with identified First Nations spaces in supporting teaching and learning (Table 5.52), which could include dedicated performance spaces and venues.

There was very strong support for programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts (Table 5.51) and strong support also for programs specifically for First Nations students in supporting teaching and learning (Table 5.36). It was considered essential too that First Nations cultural programs had First Nations teachers and were Indigenous led. In combination, these findings confirm the importance of dedicated First Nations spaces and cultural programs, and strong cohorts of First Nations staff and students in supporting First Nations musicians, music education, and music making in tertiary music institutions.

First Nations ‘spaces’ encompass engagement spaces both within and external to tertiary music education institutions. These include admission spaces, and also engagement with First Nations institutions and community, professional, and industry spaces.¹⁰¹

Indigenous Support Units in universities are recognised as playing a critical role in supporting

¹⁰¹ See also, Bartleet, Carfoot, et al. (2016); Marett et al. (2006); Newsome (2016, pp. 133–134); Sainsbury (2019); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024, pp. 110–114, 121–123).

First Nations access, participation and success.¹⁰² This was confirmed by the research which found they were very important in contributing to recruitment, supporting students, and “providing connection with other Aboriginal people and in helping students to feel more comfortable” (Joe Geia – Interview). In another study an Indigenous academic also observed that when “everybody that teaches and works there is Aboriginal” it gives students “that sense of community and belonging” (Tanya, in Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 126). Building strong relationships between tertiary music institutions and Indigenous Support Units may therefore be considered essential.¹⁰³

The findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, highlighting the importance of culturally rich, safe, and supportive ‘spaces and places’ in addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations musicians. Multiple strategies and systems need to be put in place by universities to provide “more culturally safe and responsive environments that support Indigenous students and staff to grow and flourish” (Smith et al., 2018, p. 78). For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer valuable evidence-based insights and strategies that can support the School in offering a “meaningful education” and providing a “culturally appropriate, stimulating, enriching and supportive environment” for both First Nations students and staff alike (ANU, 2024b, p. 19).

6.3.4 Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

To support the growth and development of First Nations musicians, tertiary music institutions should consider implementing teaching and learning programs that cater to their unique needs and aspirations. (Troy Russell – Survey)

The research identified key priorities in teaching and learning for First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. It is argued that without a dramatic cultural shift, post-secondary music institutions in Australia will continue to “essentialize, gloss over and ultimately repel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and musics” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 75). There is a large body of literature calling for the inclusion of First Nations cultural knowledges and ways of knowing in Australian higher education,¹⁰⁴ however

¹⁰² Behrendt et al. (2012); Behrendt (2015); Fredericks et al. (2022); Kinnane et al. (2014).

¹⁰³ Research has found that collaboration with Indigenous centres is important in supporting students to complete their degrees (Fredericks et al., 2022, p. 1), and, also, that support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Indigenous Education Units needs to be “tailored to best suit the student profile” and be “designed in close collaboration with the faculties” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 63).

¹⁰⁴ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (2015b, p. 3); Behrendt et al. (2012, pp. 94–102); Department of Education (2024, p. 11); Kinnane et al. (2014, pp. 88–89); Universities Australia (n.d.-b., pp. 54–55); University of Melbourne (2023, p. 1).

there is little literature identifying the teaching and learning priorities and requirements of First Nations musicians specifically.¹⁰⁵ The findings contribute to addressing this gap.

The overarching finding was the importance of study programs that take into full account the cultural heritage and musical and educational backgrounds, knowledges, skills, achievements, and aspirations of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity. For institutions, this means having programs that cater to all music styles and levels, and a flexible curriculum that is responsive to individual student backgrounds, learning styles, and needs.¹⁰⁶ For First Nations musicians it means having access to the full range of available programs as well as to targeted cultural programs with a focus on addressing First Nations learning priorities and needs. It is important however that specialised programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not separated from the university environment, and that students have “access to facilities, resources, and opportunities” (Joe Geia – Interview).

Like other music students, First Nations musicians want to gain knowledge, skills, and experience, and build individual confidence, capacity, and career readiness. First Nations students want to learn the foundations of music, and gain an understanding of and experience in the music profession/industry, including through real-world and industry-integrated learning opportunities.¹⁰⁷ Priorities included learning music theory and how to read and write music; learning how to play musical instruments; gaining experience in performing and recording; learning composition, songwriting and how to create original material; learning how to notate, publish, and distribute First Nations music; and developing critical thinking, and analysis and research skills. There was strong support also for study programs with a focus on creative outcomes (Table 5.55). It was important too that study programs nurture students’ vision, aims, and creativity; foster personal and artistic growth; and help students gain an understanding of themselves as a musician and artist, and explore and express their artistic voice. This included through support for creation of original material and expression of cultural heritage through song writing and composition, including in First Nations languages. First Nations students also want opportunities for sharing, and to learn from non-Indigenous people; work with musicians from different fields; explore diverse musical perspectives; and experience “mainstream” and be able to progress into the “mainstream”.

¹⁰⁵ See Newsome (2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

¹⁰⁶ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Diversity; and Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice.

¹⁰⁷ This means supporting First Nations students to gain access to and experience in professional and industry spaces, including the cultural performing arts sector. See also: Theme 4: Subtheme Aspirations and goals.

The research found however that there was a “disconnect” between what is currently available and what First Nations people want:

The problem is there's no alternative being offered. These learning models leave out cultural context and don't reflect First Nations knowledge systems, practices, or ways of making and sharing music. (Kaleena Smith – Interview).

For institutions this will mean “working with epistemological and ontological differences” (Nakata, 2017, p. 5) and facilitating productive interaction across cultural boundaries that go beyond “either/or” constructions to “both/and” possibilities in progressing outcomes for First Nations people (Frawley, 2017, p. 77). The research found it was important that tertiary music education institutions consider why they want to have First Nations students, what First Nations musicians want, and what institutions can do for First Nations people and communities?

The overriding view was that programs should be built around the interests and needs of First Nations musicians, and be based in self-determination and autonomy in how music is learned. Participants highlighted the importance of programs with a Western music industry focus,¹⁰⁸ and, also, programs specifically for First Nations students (Table 5.36) embedded in cultural practice, and with opportunities to study in First Nations cultural contexts, thereby supporting career readiness whilst at the same time creating “a cultural pathway” (Alinta Barlow – Focus Group).¹⁰⁹ This finding challenges an assumption that “Indigenous people only want access to non-Indigenous education” (WIPCE International Council, 1999, Article 1.3.2) and would be willing to “abandon their cultural heritage” (Hogarth, 2018b, p. 310). In another study, in which participants were asked how universities could improve support for Indigenous students, a student observed that “Relevant curriculum including Indigenous perspectives and voices build[s] a sense of Indigenous community on campus” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 88). A participant in another study also identified the need for students to feel valued through “connection with what they learn and who teaches it” (Lorraine, in Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2086).

Recommendations included curricula prioritising First Nations music and encompassing First Nations knowledges, cultures, and languages, drawing on First Nations ontologies and epistemologies, and with opportunities for cultural immersion. This included learning “on Country” and participating in “traditional” music workshops, ceremonies, and

¹⁰⁸ Learning the business side of the music industry was also considered important.

¹⁰⁹ It is critically important however that First Nations knowledges and perspectives are also embedded in mainstream programs (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 94–95).

community events. Programs needed to also include opportunities to learn about First Nations music, history, composers, artists, and achievements.¹¹⁰ This should include opportunities for students to gain a better understanding of their own family history, cultural heritage, stories and songlines, and to research music culture and language of their own choice, including specialising in their own cultural heritage. Students should also have opportunities to learn “traditional” First Nations music, and, also, contemporary music styles. Programs could include “rock/pop/jazz/rap/other contemporary or classical or music production” and be “industry based” with “lots of prac – songwriting, recording, performance – all project based with outcomes like albums, tours, [and] community events” (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey). In teaching “traditional” music, it was important to employ “traditional” approaches in teaching and learning; however it was also important to include careful explanations so that students “can really understand” (Joe Geia – Interview).

Implementation of a culturally appropriate (sensitive/responsive) curriculum that includes First Nations music traditions and practices, including language, would create a supportive, inclusive space that will “assist students to feel more connected to their own heritage and creates a special and unique space for musical creativity and expression” (Mr Grayson Rotumah – Survey). Approaches to teaching and learning should be flexible and adaptable and be inclusive of “multiple ways of learning and expressing that are embedded in cultural practice” (Survey participant). This included learning through experience and through “oral and aural traditions” and “story, song and dance”, not “focussed on Western systems” (Survey participant). Participants in a broader study also recommended “the need for pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning for Aboriginal (and non-Aboriginal) students” (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 6).¹¹¹ The research found that “cross learning” between courses was also important “rather than this siloing that we see” (Brooke Rigney – Survey).

A particularly significant finding was the strong support for a degree program with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture (Table 5.38). In Australia it is currently not possible for a First Nations person, or anyone else, to undertake an undergraduate program “coordinated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander instructors to major in Indigenous musics” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 77). Such an offering would make a uniquely valuable contribution to more culturally inclusive and responsive curricula and practice in Australian tertiary music education and would likely be very attractive to First Nations students. A First Nations degree program could be designed as an integrated suite of

¹¹⁰ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Research priorities.

¹¹¹ See also, Rochecouste et al. (2017), which includes recommendations for teaching staff (pp. 2090 – 2092).

programs incorporating multiple program levels (certificates, diplomas, associate degree) and integrated with existing degree offerings, with multiple entry and exit points, thereby supporting flexible approaches to access and inclusion.¹¹² This would align with the recommendation that all Australian higher education providers develop at least one subset of courses that lead to a form of “nested qualification” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 97). Another study found that holistic approaches to embedding Indigenous topics in the curriculum were also crucial, and needed to occur within a coherent framework to ensure “the cultural safety, effectiveness and sustainability” of curriculum development (Raciti et al., 2017, p. 15).

For Australian tertiary music education institutions, the findings confirm the importance of innovative programs grounded in evidence of “what works” and aligned with the “needs, requirements and aspirations” of Indigenous students and community (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 2). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights critical to informing transformative change aligned with a “culturally appropriate” and meaningful educational experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (ANU, 2024b, p. 19).

Staffing

Having First Nations staff in tertiary music institutions is vital to create an inclusive, diverse, and supportive environment. (Troy Russell – Survey)

The research found that First Nations staff were fundamental to realising First Nations rights and addressing the interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Key findings were the very strong support for the involvement First Nations staff in the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions, and the strong support also for working together with First Nations community members in supporting teaching and learning and providing cultural and well-being support, including in community contexts.

More than a decade after the 2012 Behrendt Review called for parity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the higher education sector (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xvii), First Nations staff remain underrepresented in Australian higher education.¹¹³ There is a substantial body of literature on First Nations staffing and the need for parity in Australian higher education,¹¹⁴ and also a body of scholarly literature on the involvement of First Nations people in education and research in the work of Australian tertiary music education

¹¹² See Chapter 7 (7.4) Recommendations.

¹¹³ The First Nations workforce is reported as representing under 2% of staff in Australian universities, with an average staffing level of 1.42% (NIAA, 2023, p. 3).

¹¹⁴ Behrendt et al. (2012); Department of Education (2024); Larkin (2011); National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSHEC) (2023); Universities Australia (n.d.-b.).

institutions.¹¹⁵ However, there is little literature addressing First Nations staffing and the specialist role played by First Nations staff in supporting the aspirations, priorities, and needs of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹¹⁶ The findings contribute to addressing this gap.

Increasing First Nations staffing is critical to “increasing access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 132), and to progressing Indigenous self-determination and creating “a safe and inclusive academy” (Larkin, 2011, p. 7).¹¹⁷ As evidenced earlier in the chapter the research found there was very strong support for the involvement of First Nations staff in the work of Australian tertiary music institutions (Tables 5.48–5.50, 5.60, 5.63) and strong support also for working with First Nations community members, including in community contexts (Tables 5.46, 5.65, 5.66).¹¹⁸

Participants highlighted the important role of Elders, traditional custodians, and knowledge holders, and the need to employ high profile First Nations musicians, and industry specialists, and support staff. First Nations employment should be non-tokenistic and system wide, with inclusive employment practices and observing gender equity. It was also important that institutions employ multiple First Nations teachers/staff,¹¹⁹ and make a commitment to long term engagement. This would mean employing staff from different creative backgrounds, inclusive of contemporary music practice. Non-Indigenous staff were seen as important too in providing opportunities for First Nations students to learn from educators from a diversity of backgrounds, including through partnerships with First Nation staff, and in supporting cross-cultural learning.¹²⁰ Cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous staff was also highlighted. Another study also recommended that professional development programs include components that would enhance “staff awareness, understanding and sensitivity to the history, culture and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal Australians” and promote “adoption of pedagogical strategies that address Aboriginal student learning styles” (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 7).

Of significance were the findings on staff selection criteria, which the research found should focus on outcomes desired by First Nations people. Staff should be “the right person

¹¹⁵ See Bartleet, Sunderland, & Carfoot (2016); Bracknell (2015); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Corn (2009, 2018); Corn & Patrick (2015); Mackinlay (2005); McPherson & Onus (2024); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

¹¹⁶ See Ellis (1985); Newsome (1999, 2008, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

¹¹⁷ It is important to recognise however that First Nations people are not a “passive populace” waiting to be swept into higher education to fill national workforce needs, but “sovereign peoples seeking opportunities to develop and succeed commensurate with our community aspirations” (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 1). See also: Theme 1: Subtheme Indigenous self-determination.

¹¹⁸ See also: Theme 1: Subtheme Contribution of First Nations people; Theme 2: Subtheme Connections and connecting.

¹¹⁹ See also: Theme 2 Culturally inclusive and responsive practice.

¹²⁰ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Health and well-being.

for the job” (Robert K. Champion – Survey). Recommended criteria included maturity, wisdom, and lived experience; First Nations cultural/musical knowledge, expertise and experience; First Nations cultural connection and understanding; affinity for First Nations music and people; commitment to the development of First Nations musicians and music; and “an understanding of how best to support First Nations students” (Robert K. Champion – Survey). Staff should be highly educated, and institutions needed to recognise both formal and non-formal qualifications, inclusive of First Nations cultural knowledges and professional and community expertise and experience.

Flexible employment models for First Nations staff are recognised as important (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 7), and the research found that support for First Nations staff was also essential.¹²¹ This means treating staff with respect and ensuring their cultural safety, taking into consideration “the impacts of historic power imbalances in supporting positive relationships with Aboriginal staff” (Joe Geia – Interview). Mentorships and support were also important in helping First Nations staff to build skills and advance their careers.¹²² Support for visiting lecturers was also essential to ensure that they did not “feel like outsiders” (Joe Geia – Interview). Guest lecturing was considered desirable; however, it was also essential that First Nations staff were a part of core staffing.

These findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music institutions with respect to increasing First Nations staffing levels and supporting First Nations staff. For institutions this will mean moving “beyond aspiration to implementation” through concrete actions and outcomes (Universities Australia, 2024, p. 1). A nation-wide survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Indigenous scholars recommended paying systematic attention “at an earlier stage to the academic potential of Indigenous students making their way through undergraduate and graduate research programmes” (Asmar & Page, 2017, p. 1688). Another study suggested universities consider creating “targeted centres, clusters or university Indigenous research networks that privilege Indigenous knowledges and research and provide an empowering space for Indigenous academics to advance their research profiles” (Buckskin et al., 2018, p. 86). Resourcing also needs to be increased (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 2),¹²³ and Heads of School will need to

¹²¹ This confirms the need to address “the barriers faced by First Nations staff in tertiary education, including to recruitment, retention and career progression” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 249).

¹²² Recognition of the additional work of First Nations staff in “inducting and supporting First Nations students” is also recommended as a “part of core workload” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 4).

¹²³ This could take the form of a “discrete budget for Indigenous recruitment and retention” (Universities Australia, 2024, p. 2), and should include funding to support “Indigenous leadership development” (University of Melbourne, 2013, p. 2).

be “on the front foot” in facilitating employment opportunities (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights that can support efforts to increase First Nations staffing and ensure a “supportive” environment” for First Nations staff (ANU, 2024b, pp. 5, 20).

Facilitating participation and success

We need to be thinking and talking about how we can improve programs – so that we succeed. It shouldn’t just be left to “trial and error” – we want to get the best we can in the time that we have with our students. (Uncle Ossie – Interview)

The research found that targeted support for the participation and success of First Nations students was essential to improving outcomes for First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system. Key findings were the need for flexible teaching approaches inclusive of alternative learning styles; curriculum delivery that was responsive to individual First Nations student learning interests and needs; empowering and supportive learning environments; involvement of First Nations staff; teaching staff with cultural understanding¹²⁴; and ensuring more inclusive definitions of excellence and success.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait students often face multiple challenges at university (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 59) and that the Australian higher education system does not do well at supporting some groups of students to succeed, especially students from underrepresented groups (Department of Education, 2024, p. 138).¹²⁵ There is little scholarly literature addressing the importance of support for the participation and success of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹²⁶ What is known however is that the key to success lies in being responsive to students and tailoring programs to meet student needs (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 7). This means understanding the institutional and personal circumstances faced by students in their everyday lives (Larkin, 2011, p. 5).

The research found there was a need for flexible teaching approaches and tailored learning pathways that were responsive to individual student learning interests and needs, and which allowed students to focus on their own interests, cultures, and cultural contexts. This means listening to and connecting with students; developing an understanding of students’

¹²⁴ This could be supported by providing training for non-Indigenous staff on how to implement culturally responsive teaching.

¹²⁵ A range of factors have been reported influencing the decision of First Nations students to leave university, including “negative experiences living at college; mental health concerns and ‘burnout’; poor fit of the degree with their interests; and a lack of a cohort of Indigenous students” (Fredericks et al., 2022, p. 2).

¹²⁶ See Newsome (1999, 2016).

backgrounds and life experiences; and assessing student learning interests and needs on an individual basis. This needs to recognise that “each person is different” (Mark Monk Ross – Survey), and that “there is no model that fits all First Nation’s students” (Rob – Survey).¹²⁷ Individualised support is therefore critically important and creating an environment where “students have agency and feel seen can make all the difference in their confidence and engagement” (Kaleena Smith – Interview). As one of the Survey participants explained, students will continue to try and engage “if they feel their experiences are heard” (Brooke Rigney – Survey). Another broader study found it was also important to create a relationship and develop rapport with students (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 49), and that students respond, “where there is space for them to contribute, where they are respected and where their opinions are valued” (Jean, staff member, p. 47).

Universities Australia defines student success as “a university experience that fosters the successful completion of a degree that sets up students for favourable outcomes” (n.d.-b, p. 22). The research found however that there was a need to redefine “success” based on outcomes “designed by mob” (Brooke Rigney – Survey), and for a definition of “Indigenous excellence” more aligned with “First Nations cultural values” (Kaleena Smith – Interview).¹²⁸ A senior Indigenous education policy maker in another study also identified the need to establish Indigenous terms of reference for what constitutes success, arguing that “Numbers through or completions met does not always constitute a successful transition or a good experience” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 52). Programs need to be genuinely student centred and focus on “meeting people where they’re at” (Rachel – Focus Group). This needs to ensure “meaningful inclusion and self-determined outcomes” that “genuinely enrich the experiences and futures of First Nations students” (Kaleena Smith – Interview), which means not focussing simply on increasing enrolment numbers and meeting KPIs. It is important to ask students what they want to do, what kind of music they like, and to discuss with them what studying music would mean for them, and where it could take them.¹²⁹

Indigenous student success is known to be linked to the presence of Indigenous academic and professional staff (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023). As evidenced earlier in the chapter there was very strong support for the involvement of First

¹²⁷ See also: Theme 2: Subtheme Diversity.

¹²⁸ This confirms the need for a more holistic definition of student success that includes multiple dimensions and goals of education and personal development “as defined by all stakeholders” (Bennett et al., 2015, p. 21, citing Cuseo, 2007).

¹²⁹ This needs to also include provision of information on how a program of study could benefit a First Nations musician.

Nations people in teaching and learning (Tables 5.48, 5.49, 5.50). This was seen as being about “supporting Indigenous students and an Indigenous cultural world view” (Uncle Ossie – Interview). It was critical too that staff had an understanding of students’ cultures and situations, including recognising the backgrounds of disadvantage that many First Nations students have had to navigate in entering the university; and were encouraging, supportive, and collaborative, walking/performing alongside students and helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Targeted support for learning was considered essential, including for students who did not have a formal music education background. This included support for learning Western music theory (Table 5.32); and for written work, recognising that academic language may be superfluous, incomprehensible, or discouraging for some students. Lecturers also need to support students to write “on their own terms and not override student intent and meaning (Joe Geia – Interview). The strong support for learning music theory and how to read and write music from scratch (Table 5.32) is significant, reflecting prior music and education backgrounds and an interest in learning music literacy as part of tertiary music study. This has implications for tertiary music institutions with respect to facilitating access and addressing diversity of student learning priorities through inclusive curriculum design (Newsome, 1999). Enabling, foundation, and tailored course offerings (e.g. online, short courses) are options, which could also be augmented through course tutorials and targeted tutoring (i.e. ITAS).¹³⁰ Notably, the research found that programs offering separate classes in “traditional” song and dance for First Nations students were considered important for reasons of “cultural safety” (Table 5.45). Other recommendations included dedicated oversight by program coordinators; flexible study workloads, including accommodation of employment and other external obligations; access to First Nations specific learning resources and literature¹³¹; and provision of course credit for music related work/performances undertaken during study.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, the findings have very significant implications, highlighting the need for flexible program delivery and individually tailored and supportive learning pathways for First Nations music students in responding effectively to First Nations student learning interests and needs. For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide

¹³⁰ By way of example, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) has been teaching Western music theory and how to read and write music from scratch for over thirty years (Newsome, 1999).

¹³¹ This included First Nations language dictionaries/grammars, music scores, CDs, research journals, and other resources and literature about First Nations music, musicians, and histories, and especially those authored by First Nations people.

evidence-based insights that can inform targeted strategies for “engaging Indigenous students and enhancing [their] participation and successful completion” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 3).¹³²

Supporting students

The research found that targeted approaches to student support were essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system. There is a substantial body of literature on the importance of support for First Nations students in Australian higher education,¹³³ however, there is little addressing the support needs of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system specifically.¹³⁴ The research contributes to addressing this gap.

Indigenous students face a range of challenges that can have a detrimental impact on their university experience (University of Melbourne, 2023) and on realising their aspirations through tertiary education (Rochecouste et al., 2017).¹³⁵ Completion rates for First Nation students remain lower than for non-Indigenous students,¹³⁶ however, with the right support, many go on to successfully complete their studies (University of Melbourne, 2023).¹³⁷ A large study on the transition of First Nations students into higher education reported that the overall constraints faced by students were “lack of basic foundations in education, social support and the impacts of intergenerational poverty and trauma” (Kinnane et al., 2014, p. 124). What is known is that First Nations student outcomes are impacted by the level of support they receive from the institution, which depends on the “flexibility and capability to respond to First Nations students support needs” (NIAA, 2023, p. 6).¹³⁸ Key ingredients include “a culturally appropriate and supportive environment” (Larkin, 2011, p. 5); understanding

¹³² Multiple factors are known to contribute to student success, suggesting the need for “a multifaceted approach” (Hearn & Kenna, 2021, p. 245) and for use of “evidence-based practice, evaluation, and statistical measurement” in identifying what works for Indigenous students (p. 246).

¹³³ Anderson et al. (2008); Behrendt et al. (2012); Kinnane et al. (2014); National Indigenous Australians Agency (2023); Rochecouste et al. (2017); Universities Australia (n.d.-b.); University of Melbourne (2023).

¹³⁴ See Newsome (1999, 2016).

¹³⁵ These can include family and community responsibilities, financial difficulties, ill health, lack of social support, academic disadvantage, and issues surrounding personal well-being (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 3). Other recognised challenges include work issues, difficulties associated with being separated from “country” and family and community support networks, and settling into the unfamiliar higher education environment (Rochecouste et al., 2017, p. 2081).

¹³⁶ In 2019 the nine-year completion rate for Indigenous students was 47%, compared with 74% for non-Indigenous students (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 23).

¹³⁷ This recognises also that First Nations student engagement with higher education can be “cyclical rather than linear” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 87) and that students “may learn and benefit from doing any university study but may exit before obtaining a qualification” (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 4). Innovations in “microcredentialing and early exit qualifications” may therefore be considered essential (Zacharias & Brett, 2019, p. 14).

¹³⁸ While Indigenous student support may largely be delivered through Indigenous Support Units, student support is a shared responsibility and needs to be provided also within faculties (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., pp. 22, 24).

student challenges “from the position of individual students” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 4); and “responsiveness to students and the tailoring of specific programs to directly meet students’ needs” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 7).¹³⁹ Another study recommended also making sure that students “become familiar with the expectations of tertiary study” and are “taught the skills and knowledge to be proactive about their studies” (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 9). The research corroborates these conclusions and identified a range of ways in which tertiary music education institutions could support First Nations music students.

The key finding was the need for a proactive and holistic approach to student support across the full range of student learning and support needs.¹⁴⁰ This encompassed having supportive staff and teaching and learning environments, and targeted learning, financial, accommodation, and well-being supports. The research found that institutions also needed to empower students, advocate for their rights, and make sure that support was “ongoing and meaningful” (Rhyan Clapham – Survey).¹⁴¹ Participants referred to the importance of “sensitive guidance and informative advice” (Survey participant); individualised support; opportunities to speak with staff; and having teaching staff who were empathetic and supportive and who cared about the development and welfare of students. Access to mentoring was considered essential, evidenced by the very strong support for mentoring by leading First Nations practitioners (Table 5.60) and the many comments highlighting the value of mentoring by senior First Nations staff, Elders, and knowledge holders.

Recommendations for supportive teaching and learning included one-to-one teaching; small classes allowing a tailored approach for each student; a ‘see one, do one, teach one’ approach; practical group lessons; opportunities for performing and recording¹⁴²; writing retreats; and opportunities for shared reflection on learning. Access to additional academic support and tutoring,¹⁴³ including by First Nations tutors, was also seen as essential, including in supporting reading and written work. Other recommendations included language translation of core course material and mentoring of students on a course-by-course basis.

¹³⁹ It has also been suggested that the focus of undergraduate support should be repositioned from “the access gap to the comparative one between educational starting points of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students”, noting that this will have “different impacts for different individuals, in different universities, different degrees, different subjects and for different educational and academic tasks” (Nakata et al., 2019, p. 4).

¹⁴⁰ See also: Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice; Theme 3: Subtheme Spaces and places; Theme 4: Subtheme Staffing.

¹⁴¹ Suggestions included having less red tape and institutional gate keeping, and someone to help with administrative processes such as booking studios, and requesting extensions etc.

¹⁴² This was considered important also for connecting with audiences and for showcasing First Nations talents and music in both the institution and the wider community.

¹⁴³ The ITAS (Indigenous Tutoring Assistance Scheme) is recognised as an important strategy for assisting Indigenous students to complete their degrees (Fredericks et al., 2022).

Participants referred also to the importance of access to First Nations course advisors and liaison officers, and to appropriate emotional and mental health supports, including counselling and mental health care workers. Accessibility was also important, which meant ensuring ready access to teaching staff,¹⁴⁴ and to mentors and mental health support. Accommodation and financial support were found to be critically important,¹⁴⁵ support for accommodation being particularly important for students from regional and remote communities. It was important too that First Nations students had opportunities to connect with other First Nations students and support networks, including “on campus support”; and to be involved in broader campus life such as “sports, clubs, social activities, other bands etc. – all that campus stuff that can benefit any student to become a part of things” (Dr Christopher Sainsbury – Survey).

For Australian tertiary music institutions, the findings provide evidence-based insights that highlight the importance of targeted strategies in supporting First Nations students, consistent with providing a “culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment” (Larkin, 2011, p. 5).

Aspirations and goals

The research identified key aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians in considering tertiary music education, and ways in which tertiary music institutions could support these. There is a significant body of literature on the aspirations and goals of First Nations people in Australian higher education,¹⁴⁶ however, there is little identifying the aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians specifically and ways in which tertiary music institutions can support these.¹⁴⁷ The findings contribute to addressing this gap.

The 2012 Behrendt Review reported “lower levels of aspiration to participate in higher education among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Indigenous Australians” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 20). Reasons cited for this included “a lack of confidence in academic ability, low expectations of academic achievement by teachers and career advisors, and a lack of understanding among friends and family about the opportunities that higher education offers”

¹⁴⁴ The extra workload for staff should be recognised in staff workload allocations.

¹⁴⁵ Financial support included help with tuition fees, living costs, and education expenses (scholarships, grants, bursaries, work study programs, industry opportunities, and other forms of financial assistance), and also access to financial aid counselling services to help students understand their options and navigate financial aid application processes.

¹⁴⁶ Behrendt et al. (2012); Bennett et al. (2015); Department of Education (2024); Gore et al. (2017b); Kinnane et al. (2014); Larkin (2011); Naylor et al. (2013); Thomas et al. (2014).

¹⁴⁷ See Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Millward & Kepa (2022); Newsome (1999, 2008); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

(Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 20). What is known is that programs targeting school-to-university transition can help raise the aspirations of First Nations students (Wilks & Wilson, 2015, p. 23), however recent research has found that schools could do more to motivate and support students to consider university study (Roche Couste et al., 2017, p. 2087). A university/remote area partnership study recommended also that educators and community “develop working relationships and act early to raise students’ aspirations through an awareness of wider possibilities within and beyond their own community” (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 23).

The research identified several other contributing factors specific to the aspirations of First Nations musicians. These included a lack of knowledge about what is available and how tertiary study could benefit First Nations musicians; perceptions of institutional exclusivity; and limited availability of suitable programs.¹⁴⁸ Strategies to “nurture aspiration and help people convert aspiration into action” are therefore vitally important (Department of Education, 2024, p. 125).¹⁴⁹ This means ensuring that First Nations students have access to high quality learning opportunities “aligned with their aspirations” and which allow them to fulfil their potential (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 7).

The research found there was very strong support for programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians (Table 5.54). A range of aspirations and goals were identified, which would be different for each person. Key findings were the desire to attain knowledge, skills, tools, and capabilities; develop confidence and leadership capacity; gain experience and qualifications; become a professional in one’s chosen field/s; develop a sustainable career and attain financial security; and fulfil cultural responsibilities and contribute to culture, community, and the well-being of First Nations people.¹⁵⁰ Cited careers included performer, composer/songwriter, recording artist, teacher, researcher, arts administrator, music therapist, producer, and technician.

The research found that First Nations musicians want to know how undertaking a tertiary music education would benefit them and make a difference to their musicianship, music making, and career trajectory. Throughout the research, participants emphasised the

¹⁴⁸ See also: Theme 2: Priorities in teaching and learning; Theme 3: Facilitating access; Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning.

¹⁴⁹ The Behrendt Review (2012) found that universities need to be places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people “feel they belong” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 51) and suggested a range of strategies for achieving this which may be considered also relevant to addressing the interests of First Nations musicians (pp. 51–54). Indigenous centres/units are also recognised as playing an important role in this (Fredericks et al., 2022).

¹⁵⁰ This included helping to revive threatened culture; representing culture and oneself; sharing family stories through music; advocating for First Nations rights and raising awareness of Indigenous issues through music; inspiring other First Nations people; and contributing to community service (e.g. through music teaching, community workshops).

importance of both gaining First Nations cultural knowledge and strengthening links to culture, and developing professional and industry knowledge, expertise, skills, and capabilities.¹⁵¹

Support for career pathways was considered critical. Many participants spoke of the importance of access to “real-world” learning experiences in professional and industry spaces, inclusive of First Nations cultural performing arts. This was evident in the very strong support for programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/ industry (Table 5.37), and the strong support also for programs with opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts (Table 5.57), consistent with First Nations artists often having multiple artistic practices (Sainsbury et al., 2022). Support for career pathways could be facilitated by having teaching staff with real world experience as working musicians; through mentorships and industry-integrated learning opportunities and work experience; and by having access to information about internships, training workshops, and ongoing education options. The research found there was a current lack of First Nations people in sound production, management, and as music agents, identifying a need for training in these areas. Notably, there was strong support for programs teaching sound engineering from scratch (Table 5.44), which could contribute to addressing this. Other recommendations included codesigning programs to address First Nations aspirations; providing support through career development services and/or an employment agency; providing support for job placements; and having opportunities to participate in local, national, and international industry events.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, it is important to inform First Nations musicians about what is available and what the possibilities are, and to find out what First Nations musicians are interested in and what their career aspirations are, and then provide suitable options and opportunities. Program and course audits/reviews were also recommended, to evaluate the suitability of programs in addressing First Nations priorities and aspirations. Institutional flexibility and responsiveness to the identified aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians should be considered an imperative. This could be supported through an institutional commitment to “continual learning, self-reflection, and improvement” to ensure that the institution “remains responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of First Nations peoples” (Troy Russell – Survey), corroborating Larkin (2011). What is essential is that tertiary music institutions promote higher education as a pathway that is “consistent with and supports

¹⁵¹ This included gaining music industry/business knowledge and skills such as career planning; CV development; managing sole trader tax; understanding how to get a manager or agent; and applying for funding etc.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values rather than [being] at odds with it” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 52), and offer programs that nurture and support the dreams, aspirations, and goals of First Nations musicians, including as described in this chapter.

6.4 Summary and conclusions

For real change and real innovation, you need to listen. You need to act, and then you actually need to implement and develop that in consultation, in collaboration. And there needs to be a real input from those who have knowledge – and I’m talking about creatives. (Kaleena Smith – Interview)

Any significant improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians’ participation in higher education will require “new ways of thinking about and acting to improve results” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 13). The findings presented in this chapter answer the two key research questions, providing comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions can respond to these effectively, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music.

The research confirms the essential importance of support for First Nations rights, encompassing educational and cultural rights, and the fundamental role of Indigenous self-determination in progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Realisation of Indigenous self-determination in tertiary music education institutions requires the involvement of First Nations people in decision making in every aspect and at every level of the institution, together with proactive equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and antiracism policies and strategies. Recognition of the vital role and special contribution of First Nations people in the work of tertiary music education institutions is essential, and proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing and support First Nations staff are recommended. Targeted investment, funding, and resourcing may also be considered critical to progressing First Nations rights and interests in tertiary music education institutions.

Tertiary music institutions need to be welcoming, culturally affirming, and ‘culturally safe’ places for all First Nations people, and institutional environments need to be empowering, and supportive. Recognition and respect for First Nations Peoples, cultures, and knowledges are essential. This means implementing culturally inclusive and responsive

policies and practices that make space for First Nations voices; are inclusive of First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and expressing, inclusive of diversity. Acknowledgment of custodianship of Land and respect for First Nations protocols are also essential. Connection with Country, culture, and community may be considered fundamental to inclusive practice, and institutions therefore need to have strong ongoing collaborative relationships with First Nations communities and community members, particularly those local to institutions. Culturally rich, safe, and affirming First Nations ‘spaces and places’ for gathering, learning, and making music are also essential.

Facilitating increased access by First Nations musicians to Australian tertiary music education institutions needs to be a high priority. This means promoting awareness of programs and their benefits for First Nations musicians; addressing barriers to access; and providing genuine pathways responsive to First Nations interests and requirements. First Nations students should have access to all available programs and to dedicated cultural programs with a focus on First Nations learning priorities and needs. Study programs need to also take into full account the cultural heritage, musical and educational backgrounds, and knowledges, skills, and achievements of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity.

Programs also need to facilitate the participation and success of First Nations students. This requires institutional flexibility and responsiveness to individual learning interests and needs, accommodating alternative learning approaches and supporting the professional goals and career aspirations of students. First Nations teachers, mentors, and community members have a critical role to play in supporting learning outcomes for First Nations students, and all staff need to have cultural understanding and a commitment to empowering and supporting First Nations students. Targeted support for First Nations students is also essential and needs to be based in proactive and holistic approaches across the full range of student learning and support needs. Research and research training in tertiary music institutions should address identified First Nations priorities and promote Indigenous self-determination, including for students.

For Australian tertiary music education institutions, the findings highlight the critical importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights; align with First Nations cultures and values; support the learning priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; recognise First Nations diversity; and above all, observe Indigenous self-determination as the guiding principle.

6.5 Limitations of the research

There were several limitations identified in the study. These related to the scale and scope of the research; sample size and profile; survey questionnaire 5-Likert scale option and question choices; application of the co-design methodology, including time limitations; and researcher identity.

The research comprised a small-scale case study conducted at a single Australian tertiary music education institution. It is recognised that there can be no “one size fits all” approach to implementing institutional change (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 5) therefore the scale of the study may have potential implications for the generalisability of the study. The scope of the study was restricted to an investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system and development of the recommendations for ANU the School of Music.

The participant sample size was relatively small. A larger sample would have added further data to the results which may have contributed to increased statistical reliability. The sample profile was restricted to experientially informed First Nations musicians. A larger sample inclusive of a more dispersed set of voices (e.g. First Nations people studying or teaching in fields other than music or who chose not to pursue a tertiary music education) would have added comparative breadth alongside the depth of expert views and perspectives reported in the research. The sample profile was also restricted to First Nations people aged eighteen and over for ethical reasons, limiting the extent to which the study may be considered inclusive of the views and perspectives of younger First Nations people. The Survey Questionnaire demographic profile may also have impacts on the reliability and generalisability of the findings, mainly with respect to gender (Table 5.2), current living location (Table 5.4), and current state and territory location (Table 5.5).

The Survey questionnaire closed-ended questions employed a simple unipolar 5 Likert scale for importance format, measuring the degree of importance for a given proposition (i.e. identifying participant priorities). The topic questions were framed accordingly. This sought to establish a “conversation” with respondents in thinking about what was more or less important. The choice of a unipolar format based on “importance” might however be considered somewhat weak (i.e. as inferring something “positive”), with possible impacts on reporting and validity of results. Different wording and/or a bipolar format would be alternatives.

One of the closed-ended Survey questions asked respondents whether they had studied at a tertiary music institution but had not received a formal qualification because they did not

complete the full study program ('yes/no/prefer not to say'). This was not followed up with a question asking, 'if so, why not?', as this was considered potentially overly intrusive. However, several respondents commented voluntarily on this in the open-ended questions. It may have been informative to ask this question of all participants who had discontinued their studies.

Scaling of co-design solutions to system-wide responses is an identified limitation of co-design (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737). Although co-design is well suited to individual programs, projects or services (Blomkamp, 2018, p. 737), in "zooming out" to system wide challenges, it is important to recognise the need for variation (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 45). The bespoke co-design study did not aim to develop recommendations for the Australian tertiary music education sector as a whole or consider the implications of the study for other sectors or application in other contexts, suggesting a limitation with respect to generalisability of the findings and recommendations. The study also did not extend to implementation (or trial implementation) and evaluation of the outcomes phases of co-design, due to restrictions placed on the scope of the research as a PhD study, and may thus be considered limited in this regard. A trial implementation phase would have been useful in testing the applicability of the methodology and validity of the findings and recommendations in practice, but only in the specific context of the research at the ANU School of Music. The study was also time limited. Time constraints are recognised as being one of the top barriers to co-design (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 43), and it is known that restrictive time frames can impede the development of meaningful ideas and solutions (Dreise & Mazurski, 2018, p. 24; Government of Western Australia, 2024, p. 6). These factors may have limited the extent of contribution by participants, with potential impacts on the reliability of findings.

Researcher identity was also an identified limitation of the study. The principal researcher was a non-Indigenous person, and the research was therefore not Indigenous led, with impacts on the engagement of some First Nations stakeholders and consequent potential implications for the reliability of findings.¹⁵²

6.6 Recommendations for future research

Recommendations for future research relate primarily, but not exclusively, to addressing the limitations of the research as outlined above. Future research could include: larger scale studies and research involving a larger number of stakeholders and/or a broader sample profile; survey questionnaire research employing a different Likert scale format and/or

¹⁵² A leading First Nations organisation declined to participate in the research due to a policy of prioritising research by First Nations researchers.

asking different/additional questions; research conducted over a longer time frame; co-design case studies in other tertiary music education contexts; research encompassing the implementation and outcomes evaluation phases of co-design; longitudinal studies; research focussed on specific demographics/groups¹⁵³; studies encompassing other areas of First Nations performing arts/cultural education¹⁵⁴; collaborative/comparative research with other providers, agencies, and organisations, including education providers and cultural bodies and institutions¹⁵⁵; music profession/industry related research, including with a focus on First Nations music/cultural industries; internationally focused/comparative research; and First Nations led research.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations provides a summary of the research, including the topic and its importance; gaps in the scholarly literature addressed by the research; research principles, premise, and rationales; research aims, goals, and questions; research design, methodology, and methods; research findings; implications of the findings; beneficiaries of the research; research recommendations; potential impact of future research; research contribution; and final concluding comments.

¹⁵³ This could include for example, First Nations young people, school students and educators, tertiary music students and educators, and people living in particular locations, for example rural and remote areas.

¹⁵⁴ This could include for example, dance, musical theatre, acting, art, and languages.

¹⁵⁵ This could include for example, universities, schools, TAFE, Creative Australia, and First Nations institutions and industry/performing arts bodies.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The research comprised an Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and development of a set of formal recommendations to inform the future strategic direction of the ANU School of Music.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, and music making continue to be situated “on the fringe of Australian music scholarship and knowledge institutions” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020, p. 70) and more needs to be done “to support First Nations knowledge and to close the gap on First Nations disadvantage” (Department of Education, 2024, p. 206). First Nations people remain underrepresented in the Australian tertiary music education system,¹ and First Nations musicians still encounter prohibitive access and participation barriers to engaging with and therefore benefiting, on an equitable basis, from what Australian tertiary music education institutions have to offer. The research sought to contribute to addressing these long-standing historic inequities and challenges.

There is a large body of scholarly literature on equity and inclusion and the engagement of Australian universities with First Nations peoples and communities.² There is however a lack of nationally focussed Indigenous-informed research identifying and addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with Australian tertiary music education institutions specifically; and also little scholarly literature addressing the rights of First Nations Peoples and First Nations underrepresentation, equity, and inclusion (access, participation, and success) in the Australian tertiary music education system. This includes in considering the implications of the Behrendt Review (Behrendt et al., 2012) and the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (2020) for Australian tertiary music education institutions. The research contributes to addressing these gaps.

¹ Cakitaki et al. (2022); National Indigenous Australians Agency (2023).

² See Chapter 2 (2.4, 2.6).

The research sought to contribute to progressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system and to do so based in principles of Indigenous rights, social justice, and Indigenous self-determination.³ The research was underpinned by two interrelated rationales. The first recognises the critical role of tertiary education in eliminating the disadvantage still experienced by too many First Nations Peoples and communities,⁴ and the important role of tertiary music education institutions in “closing the gap” and improving the life circumstances of First Nations people. The second recognises the unique status and significance of First Nations music and performative cultures and the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture for First Nations Peoples and communities, and the special role that Australian tertiary music education institutions can play in supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making.⁵ The goals of the research were to: 1. Develop an evidence-based understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and 2. Develop a set of nationally focussed First Nations informed recommendations for strategies to address the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system, and at the ANU School of Music specifically.

The research comprised a place-based, extended case study conducted at the ANU School of Music from 2022 to 2025, and employed an Indigenous-centred advanced mixed-methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design. The research design comprised four integrated components: 1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group 2; Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops; 3. Survey Questionnaire; 4. Interviews. In combination these served to ground the project in First Nations realities and provided a means for contribution of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations voices and facilitation of Indigenous self-determination, governance, and ownership in the research.

The research was based in the premise that Indigenous self-determination provides an ethical, pragmatic, and practical means for progressing the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities in the colonial legacy contexts of the Australian tertiary music

³ Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Department of Education (2024); Newsome (2008, 2016); Sainsbury & Newsome (2024).

⁴ Bandias et al. (2014); Behrendt et al. (2012); Bradley et al. (2008); Department of Education (2014); Gore et al. (2017a); Pechenkina et al. (2011); Productivity Commission (2024).

⁵ Australia Council for the Arts (2007); Bracknell (2015); Bracknell & Barwick (2020); Ellis (1985); Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance (2002); SCRGSP (2020); Statement on Indigenous Australian Music and Dance (2011); Wafer & Turpin (2017).

education system. This recognises that responses to the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples should be evidence-based and centre Indigenous agency and solutions.⁶ The Indigenous-centred co-design methodology provided the means for achieving this.

The research addressed the two key interconnected questions: 1. What are the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system? 2. How can Australian tertiary music institutions address the identified priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities more effectively? The research addressed the third auxiliary question through development and implementation of a bespoke Indigenous-centred co-design methodology, which provided the means for answering the key research questions, grounded in the views and perspectives of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders (see 7.6).

The research results (Chapter 5) addressed the two key research questions, providing nationally focussed empirical data derived from the three data collection components (Survey Questionnaire, Interviews, Focus Group Workshops),⁷ and which formed the basis for the formal set of recommendations to the ANU School of Music.⁸ The research findings (Chapter 6) comprised a thematic synthesis of the results, which answered the key research questions. The findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions can address these, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music.

Research question 1: Key findings were the critical importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights, including to Indigenous self-determination; align with First Nations cultures and values; respond to the learning priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; support the health and well-being of First Nations people including with respect to ‘cultural safety’; recognise the importance of connections and connecting in supporting the priorities and aspirations of First Nations musicians, support First Nation research priorities, and recognise First Nations diversity.

Research Question 2: The research found that to address First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs effectively, Australian tertiary music education institutions need to advocate for and support First Nations rights and implement Indigenous self-determination as

⁶ Behrendt et al. (2012); Department of Education (2023b); Smith et al. (2017b).

⁷ These addressed the key research questions, asking a combination of ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions.

⁸ See Chapter 7 (7.4) Recommendations; Appendix E.

core business; implement anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies; recognise the contribution of First Nations people; address barriers to First Nations access; recognise First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and expressing; implement culturally inclusive and responsive policies and practices; offer inclusive, responsive and supportive study programs; provide ‘culturally safe’ spaces and empowering teaching and learning environments; increase First Nations staffing and support First Nations staff; facilitate and support the participation and success of First Nations students; provide targeted support for First Nations research and researchers; and ensure adequate funding and resourcing.⁹

In combination the research findings point to the need for a paradigm shift in the Australian tertiary music education system consistent with calls to “decolonize music education and decentre the study of western classical music” (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020) and ensure that First Nations people are truly “at the heart” of the tertiary education system (Department of Education, 2024, p. 237). It is critical that Australian tertiary music education institutions therefore take proactive steps to overcome historic marginalisation by critically examining current policies, programs, and practices, with a view to progressing transformative change aimed at addressing the rights and interests of First Nations people and communities more effectively. This process should be led by First Nations people.

The research was aligned with the mission and strategic policy commitments of the ANU, as Australia’s national university (ANU, n.d.-a), with the aim of promoting national leadership by the ANU School of Music in addressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹⁰ The findings and recommendations of the research are also applicable in other Australian tertiary music education contexts, however, as there can be no one approach to institutional change that will suit every institutional context and circumstance (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 5), the findings and recommendations would need to be tailored to local circumstances and needs.¹¹

7.2 Implications of the findings

The research findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, presenting a challenge to the existing status quo and pointing to the need

⁹ The level of investment should, at a minimum, reflect “the imbalance that needs redressing and the proportion of the population being supported” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 38).

¹⁰ Australian National University (2021, 2022, 2024b).

¹¹ Benefits include targeting underrepresentation and tailoring initiatives to “address the perceived and actual barriers of specific cohorts”; employing “context-specific strategies matched to local industries”; and recognising and leveraging “the contribution universities make to communities (Department of Education, 2024, p. 130).

for systemic change aimed at ensuring our tertiary music education institutions are more inclusive and responsive to the rights and interests of diverse First Nations people and communities. What is clear is that First Nations people want greater access, options, and opportunity. This will mean creating more space for assertion of First Nations rights, agency, and autonomy in institutions, and considering what institutions can do for First Nations people and communities, rather than the other way round.¹²

The research draws attention to the need for Australian tertiary music education institutions to interrogate whose interests they are serving, and to recognise their special role and responsibilities in supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making, and improving the life circumstances of First Nations people through higher education. This means embracing a multi-perspectives world view that celebrates diversity, consistent with cultural plurality, interculturality, and transculturality in music education.¹³

It will be critically important that tertiary music education institutions review their existing policies, programs, and practices to ensure they are inclusive and responsive to identified First Nations aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs. This will likely mean adapting programs and/or developing new programs and models of practice aligned with First Nations interests, aspirations, and needs. Indigenous-centred co-design provides a potentially productive way forward.¹⁴ Keys to effective change will be support from the highest levels of the institution; commitment to ‘whole-of-institution’ engagement and transformative change; and most importantly, review and development that is First Nations led and inclusive of a diversity of experientially informed First Nations stakeholders, including community members, and in particular, those local to the institution.¹⁵

7.3 Beneficiaries of the research

The main goal of the research was to develop Indigenous-informed empirical evidence, grounded in the insights and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations

¹² This will mean “making space for different community members with their perspectives to not only participate but also have a voice, agency, and active role in the co-design of a conservatoire’s civic activities” (Bartleet, 2025, p. 216).

¹³ Ambrose & Thormählen (2025); Camlin et al. (2025); Drummond (2005); Karlsen et al. (2016); Schippers (2010, pp. 30–32, 123–124).

¹⁴ However, although co-design has been successfully applied in a range of Australian First Nations contexts (See Chapters 1.6.5, 4.2.5), it is important that there are appropriate protocols and training in Indigenous community engagement and co-design in the higher education context (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 5).

¹⁵ Change processes need to be inclusive of First Nations musicians/composers/songwriters; music educators; music researchers; traditional owners/custodians and culture bearers; music profession/cultural industry leaders and practitioners; and musicians/creatives from a range of locations and educational and cultural backgrounds, and representing musical diversity.

Peoples, as a means for enhancing the engagement of Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and improving outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.¹⁶

The principal intended beneficiaries of the research are First Nations people and communities. The research recommendations are therefore directed towards outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities, including those currently engaged with Australian tertiary music education institutions and those who may wish to engage with tertiary music education institutions in the future, especially as students and staff. First Nations communities and community members will likely benefit through increased engagement with tertiary music education institutions, including in teaching, learning, and research; and through increased support for First Nations musicians, music, and music making, and new institution-community collaborations and initiatives. Over time there will likely also be benefits for the broader music profession/industry and research sectors through increased engagement and institutional support for First Nations musicians, creators, and researchers. This would likely see increasing numbers of First Nations professionals coming through (musicians/composers/sound engineers/producers/educators/researchers etc.), contributing to First Nations representation and cultural diversity in the professions/industry and amplification of First Nations voices, knowledges, and perspectives in research.

Universities and tertiary music education institutions will also be beneficiaries through access to nationally focussed Indigenous-informed empirical data, findings, and recommendations that can inform future strategic policy and development. Potential benefits include enhanced support for First Nations student access, participation and success; increased First Nations staffing; further integration of First Nations knowledges and pedagogies in music curricula and practice; development of more inclusive and responsive curricula and pedagogy for First Nations music students; more effective support for First Nations students and staff; greater collaboration with First Nations communities and increased engagement with schools and professions/industry; and more effective support for First Nations priorities and outcomes in research. The ANU and the ANU School of Music will benefit also through recommendations specific to the School.

¹⁶ See also, Gore et al. (2017a); Shay et al. (2023).

Above all, enhanced support by Australian tertiary music education institutions will bring about immediate and longer-term benefits for Australian First Nations musicians, music, and music making.

7.4 Recommendations

The principal immediate outcome of the research was the set of formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music.¹⁷ The recommendations provide evidence-based insights and practical steps that the School of Music can take in progressing the rights and interests of First Nations musicians in and through the work of the School into the future. Most of the recommendations are also applicable to the work of other Australian tertiary music education institutions, and some may also be more broadly applicable in other educational contexts.¹⁸

Australian tertiary music education institutions are currently engaged in significant efforts to improve outcomes of benefit for First Nations people and communities, including as articulated in institutional mission statements, policies, and plans. Many of these efforts align with and are supported by the findings of the research.¹⁹ However, more needs to be done. It was clear from the research that First Nations musicians would like to see significant change. The following recommendations suggest ways to achieve this. These comprise generic recommendations directed towards the Australian tertiary music education sector, drawn from the set of recommendations to the ANU School of Music (Appendix E). It is recommended that Australian tertiary music education institutions take proactive steps to progress the following objectives:

1. Indigenous self-determination: Implement proactive policies and strategies to progress Indigenous rights and self-determination as core business and drive systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives.
2. First Nations cultural rights: Create and support opportunities for First Nations musicians to practise cultural rights, in partnership with First Nations people and through First Nations-led cultural solutions. This includes offering culturally

¹⁷ See *Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music* (Appendix E).

¹⁸ This includes university faculties/schools/centres; TAFE providers; schools; and private organisations/providers.

¹⁹ These include efforts to increase First Nations student and staff numbers; integrate Indigenous knowledges into 'mainstream' curricula; support First Nations musicians, music, and music making, including through targeted projects/initiatives; support outreach and engagement with First Nations communities and community members; support the participation and success of First Nations students; and support First Nations researchers and research.

inclusive curricula responsive to the aspirations and priorities of First Nations musicians and reflecting the diverse musical interests, practices, and traditions of First Nations people.

3. Contribution of First Nations people: Actively promote First Nations leadership and contribution of First Nations people in all arenas and at every level of institutional activity, including through community-institution partnerships and Indigenous-led initiatives.
4. Equal opportunity: Develop Indigenous specific strategies to address discrimination and racism and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff, including through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.
5. Funding and resourcing: Take proactive steps to ensure adequate funding and resourcing in addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people, and in supporting First Nations programs and initiatives.
6. Recognition and respect: Implement inclusive policies and practices that acknowledge First Nations custodianship of Land, demonstrate understanding and respect for First Nations cultural protocols, recognise the contribution of First Nations people, and respect First Nations cultures, values, knowledges, and practices, inclusive of diversity.
7. Culturally inclusive and responsive practice: Offer inclusive and culturally responsive programs that address the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations musicians and provide opportunities also for non-Indigenous learning, including through new program design, which should be Indigenous led.
8. Diversity: Offer programs that are inclusive of First Nations students from a range of cultural and educational backgrounds, and cultural and musical diversity.
9. Health and well-being: Support First Nations health and well-being, including by ensuring a ‘culturally safe’ environment for First Nations staff and students, and through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.
10. Connections and connecting: Foster connections of benefit to First Nations students, staff, and communities, including through collaboration/partnerships with First Nations communities; collaboration with schools; networking and collaboration with First Nations artists and organisations/professions/industry; and connections between First Nations people and with non-Indigenous people within the institution.

11. Research priorities: Provide proactive support for First Nations-led research and research instigated by First Nations researchers or endorsed by First Nations people, including research by First Nations students.
12. Access: Take a proactive approach to facilitating access for First Nations musicians by addressing barriers and offering flexible and inclusive study options responsive to the learning priorities, requirements, and circumstances of First Nations musicians.
13. Spaces and places: Provide culturally rich, safe, and affirming ‘spaces and places’ for First Nations people, including dedicated First Nations cultural spaces, targeted cultural programs, and opportunities for ‘two-way’ sharing and learning. Strong working relationships with Indigenous Support Units within institutions are also recommended.
14. Priorities in teaching and learning: Offer study programs inclusive of and responsive to the interests and priorities of First Nations musicians, including through curriculum innovation.
15. Staffing: Implement proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing, involve First Nations community members in the work of institutions, and ensure an inclusive and supportive environment for all First Nations staff.
16. Participation and success: Implement targeted strategies to support the participation and success of First Nations students.
17. Supporting students: Implement targeted holistic strategies to support First Nations students across the full range of student learning and support needs.
18. Aspirations and goals: Offer programs that are inclusive of and responsive to the aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians.
19. First Nations programs: Support and build on existing First Nations programs and initiatives within the institution.
20. Implementation plan: Develop an implementation plan for introducing change, in collaborating with First Nations staff/stakeholders, and a process for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting outcomes as a part of core business. Implementation planning needs to be based in an Indigenous-led ‘whole-of-institution’ approach, taking into account the location and circumstances of the institution.
21. Equity data monitoring and reporting: Monitor and track the equity participation rate of First Nations students and staff as a part of standard evaluation, monitoring, and reporting.

22. Program and policy evaluation: Develop a robust process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all programs and policies with respect to addressing First Nations aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs, including through qualitative evaluation strategies aligned with Indigenous methodologies.
23. Australian Universities Accord Final Report (2024): Consider the findings and recommendations of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord Final Report with respect to progressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in engaging with the tertiary music education system.

The most challenging recommendations will be those related to developing more inclusive and responsive curricula and pedagogy and ensuring that First Nations students have access to all available programs and to those with a focus on addressing First Nations learning aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs. This will likely mean adapting existing and/or developing new curricula, programs, and initiatives. It will be important to increase First Nations staffing; further develop collaborative arrangements with First Nations communities, schools, and professions/industry; and support measures to ensure supportive ‘spaces and places’ and ‘culturally safe’ environments for all First Nations people within and associated with the work of institutions. Of particular importance will be recruiting suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and musics, including “traditional” song/dance. Together with other developments, including professional/industry mentoring and tailored student support, this will require additional targeted investment and sustained funding and resourcing, including in maintaining and building on existing First Nations programs/initiatives. In a restricted financial environment this may present significant challenges for institutions, but ones that will need to be overcome to move forward effectively. What is known is that institutions that do well in terms of numbers of students and progression of students through to graduation, do not rely solely on funding allocated to Indigenous education from government, but add to that commitment through allocation of their own resources towards programs and activities that support Indigenous education (Behrendt, 2015).

The critical link between resourcing and programming was an issue raised by one of the interviewees, who asked “If there was to be a very special program for Aboriginal input, what would the cost be? And could the university sustain that sort of idea ...?” (Uncle Ossie – Interview). This question cuts to the nub of the matter, underscoring the nexus between specialised programs for First Nations students and the importance of adequate and ongoing

funding/resourcing to support these. It also draws attention to “mainstreaming” versus First Nations programs debates,²⁰ and to deficits in funding models and allocation priorities, and persistent under resourcing, including within tertiary institutions themselves. These are key challenges that universities and tertiary music education institutions will need to grapple with in progressing access and equity and outcomes of benefit for First Nations people.

There are cogent arguments for establishing First Nations centres/hubs/programs, led by First Nations people, across the Australian tertiary music education sector. For institutions these can create a visible First Nations presence and provide tangible evidence of institutional commitments to supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making. They can also provide specialist cultural and educational resources for both First Nations people and communities and the institution itself, and provide a focal point for First Nations gatherings and activities, and a touch stone and peer support environment for all First Nations students, no matter what program they are enrolled in. This is especially important where there are smaller cohorts of First Nations students.

In Australia, specialist tertiary music education programs for First Nations musicians are thin on the ground, and without additional targeted funding, these must compete for institutional resourcing on arguably unequal and thus unfair terms. It is essential therefore that tertiary music education institutions interrogate “standard practice” (Regelski, 2020, pp. 40, 42) and make efforts to transcend normative one-size-fits-all and “either/or” positions to invest in the transformative potential of “both/and” possibilities (Frawley, 2017, p. 77),²¹ including innovative “third spaces”,²² in supporting access, participation, and success on First Nations terms.²³

Key feasibility and practical challenges for tertiary music education institutions in progressing transformative change will include: Addressing the access, learning, and support needs of a culturally and educationally diverse First Nations student demographic; ensuring that curricula and pedagogy address the aspirations, priorities, and learning interests and needs of First Nations students, encompassing both discipline-specific and Indigenous-specific content; recruiting specialist First Nations academic staff, including First Nations content/knowledge experts and “traditional” song/culture owners; supporting community, school, and profession/industry engaged practice; and sourcing adequate and sustained funding.²⁴ Critical

²⁰ See Chapter 2 (2.6.4).

²¹ See also, Olsen (2018).

²² See also, Bhabha (1998); Holcombe (2005); Larkin, in J. Smith et al. (2018).

²³ See also, Newsome (1999, 2016).

²⁴ See also, Chapter 2 (2.6.1) and Behrendt et al. (2012, p. 196).

success factors will include: Institutional commitment and support for transformative change; Indigenous-leadership and institutional collaboration with a range of First Nations stakeholders; ‘whole-of-School’ investment and collaboration in the change process; First Nations stakeholder support for any proposed changes, inclusive of local community members; ongoing community involvement; and long-term institutional commitment, including to resourcing.²⁵

Curriculum renewal needs to be a ‘whole-of-School’ endeavour to ensure comprehensive and supported approaches to developing more inclusive and culturally responsive programs and practices. New study offerings addressing the priorities and requirements of First Nations music students could include: tailored foundation/bridging programs; distance education models; school-based courses; individual accredited courses addressing identified First Nations interests/needs (e.g. music performance/production; songwriting/composition; recording/sound engineering etc.) and other targeted initiatives.

Development of a First Nations degree program (or preferable more than one) needs to be a high priority (Table 5.38). This would provide a long overdue option for Australian First Nations musicians (and potentially other students) to undertake a bachelor’s degree majoring in First Nations musics, knowledges, and cultures, taught by First Nations people. A First Nations degree program would need to be inclusive of First Nations students from a wide range of musical and educational backgrounds; provide tailored learning options, opportunities, and environments responsive to the aspirations, interests, and learning needs of First Nations musicians; and be developed by First Nations people.

Such an offering could be developed as a nested suite of First Nations centred music programs (i.e. certificate, diploma, associate degree, degree), and be comprised of new and/or existing First Nations focussed music courses, and/or adapted “mainstream” courses, leading to post-graduate studies. The program would need to be flexible and provide multiple entry and exit points; integrated links with ‘mainstream’ programs/courses; and tailored pathways both from and into ‘mainstream’ music programs/courses. Accredited short course and online options could also be included, such as those referred to earlier. It would be critical that study options were inclusive of a wide range of music styles/genres, incorporate ‘on Country’ and ‘in community’ learning, and provide integrated real-world profession/industry learning opportunities (such as those offered through CASM and Ngarra-Burria).²⁶ It would also be

²⁵ See also, Chapter 2 (2.6.1) and Behrendt et al. (2012, p. 196); Chapter 3 (3.3.10) Success Factors.

²⁶ Study areas could include individual/group practical (vocal and instrumental lessons); performance/production; composition/songwriting; recording/sound engineering; music theory/literacy; First Nations music/cultures/language studies; industry studies; research studies (inclusive of practice-based and cultural heritage research); “traditional” music/dance; and foreign exchange/study opportunities.

important to consider offering separate classes for First Nations students in selected courses for reasons of “cultural safety” (e.g. “traditional’ song/dance/languages) (Table 5.45), recognising the distinct and special relationship that First Nations students may have with First Nations cultural knowledges and with First Nations knowledge/culture owners.

Shared spaces would also be important in providing opportunities for cross-curricular and interdisciplinary teaching, collaborative learning, cultural/musical collaboration and exchange, and strengthening cross-cultural understanding. Some courses could potentially be offered to all students (e.g. as with existing Indigenous Studies courses)²⁷; and options could also be provided for First Nations students enrolled in ‘mainstream’ degree programs, who might wish to take specialised First Nations courses as a part of their degree. In view of the continuing low numbers of First Nations students enrolled in ‘mainstream’ tertiary music education programs, consideration needs to be given also to the learning interests and requirements of individuals and smaller cohorts of First Nations students, to ensure that their cultural interests and learning needs are not overlooked.²⁸ A student-centred approach would provide flexible options, and also engage directly with First Nations students to learn about their interests and aspirations and preferred ways of accommodating these, which could include through tailored First Nations course options, as referred to earlier.

An approach suggested in the research was that if there were a combined class of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, then “the whole class would be taught the Aboriginal way, and another class the English-Anglo way” so that students who do not know Aboriginal people would have a better understanding of Indigenous people and culture (Uncle Ossie – Interview). This would have the advantage of facilitating connections between cultural content and pedagogy. In the context of Indigenous Studies courses for all students (Nakata, 2006, pp. 270-271), it draws attention also to the “complex or contested terrains” of overlapping knowledge systems (Nakata, 2007, p. 197), which would need careful consideration.

Any significant change will require institutional vision and commitment, long-term strategic thinking, and an engaged ‘whole-of-School’ effort, together with support at the highest levels of institutions (Behrendt, 2015). Tertiary music education institutions will need to be proactive, smart, and creative. This will mean working in partnership with First Nations

²⁷ These could for example include courses on First Nations music/culture/history; research studies; “traditional” music/dance studies; language studies; and ‘on Country’ and ‘in community’ learning.

²⁸ This would be considered essential to addressing student diversity as a standard consideration in curriculum design.

people,²⁹ and drawing on the combined forces and resources of multiple sectors, recognising that institutions will not be able to bring about effective change alone. In turn, investment by institutions in First Nations people, ‘spaces’, and programs will provide long-term benefits for institutions themselves, including educational, social, cultural, economic, and reputational.

Strategies for achieving this include:

- Establishing First Nations decision making bodies within tertiary music education institutions that are internal/external facing, inclusive of First Nations local community members, and integrated with the governance and decision-making mechanisms of the institution.
- Establishing collaborative change teams within tertiary music education institutions, inclusive of First Nations and non-Indigenous staff, to consider transformative change priorities and best steps forward.
- Opening the doors to all First Nations musicians who are talented and motivated, irrespective of formal educational background and/or qualifications.
- Establishing First Nations centres/hubs/programs within/associated with tertiary music education institutions.
- Developing tailored education programs/courses for First Nations students, with a focus on supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making.
- Developing a First Nations music degree program, preferably at more than one more institution, with ANU (as Australia’s national university) a priority.
- Increasing First Nations staffing and supporting First Nation staff.
- Ensuring that all First Nations programs/courses are taught and/or led by First Nations experts.
- Ensuring that all program offerings are inclusive and culturally responsive.
- Developing tailored First Nations research strategies to support First Nations researchers and research by First Nations students (inclusive of practice-based and cultural heritage research).
- Establishing and maintaining strong collaborative relationships with First Nations community members, schools/education providers, industry/professions, and cultural institutions/organisations/agencies.

²⁹ This includes with First Nations community members and First Nations institutions, organisations, and agencies.

- Developing targeted resourcing/funding strategies to support adequate and sustained investment in First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs.
- Creating First Nations cultural environments and ‘spaces’, and supporting a sense of belonging for all First Nations people in tertiary music education institutions.

7.5 Potential impact of future research

As outlined in Chapter 6 (6.6), recommendations for future research include: larger scale studies, and research involving a larger number of stakeholders and/or a broader sample profile; survey questionnaire research employing a different Likert scale format and/or lines of questioning; research conducted over a longer time frame; co-design case studies in other tertiary music education contexts; research encompassing the implementation and outcomes evaluation phases of co-design; longitudinal studies; research with a focus on specific demographics/groups; studies encompassing other areas of First Nations performing arts/cultural education; comparative/collaborative research with other providers, agencies, and organisations; music profession/industry related research; internationally focused research; and First Nations led research.

Anticipated impacts of future research include increased understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations people in engaging with the tertiary music education system, and further insights into ways tertiary music education institutions can respond to these effectively. The most valuable arenas for future research will be those that support Australian tertiary music education institutions in addressing First Nations aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs.

Larger scale studies and studies involving a larger number of stakeholders and a broader profile of participants would provide additional data and comparative findings useful to informing future strategic policy and development. Survey questionnaire research with a different Likert scale format and/or lines of questioning would provide additional understanding of participant priorities, requirements, and needs. Research conducted over a longer time frame would contribute additional data useful to informing findings and solutions. Co-design case studies conducted in other tertiary music education institutions would provide important comparative insights and recommendations, including those tailored to individual institutional locales and circumstances. Research encompassing the final phases of co-design would facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation of the efficacy of Indigenous centred co-design in tertiary music education contexts, which could lead to development of more effective First

Nations policy and practice over time.³⁰ Research with a focus on gaining a better understanding of the aspirations, priorities, and needs of particular demographics/groups would also be important in developing more effective approaches to addressing diversity.³¹

Research encompassing other areas of First Nations performing arts/cultural education would provide additional and comparative insights useful to developing more inclusive and culturally responsive study programs,³² and which could be conducted in collaboration with leading First Nations providers/organisations, drawing on wider experience and expertise and potentially also leading to new collaborations. Collaborative research with other education providers, agencies, and organisations also has the potential for multiple mutually beneficial outcomes,³³ including in developing more inclusive and culturally responsive study programs, and supporting First Nations music education in the school and TAFE sectors.³⁴ Music profession/industry related research would also be useful in developing study programs that support the career aspirations of First Nations music students.³⁵ Research investigating First Nations tertiary music education in international contexts would also be valuable in providing additional and comparative insights useful for developing best practice approaches in the Australian context. Of critical importance however will be First Nations-led research in providing additional data and insights essential to developing an Australian tertiary music education system that is properly inclusive and responsive to the identified aspirations, priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations people and communities into the future.

7.6 Research contribution

The research comprised a nationally focussed Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, based in a first time

³⁰ Closely related to this is the need for longitudinal research investigating the impacts of institutional strategy in improving outcomes for First Nations people and communities over the longer term (Frawley et al., 2017; J. Smith et al., 2018).

³¹ Target demographics could include First Nations young people; First Nations school students/educators; First Nations tertiary music students/educators; those living in particular locations (e.g. rural and remote areas); and First Nations musicians for whom English is a second language, and/or who have not studied music before.

³² This could include for example research into First Nations dance, theatre, screen/media, art/crafts, and languages education.

³³ This could include research with First Nations providers; universities; TAFE; schools; and cultural bodies and institutions (i.e. First Nations community organisations; national First Nations cultural organisations/institutions; and broader national performing arts and industry bodies).

³⁴ This would also support the pipeline of First Nations students into tertiary music education.

³⁵ This could for example focus on opportunities and areas of potential future growth, including in First Nations music/cultural industries.

Indigenous-centred case study at the ANU School of Music. The results provide nationally focussed Indigenous-informed empirical evidence, and the findings provide First Nations informed insights and recommendations to inform the strategic direction of the ANU School of Music, and which are applicable also in other tertiary music education contexts. As such the research makes an original contribution to a better understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with Australian tertiary music education institutions, and to evidence-based approaches to addressing these more effectively.

The research methodology comprised an innovative Indigenous-informed adaptation of co-design tailored to the place-based community-institution contexts and circumstances of the case study at the ANU School of Music.³⁶ This bespoke application of co-design addresses a gap in the scholarly literature, contributing new knowledge on approaches to Indigenous-centred co-design, in the context of the Australian tertiary music education system specifically. The research also evidences the efficacy of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous-centred co-design in developing Indigenous-informed responses and solutions to underrepresentation, exclusion, and inequities, and in enhancing outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the colonial legacy contexts of the Australian tertiary music education system.³⁷ This suggests that Indigenous-centred co-design may be productively applied in other Australian tertiary music education contexts, including for a range of strategic review and development purposes.

7.7 Conclusion

In the push to Indigenise the curriculum in the contemporary university, art education needs to come to terms with how it intends to position itself, recognising and acknowledging the impact of settler colonisation within long and continuing First Peoples' histories. We need to reckon with history and contemporary affects and effects of the settler colonial disruption and displacement of First Peoples with accountability. (McPherson & Onus, 2024, p. 120)

The 2024 Australian Universities Accord Final Report proposes an inspiring vision in which First Nations Australians are positioned “at the heart of the higher education system”

³⁶ This was tailored to the circumstances of the School at the time of the research (2022–2025).

³⁷ This supports the proposition that in Indigenous education policy settings “we should shift from normative notions of evidence-based policy to Indigenous-based evidence to inform policy and practice towards change” (Shay et al., 2023, p. 83).

(Department of Education, 2024, p. 246). For Australian tertiary music education institutions this offers a timely opportunity for a bold and progressive approach to advancing and achieving equity, one that would recognise the unique status and significance of First Nations music and performative cultures, and the special role that tertiary music education institutions can play in supporting First Nations musicians, music, and music making, and in improving the life circumstances of First Nations people. It would also highlight the invaluable contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions. Such efforts would go a long way towards ameliorating the continuing effects of an ongoing colonial legacy in our tertiary music education institutions (McPherson & Onus, 2024).

Without significant change Australian tertiary music education institutions will remain exclusive and continue to marginalise First Nations musicians, music, and music making. Positioning First Nations musicians, music, and music making “at the heart” of the Australian tertiary music education system would be a truly transformative step, one that would be of significant educational, cultural, and research value to First Nations people and communities as well as to institutions themselves. Such a step would make a real and tangible contribution to rectifying injustices and addressing ongoing inequities in the Australian tertiary music education system. It would also contribute to creating a truly unique and distinctive Australian tertiary music education system, one that would bring substantial benefits to everyone engaged with the sector and which would likely be of international interest and significance in progressing innovative best practice in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous tertiary music education contexts.

In the wake of the failed Voice to Parliament referendum, it is more important now than ever that Australia’s national institutions step up and intensify efforts to progress the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples, including to self-determination. For Australian tertiary music education institutions this will mean taking proactive action in ongoing partnership with First Nations people and communities to support First Nations rights and ensure a proper place for First Nations musicians “at the heart” of our tertiary music education system. My hope is that the findings and recommendations of this research will contribute to achieving this.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Agreement

Research Agreement

Project Title:

Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system

Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator:

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Project Overview:

The research is investigating ways to improve the engagement of Australian tertiary music institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities through an Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design case study at the ANU School of Music (SoM).

The research involves

- A first-time Indigenous-informed analysis of the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system and at the SoM specifically
- Development of a set of Indigenous-informed recommendations to enhance the engagement of the SoM with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and improve outcomes of benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities at and through the work of the SoM

Research Aims:

The overarching aim of the research is to:

Develop an Indigenous-informed evidence base to enhance the engagement of the Australian tertiary music education system with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and improve outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at and through the work of the ANU School of Music.

The specific aims of the research are to:

1. Identify the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system and with the SoM specifically
2. Develop a set of recommendations to enhance the engagement of the SoM with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and improve outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities at the SoM

Anticipated Research Outcomes:

1. A first time Indigenous-informed analysis of the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system and the SoM specifically
2. A set of Indigenous-informed recommendations to improve outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system and with the SoM specifically

Research Principles:

The research is based in principles of Indigenous rights, self-determination and social justice, and therefore centres the agency, participation and voices of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research.¹

[Further details about principles and protocols in the research are outlined in this document and in the *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document]

Research Methodology and Methods:

The research is based in a place-based case study at the ANU School of Music and employs an Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods methodology within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design.

- The ANU School of Music provides the place-based institutional case-study site for the research.
- The Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods methodology provides the means for contribution of a breadth, depth and diversity of perspectives and views in the research through participation by informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from a wide range of backgrounds, locations and communities.
- The Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design framework provides the means for ensuring the central participation, control and ownership in the research by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as co-researchers, including in the conceptualization and conduct of the research, control and analysis of data, interpretation of the findings and communication of the results.

There are four integrated components in the research:

¹ Principal Researcher – Jennifer Newsome (PhD Candidate)

Each of the four components contributes in a different but complementary way to the central role of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and community stakeholders in participating in and influencing the outcomes of the research:

1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

An ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will be established to provide Indigenous governance, guidance and support in the research project and a touchstone for the overall protocols and conduct of the research, then following completion of the research, constituted as an ongoing formal advisory body for the ANU School of Music.

2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops (x 3)

The Focus Group Workshops constitute the data collection, analysis, and recommendations development component of the research. In these, the co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops will collaborate in identifying the priorities, needs and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system and developing the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music. Participants will also collaborate in co-developing a *Thematic Issues Framework* which will be used as the basis for addressing the research aims, co-design of the questions for the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components, and as a guide in the co-analysis and interpretation of the data from the Survey and Interview components.

3. Survey Questionnaire

The Survey Questionnaire will be based on the *Thematic Issues Framework* co-developed by the Focus Group Workshop participants. The Survey Questionnaire will seek the views, opinions and perspectives of a wide range of experientially-informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders on the priorities, needs and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. This will add to the diversity and breadth of perspectives and views in the research and will be used to inform the deliberations of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop participants. The results of the Survey will be interpreted together with the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group participants in developing the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music.

4. Interview

The interviews will be semi-structured and based on the *Thematic Issues Framework* co-developed by the Focus Group Workshop participants. The interviews will seek the views, opinions and perspectives of a small number of experientially-informed, leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders on the priorities, needs and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. These will add to the diversity, depth and breadth of perspectives and views in the research and will be used to inform the deliberations of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop participants. The results of the interviews will be interpreted together with the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group participants in developing the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music.

Research Participants:

The primary participants in the research are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the key stakeholders and intended main beneficiaries of the research.

The research is collecting data from up to approximately 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait People who will be involved in the following components of the research:

- ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (6–8 members)
- Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops (x3) (5–8 participants)
- Survey Questionnaire (approximately 30 participants)
- Interviews (up to 10 participants)

The secondary participants in the research are non-Indigenous staff from the ANU School of Music Directorate and Committees, who will be involved in project briefings and meeting Indigenous co-research participants. Key staff will also be participating in one or two of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops.

Roles of Participants:

Jennifer Newsome – PhD Candidate

- Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator/Convenor/Focus Group Workshops

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

- Indigenous stakeholders/co-researchers, Indigenous oversight and guidance in the research

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops

- Indigenous stakeholder co-design co-researchers, development of the formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music
- Non-Indigenous stakeholder participants (key ANU School of Music staff)

Survey Questionnaire

- Indigenous stakeholder respondents

Interviews

- Indigenous stakeholder respondents

Data collection and analysis:

Primary Data will be collected in the form of:

- Audio or audio-visual recordings and transcripts of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop meetings (or minutes if not recorded)
- Audio or audio-visual recordings and transcripts of interviews (or summaries if not recorded)
- Survey Questionnaire

Secondary Data will be created in the form of:

- Written/electronic discussion notes and minutes of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group meetings
- Written/electronic discussion notes, summaries and minutes of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop meetings
- Interview summaries

- Survey questionnaire analyses and summaries

Analysis will comprise:

- Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops – qualitative thematic content analysis
- Interviews – qualitative thematic content analysis
- Survey – quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative thematic content analysis

Use of data:

The research data will be used to develop the following material outputs:

- Summary of Results Final Report
- Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report
- PhD thesis
- Public presentation/s, conference papers and potentially published peer reviewed articles, book chapters and website content

Access to and use or reuse of the data for any other purpose will only be with the written permission of the participants.

Anticipated Benefits of the Research:

All participants in the research will be involved in considering the potential benefits for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the core research question.

Primary intended beneficiaries:

The primary intended beneficiaries of the research are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the key stakeholders. It is anticipated that there will be both direct and indirect, and short and longer term benefits for all participants in the research, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in particular.

Principal anticipated benefits:

The principal anticipated benefits will be a formal set of Indigenous-informed recommendations aimed at improving the engagement of the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and providing outcomes of benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at the ANU School of Music.

Secondary beneficiaries:

The ANU and ANU School of Music, and potentially the Australian tertiary music education and performing arts sectors and community more broadly.

Direct Benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participants in the Research:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in the research will benefit directly in the following ways:

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through:

- A closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition of contribution in research outcomes and products (by name if preferred)
- Acquiring of transferable knowledge and skills.

Indigenous co-design Focus Group Workshops: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through:

- A closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition of contribution in research outcomes and products (by name if preferred)
- Acquiring of transferable knowledge and skills

Interviews: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through:

- A closer and more influential relationship with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition in research products and outcomes (by name if preferred)
- Transferable specialist knowledges and skill

Survey Questionnaire: Participants will not personally benefit from involvement in the research, however they may benefit in the longer term through:

- Acknowledgement by name in the Summary of Results Final Report (if preferred)

Broad benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities:

It is anticipated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities may also benefit more broadly from the research through potential flow-on effects in the Australian tertiary music education and performing arts sectors and community, in the following ways:

- Enhanced engagement by the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Systemic, structural and cultural change and enhanced responsive to the identified priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at the ANU School of Music
- Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, music-making, music production, music scholarship and research at/through the ANU School of Music
- Access to a wider range of culturally and socially responsive educational opportunities and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Access to a wider range of culturally and socially responsive research training and research opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased employment opportunities and higher levels of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People at the ANU School of Music
- Improved support mechanisms and provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the ANU School of Music

- More productive research relationships and increased research of benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of ‘in community’ engagement and project activity in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of ‘community-engaged/integrated’ teaching and learning with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased profiling and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, musicians, and music scholars and research at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of cooperation and collaboration between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in music-making, music production, music education, and music scholarship and research at/through the ANU School of Music
- Use of the Indigenous-informed research results to improve the engagement of other tertiary music institutions and music/performing arts institutions and providers with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities

[Full details of the benefits of the research are articulate in the *Benefits of the Research* document.]

Potential risks of participation in the research:

- Potential risks in the research have been identified as a standard aspect of the formal ethics approval process for the research
- There are identified risks associated with all four components of the research and all participants may therefore potentially be exposed to a degree of risk or even harm as a consequence of participation in the research.
- Potential risks include:
 - Psychological/emotional distress
 - Economic loss as a consequence of participation in the research
 - Risk of third-party identification
- Every effort has been made in the design of the research to minimise risks for participants.
- These risks are mainly though not exclusively associated with the collaborative nature of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops component.
- It is recognised that risk and/or negative consequences of participation in the research may be not only more prevalent but also more serious for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants as a legacy of racism and socio-cultural-economic exclusion and discrimination.
- Given the community/institution contexts of the research at the ANU and ANU School of Music there may be risks associated with potential third-party identification, with potential impacts with respect to university operations and politics and relational and reputational risk.

- Given the community/institution contexts of the research at the ANU and ANU School of Music there may also be a potential risk of social harm due to the fact that the research involves participants with differing levels of institutional and/or community power and influence and may also involve those with whom the ANU has collaborative or commercial arrangements.
- Every effort will be made to minimise and mitigate any risks to participants throughout the research, including with respect to ensuring confidentiality as far as is allowed by law and minimisation of risk of third-party identification, including in the Summary of Results Final Report and any subsequent publications or presentations.
- Where a participant experiences distress as a consequence of participation in the research provisions will be made for referral to a counselling or other health service.

[Full details about the risks and their minimization, mitigation and management in the research are outlined in the *Risk Management Strategy*.]

Ethics and protocols:

Informed Voluntary Consent:

- Participation in the research is by free, prior and informed consent.
- Participation in the research is on a voluntary basis and participants may decline to take part in the research or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation or fear of negative consequences at any time until the work is prepared for publication, and in the knowledge that where possible all data associated with their involvement will not be used, except by written agreement.
- It is important to the integrity of the research that potential participants do not feel under any pressure to participate, and therefore should feel free not to participate in the research.
- Details of the research will be provided to participants in Participation Information Sheets and Consent Forms specific to each of the four components of the research.
- Participants will be informed if the project changes, and information provided to participants will be clear and understandable.

Special Notes:

- Consistent with the principles of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design in the research, this *Research Agreement* document will be made available for review by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the research and is therefore subject to amendment.
- If there is any substantial change during the research a new *Research Agreement* will be negotiated.

Indigenous Protocols:

- The research will uphold the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty, governance and functionality with respect to ownership, control and representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the processes, products and outcomes of the research.

- A PhD Project Indigenous Reference Group comprised of all the First Nations staff of the SoM will be established to provide guidance to the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator in the lead-up to the submission of the Ethics Application Protocol for the research, establishment of the formal *ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group*, determination of potential participants in the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops, and review key draft guiding documents for the research: *Research Agreement, Risk Management Strategy, Benefits of the Research*
- An ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will be established as a key component in the research to provide ongoing advice, guidance and support to the Principal Researcher in all aspects of the research project, and then constituted as an advisory body in the ANU School of Music to support the School in effectively addressing the identified interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities at and through the work of the School into the future. The Indigenous Reference Group will review the key guiding documents for the research and contribute to the co-development of the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* for the Indigenous Reference Group and to the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* for the research project, together with the Principal Researcher and the Head of School. This will include contingency planning around ongoing membership.

[Full details about the role and activities of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in the research project are detailed in the document: *Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research*]

- The research will demonstrate respect for the diverse and shared cultures and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, and will adhere to Indigenous protocols, including those specific to the place-based institutional and community contexts of the research at the ANU campus and the ANU School of Music.

Indigenous Co-research Participation:

- The research is based in principles of Indigenous rights and self-determination, and therefore centres the agency, voices, views and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants throughout the research.

Respectful Participation

- Respect for the input of all participants in the research is considered paramount to the integrity of the research and in achieving the aims and objectives of the research.
- Participants will be free to express a diversity of views and perspectives and provide input from their own points of view and encouraged to respect the equal rights of other participants to also do so.

Collaborative Participation:

- A partnership approach to co-research collaboration in the research is paramount to the integrity and results of the research, therefore the research will be conducted in a way that supports and facilitates this approach throughout.

- The contribution of all participants to the research will be acknowledged, and individual participants can elect to be acknowledged and/or attributed by name if they wish, and to choose how they are named.

Indigenous data sovereignty and governance, and copyright and intellectual and cultural property rights management:

The research seeks to uphold the intellectual, cultural and moral rights of all participants in the research.

- The research will uphold the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and governance with respect to ownership of and control over Indigenous cultural and intellectual property in all data provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in the research. This will be stated in the *Summary of Results Final Report*, the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report*, the PhD thesis and any subsequent published accounts of the research.
- Participants in all four components of the research will retain ownership of the cultural and intellectual property held in the knowledge they provide.
 - This will include in the primary data in the form of audio and/or audio/visual recordings and transcripts of workshops, meetings, interviews, the original survey data, and minutes and summaries where no recording is made.
 - It will also extend to knowledge contributed to secondary data written up by the Principal Researcher and held in material form (written/electronic discussion notes, confirmed minutes of meetings, summaries of meetings and interviews).
 - This will be stated in the *Summary of Results Final Report*, the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report*, the PhD thesis and any subsequent published accounts of the research.
- Co-research participants involved in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops will have the opportunity to consider the issues of ownership and/or co-ownership of intellectual property contributed to the research, and to negotiate co-authorship and shared copyright in any material outputs of the research where a substantial intellectual contribution has been made to the output.
- The research will uphold the moral rights of all participants, including the right of acknowledgement, right of attribution and right of integrity for all contributions made by participants to the research.
 - This will extend to all material outputs of the research in which participants may elect to be acknowledged and/or attributed by name if they wish, and to choose how they are named.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ‘traditional’ cultural knowledges which may be referred to by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in the research will be considered to be communally held by the participant and relevant community members.
 - Any reference to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ‘traditional’ cultural knowledges will not be included in the material or public outputs of the research.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ‘traditional’ cultural knowledges which may be referred to by non-Indigenous participants in the research will also be considered to be communally held by the relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members and will not be included in any material or public outputs of the research.
- Copyright in the primary data in the form of audio and/or audio-visual recordings, transcripts of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops and interviews (and

minutes or summaries if not recorded), and the original Survey component of the research will be held by the research participants.

- Copyright in the secondary data created by the Principal Researcher in the form written/electronic meeting notes, confirmed minutes and summaries of meetings and interviews, will be jointly held by the co-research participants and the Principal Researcher as co-authors specific to each document
 - This will be stated in each of the respective documents specific to the contribution of the co-research participants
- Copyright in *The Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report* will be jointly held by the co-research participants in the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops and the Principal Researcher, as co-authors.
 - This will be stated in the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report*
 - Co-research participants involved in the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops will have the option of attribution as a co-author by name in the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report*, in which case they may choose how to be named.
- Co-research participants in the ANU School of Music Reference Group will jointly own the copyright in the secondary data in the form written/electronic discussion notes and confirmed minutes of meetings as co-authors, and jointly with the Principal Researcher/Coordinator as co-authors where the Principal Researcher/Coordinator has directly contributed to the creation of the secondary data.
 - This will be stated in the *Summary of Results Final Report*.
 - Individual participants will have the option of being credited by name in the *Summary of Results Final Report* if they wish, and to choose how to be named.
- Copyright in the *Summary of Results Final Report*, the PhD and subsequent public and published accounts of the research solely authored by the Principal Researcher will be held by the Principal Researcher.
 - In these outputs, the Principal Researcher will uphold the moral rights of all participants to acknowledgement and right to attribution for the contribution made to the research, and participants may elect to be acknowledged and/or attributed by name and to choose how they are named.

Use of IP contributed by participants

IP contributed by participants in the research may be used in the development of the recommendations for the School of Music and the summary of results report. It may also be used in the PhD thesis and may be used in public presentations and possibly peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, book chapters and on websites. Any such use will maintain the confidentiality of the identity of participants as far as is allowed by law, unless a participant elects to be named in the research, in which case participants can choose how they wish to be named.

Use of IP owned by an individual outside the research team

In the event that IP owned by an individual outside the research team is to be used within a research output produced within the project, a licensing agreement to use that IP will be negotiated with the relevant party or parties prior to use.

Communication Strategy:

- Communication with research participants will take place via a range of means and modes including face-to face in-person, phone, written paper, electronic communication (i.e. email, social media messaging, and/or via Zoom, or other online meeting application).
- Communication with research participants will be underpinned by principles of respect, trust and transparency, open and direct communication, cooperation and collaboration, flexibility, responsiveness and sensitivity, and maintenance of privacy and confidentiality.
- Communication with research participants will respond to the language and communication preferences, styles and needs of participants on an individual and group basis.
- Communication with co-research participants in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and Indigenous Co-design Focus Groups will be underpinned by the principles of Indigenous co-design in the research and based in transparent, continuous, iterative dialogic processes. (See also: *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*)
- Communication with Interview participants will respond to the identified communication preferences, styles and needs of participants on an individual basis.
- Communication with Survey participants will be via primarily via email or other on-line means and limited mainly to the dissemination of the Survey and the feedback phases of the Survey. Participants will however have the option of individual communication face-to-face in-person if they wish.

Dissemination of the Results:

- The results of the research will be disseminated in the form of the *Summary of Results Final Report*, the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report*, the PhD thesis and public presentation, and potentially in peer-reviewed articles, conferences and other public presentation/s, book chapters and on websites.
- The results of the research will also be disseminated via a public presentation at the ANU School of Music and potentially other ANU venues/context.
- Participants will also be able to receive a copy of the *Summary of Results Final Report* via other means if requested, and as appropriate to needs, including as a verbal summary, in hard copy form, or via email and/or other online means.
- Dissemination documentation will identify the ANU and the ANU School of Music, acknowledge the contribution of all sources of support, and acknowledge the contribution to the research by co-research participants, who may elect to be acknowledged and/or attributed by name and to choose how they are named.
- A copy of the results of the research in the form of a draft *Summary of Results Final Report* authored by the Principal Researcher will be provided to the participants in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops for review and confirmation prior to inclusion in the PhD or public dissemination in any form.

- Decisions about public dissemination of the research results in the form of the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report* and the *Summary of Results Final Report* will take place in collaboration with the following key stakeholders:
 - ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group participants
 - Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops participants
 - Head of School (ANU School of Music) Professor Kim Cunio
 - Indigenous Convenor (ANU School of Music) Associate Professor Christopher Sainsbury
 - The ANU media relations or communications officer/s (if a media release is considered appropriate)
- Any public dissemination of the results of the research by the Principal Researcher will take place only after the Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report has been officially delivered to the ANU School of Music.
- Any public presentation of research in progress by the Principal Researcher prior to the official delivery of the Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report to the ANU School of Music (e.g. ANU research seminar presentation, professional conference, peer reviewed article or book chapter) will declare the status of the project as ‘in development’.

Confidentiality:

- The identity of participants will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, except where a participant elects to be named in the research, in which case they may choose how they wish to be named.
- It is important to the integrity of the research that all participants maintain the confidentiality of group discussions and participants should refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.
- It is also important to the integrity of the research that participants refrain from revealing, non-publicly available, internal information about the ANU or ANU School of Music within the research.
- Access to the information provided by participants will be restricted to the Principal Researcher/Coordinator and the participants in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops.
 - Details that identify participants with this information will be stored separately from the rest of the research data.
- After completion of the research and publication of results, any subsequent use of the information provided by participants to the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator will only be with the prior written consent of the participants.

Data storage, management, and access:

Audio or audio-visual recorded data and transcripts

The audio or audio-visual recorded data and transcripts of the Focus Group meetings and the Interviews (or Focus Group meeting minutes and Interview summaries if not recorded) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, and archived at AIATSIS indefinitely (under AIATSIS protocols), unless elected otherwise by the participants. Draft versions of transcripts provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the recorded data and transcripts will only be with the prior written consent of the participants.

Participants in the Focus Group and the Indigenous Reference Group will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period is included in the relevant Participant Information Sheets, and participants are provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Forms.

Participants in the Interviews will have an opportunity prior to and following the interview to discuss and elect what they would like done with the recording and transcript of the interview.

Written and electronic data

- ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group:

Transcripts of meetings and discussion notes will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by the participants. Confirmed minutes of meetings will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer indefinitely, unless elected otherwise by the participants. All shared documents during the period of the research will be considered confidential. Draft documentation provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the recordings, transcripts of meetings and discussion notes held at ANU will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period is included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants are provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Focus Group Workshops:

Minutes and summaries of the meetings of the Focus Group will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by the participants, in which case they will be stored indefinitely. All shared documents during the period of the research will be considered confidential. Draft documentation provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the minutes and summaries will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data

following the required storage period is included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants are provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Interviews:

Transcripts and summaries of interviews will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by participants, in which case they will be stored indefinitely. Details identifying participants with this data will be stored separately. Drafts of transcripts provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. All shared documents will be considered confidential. Access to and use of the transcripts and summaries will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will have an opportunity prior to and following the interview to discuss and elect what they would like done with the transcript and summaries of the interview. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period is included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants are provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Survey:

The completed surveys and a de-identified copy of them will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted. De-identified copies of the surveys will be archived at AIATSIS indefinitely (under AIATSIS protocols). Access to and use of the de-identified copies of the survey held at AIATSIS will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period is included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants are provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Recommendations to the ANU School of Music:

The set of recommendations provided to the ANU School of Music by the Focus Group will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer indefinitely. Access to and use of the recommendations will be at the discretion of the ANU School of Music directorate in consultation with the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.

Guiding Documents for the Research:

- *Research Agreement*
- *Benefits of the Research*
- *Risk Management Strategy*
- *Stakeholder Participation Plan*
- *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*
- *Covid-19 Safety Protocols*

Feedback mechanisms:

- The Principal Researcher will report back regularly to the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group on the processes and progress of the research project.
- The Principal Researcher will maintain regular contact and open communication with all co-research participants throughout the research project.
- Feedback on the results of the research will be provided in the form of the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report* and the *Summary of Results Final Report* to all participants via Dropbox.
 - A link to the Dropbox will be provided in each of the component Participation Information Sheets.
- Participants will also be offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the *Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report* and the *Summary of Results Final Report* via other means as requested and appropriate to needs, which could include through face-to-face meetings and/or presentations to stakeholders as a verbal summary, in hard copy form, or via email and/or other online means.
- After completion of the PhD, the results of the research will be communicated via a public presentation at the ANU School of Music and potentially also at other ANU venues/contexts

Ceasing the research:

Participants can opt out of the research at any time without fear of negative consequences, and in the knowledge that where possible all data associated with their involvement will not be used, except by formal agreement.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting personal information within the research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppi/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Queries, concerns and complaints:

Contact Details for More Information:

For more information or queries please contact the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au

Concerns and Complaints:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If participants have any concerns or complaints about how

this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Contact Details if in Distress:

If participants experience distress at any time during the research, they should contact the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator who will be able to refer them to a counselling or other health service if they wish. Or research participants can contact:

- For ANU staff and students: ANU Counselling Service (available only for ANU staff and students): +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14

Human Ethics Protocol 2019/956 approval granted by HREC 03/05/2022

Appendix B:

Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research

Project Title:

Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator:

Jennifer Newsome, PhD Candidate, ANU School of Music
ANU School of Music Office +61 2 6125 5700
jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au

OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK

- The research is based in principles of Indigenous rights, self-determination and social justice, and centres the agency, participation and voices of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the primary stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research.¹
- The Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design framework for the research facilitates Indigenous self-determination by amplifying and privileging the informed voices of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in addressing the research question, aims, and objectives, and in determining the results.
- Consistent with the principles of Indigenous co-design in the research, this document will be reviewed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the research and is therefore subject to amendment.

[Further details about the principles and protocols in the research are outlined in the *Research Agreement*]

PRINCIPLES OF INDIGENOUS CO-DESIGN IN THE RESEARCH

Co-design

There is no one single definition of co-design, however, the general principles that underpin the various definitions of co-design are:

- Active involvement of and in-depth participation by a comprehensive range of end users and stakeholders in partnership-based, design-led decision-making processes that lead to productive innovation and improved outcomes. (WACOSS, 2016: 3–5, 8)

¹ Principal Researcher – Jennifer Newsome (PhD Candidate)

- A process of collaborative design of services together with stakeholders, using a structured approach that provides the opportunity for stakeholders to have a meaningful and significant influence over the planned service. (Western Australian Government, 2018: 5)

Indigenous co-design

In this research Indigenous co-design comprises a place-based Indigenous-informed bespoke adaptation of co-design that prioritises control over and input into the research by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Indigenous co-design in the research will:

- Involve the central participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People throughout the research as co-research partners in the co-construction of knowledge aimed at addressing the research question, aims and objectives
- Consult and engage collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in establishing the proposal, framework and design of the research
- Position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants as collaborative co-research partners throughout the research and provide opportunities for co-design by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in all components and processes of the research
- Ensure that benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research are paramount in the research
- Respond flexibly throughout the research to the possibility for changes to the research as recommended and determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants
- Provide opportunities for effective collaboration through participation by a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other key stakeholders from across the overlapping community-institution space
- Prioritise the diverse voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People throughout the research as the principal stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of the research
- Utilise research methods that provide scope for input into the research by a diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in addressing the research question, aims and objectives
- Respect the diverse opinions, perspectives and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as paramount in the research
- Respect the shared cultures and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, and adhere to Indigenous protocols throughout the research, including those specific to the place-based institutional and community contexts of the research

- Recognise Indigenous ‘community’ as a complex notion and overlapping ‘field of action’ in the institution/community context, and as inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-researchers and community stakeholders in the research
- Recognise and respond proactively to historical legacies of racism, discrimination, exclusion, disenfranchisement and socio-economic disadvantage and trauma which may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the research, and in an understanding that these may differ between individuals, groups and ‘communities’
- Recognise cultural and social differences, inequalities and/or power differentials as inherent to participatory co-design research, and respond proactively to these through respectful dialogic processes aimed at mutual awareness, understanding and resolution
- Uphold Indigenous data sovereignty and governance in the research; and ownership, and control and representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the processes, products and results of the research
- Ensure protection of Indigenous cultural knowledges and intellectual property in the research
- Ensure that mitigation, minimisation and management of risks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities in the research are paramount in the research

INDIGENOUS-INFORMED, INDIGENOUS-CENTRED CO-DESIGN METHODOLOGY

- The research comprises a place-based case study at the ANU School of Music and employs an Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods approach within an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design.
- The mixed-methods approach contributes to the depth and breadth of a diversity of informed Indigenous perspectives and views in the research through participation and input by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from a range of backgrounds, locations and communities.

INDIGENOUS-CENTRED CO-DESIGN METHODS IN THE RESEARCH

There are four integrated components in the research, each of which contributes to the central agency of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and community stakeholders in participating in, contributing to, and influencing the outcomes of the research:

1. ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will provide overarching Indigenous governance in the research and act as a touchstone for the overall protocols and conduct of the research. The Reference Group will also provide advice, guidance and support to the Principal Researcher and the ANU School of Music in addressing Indigenous interests throughout the research. The Principal Researcher will maintain regular communication with and provide regular updates on the research to the Indigenous Reference Group.

After completion of the research project, the Indigenous Reference Group will then be constituted as an ongoing formal advisory body for the ANU School of Music as a means for enhancing engagement by the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities into the future, and for increasing the involvement of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the core business of the ANU School of Music. The Indigenous Reference Group will also provide support and guidance to the ANU School of Music in monitoring and evaluating implementation of the formal recommendations of the research.

The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will contribute to the co-design of the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* for the Indigenous Reference Group and to the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* for their involvement in the research project, in collaboration with the Principal Researcher and the Head of the ANU School of Music. This will include contingency planning around membership.

[Full details about the role and activities of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the research project are detailed in the: *Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research* document]

2. Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops

The Focus Group Workshops constitute the core data collection, analysis, interpretation and recommendations co-development components in the research, and the main collaborative Indigenous co-design forum for considering the research question and developing the set of formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music.

The co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops will contribute to co-design of a *Thematic Framework* which will act as a common guide in addressing the research question and developing the lines of questioning for the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components, and as the thread connecting the three data collection components.

Participants in the Focus Group Workshops will contribute to the co-interpretation of the data collected through the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components in considering the research question and developing the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music.

3. Survey Questionnaire

The Survey Questionnaire component will provide experientially-informed perspectives and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from a wide range of backgrounds, locations and communities, and will contribute to the overall breadth and diversity of perspectives and views in considering the research question and in developing the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music.

4. Interviews

The Interview component will provide in-depth perspectives and views from a range of experientially-informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and will contribute to the overall depth, breadth and diversity of views in considering the research question and developing the recommendations for the ANU School of Music,

INDIGENOUS CO-DESIGN FOCUS GROUP WORKSHOPS

Participants

- The co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops will comprise:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with a particular interest in and experientially-informed expertise on the research topic and question
 - The Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator/Focus Group Convenor
 - ANU School of Music management personnel and key staff

Roles

- The role of the Focus Group Workshop co-research participants will be to:
 - Attend meetings
 - Contribute to a mutually agreed set of principles and protocols for the conduct of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops through review of the *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document
 - Employ principles of Indigenous co-design in addressing the research question, considering the research data, and developing the set of formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music
 - Collaborate in contributing to the *Thematic Framework* and lines of questioning for the Survey Questionnaire and Interview components of the research
 - Develop agreement about the storage, and future access and use of the research data produced by the co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops
- The role of the Principal Researcher will be to:
 - Coordinate the logistics of organising meeting times and venues (including via Zoom if needed)
 - Convene and chair meetings in a coordinating, facilitating and documenting role
 - Provide information about the research and opportunities for co-research participants to discuss all aspects of the research, prior to commencement of the Workshops, including issues relevant to the ethical conduct of the research (See: *Research Agreement, Benefits of the Research, Risk Management Strategy*)
 - Provide opportunities for co-research participants to discuss and directly address issues relevant to the differing roles and positioning of participants in the research, including as related to risks, issues of diversity, inequality and/or power differentials, confidentiality, and third-party identification in the research
 - Maintain open and continuing dialogue with co-research participants with respect to values, expectations, assumptions, intentions, goals and processes in the research
 - Provide information and advice on the principles of co-design (as outlined in this document)
 - Provide information, agendas, draft documents, and data relevant to effectively addressing the research question and developing the set of formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music

- Collect and collate research data in the form of audio or audio-visual recordings of the Focus Group Workshops and Interviews (or Minutes and Summaries if not recorded), and the Survey Questionnaire responses and other documentation
 - Provide analyses of the research data for interpretation by the participants in the Focus Group Workshops
 - Facilitate collective agreement about the storage, and future access and use of the research data produced by the co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops
 - Provide Focus Group Workshop transcripts (if recorded), and minutes and summaries of meetings
 - Facilitate risk minimisation, mitigation and management for the co-research participants (See: *Risk Management Strategy*)
 - Organise agreed remuneration and reimbursements
 - Facilitate accessible, transparent two-way communication with co-research participants, including regular opportunities for feedback from participants
 - Provide feedback on the results of the research to stakeholders
- The role of ANU School of Music management personnel and key staff will be to:
 - Attend selected meetings to share information, expectations and insights about the ANU and ANU School of Music and to contribute to the development of mutual understanding and collaborative approaches in addressing the research question, aims and objectives of the research
 - Receive and respond to updates on the progress of the Focus Group Workshops and the perspectives and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the research
 - Contribute to constructive problem solving and to the development of mutually endorsed solutions and results in progressing the co-development of the set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music

Principles for the Conduct of the Co-design Focus Group Workshops

- A mutually agreed set of expectations, principles, processes and protocols will be established between the co-research participants at the first workshop for the conduct of the Focus Group Workshops, using the *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document as a starting point.
- The agency, voices, perspectives and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants will be central and prioritised in all discussions and deliberations as a means for ensuring the integrity of the research in achieving its aims, objectives and results.
- Priority will be given to maximising benefits for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in considering the research question and developing the formal set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music (See: *Benefits of the Research*).

- The Focus Group Workshops will be conducted in a way that ensures the “cultural safety” of co-research participants, based in respect for Indigenous cultures, appreciation of cultural diversity and adherence to Indigenous protocols.²
- Respect for the input of all co-research participants will be considered paramount to the integrity of the research in achieving its aims and objectives, and participants will be free to express a diversity of opinions, perspectives and views, provide input from their own points of view, and encouraged to respect the equal right of other participants to also do so.
- Diversity will be recognised as a ‘cornerstone’ in the research and as essential to the integrity of the research in achieving its aims, objectives and results. This will mean:
 - Acknowledging and providing scope for differing opinions, perspectives and points of view in deliberations and in determining the formal recommendations for the ANU School of Music
 - Considering the potentially differing needs and requirements of co-research participants in the format and conduct of the Focus Group Workshops
 - Taking into account potential communication differences and requirements of co-research participants, and valuing and responding to cultural and language diversity in the Focus Group Workshops
- There will be recognition of potential cultural and social differences between participants, and of the need for mutual respect and understanding amongst participants within the collaborative group dynamic.
- There will be recognition that unequal power relations between participants may have potentially negative impacts for participants, both institutionally and personally, and also on the integrity of the research. This will be addressed through establishment of a mutual commitment by participants to the minimisation and mitigation of this type of risk in the research.
- The co-design process will be conducted as an iterative and dialogic one comprised of in-depth forum discussions and deliberations that will consider matters in a cyclic and overlapping way rather than in a strictly linear manner.
- The co-design process will be conducted as a generative one in which co-research participants will have the opportunity for input into processes, content and conduct of the Focus Group Workshops.
- Focus Group Workshops will be structured and focussed, and co-research participants will receive notification and relevant documentation, including agendas, prior to the Workshops.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the Focus Group Workshops will have the right to invite attendance and contribution to deliberations by staff of the ANU and/or ANU School of Music staff and/or others on an ad hoc or continuing basis.

² With the aim of ensuring an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe for all members of the Reference Group, based in recognition of diversity, respect for individual views, and the sharing of knowledge and understanding.

- In considering the aims and objectives of the research and in developing the formal set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music, the co-research participants will be encouraged to adopt the co-design principle of a ‘vision orientation’ rather than simply considering how to change what already exists.
- Collaborative approaches to consensual decision-making will provide the overarching guiding principle in determining the formal set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music.
- Particular attention will be given to communicating and minimising risks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander co-research participants in the research (See: *Risk Management Strategy*).
- Deliberations will be information and data-led with priority given to Indigenous information sources and Indigenous-centred and controlled data where possible.
- There will be an expectation that co-research participants will maintain the confidentiality of group discussions and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person or group.
- Recognition will be given to the potentially negative impacts on the integrity and validity of the research outcomes of the ‘Hawthorne effect’ whereby co-research participants may feel obliged to agree with the views of other participants.
- Information about data collection, storage, access, use and management will be provided to co-research participants prior to agreeing to participate in the research (See: *Participant Information Sheet* and *Consent Form*).
- Participants will have an opportunity to collectively determine data storage, access and use conditions as a part of the research process.
- There will be open and continuing dialogue with co-research participants about values, expectations, assumptions, intentions, goals, processes and outcomes in the research.
- There will be opportunities for co-research participants to provide feedback throughout the research, including on a confidential and one-to-one basis if requested.
- Feedback on the results of the research will be provided to co-research participants, and in a variety of forms and means as requested and/or relevant to needs.
- Information about how the results of the research will be disseminated will be provided to the co-research participants (See: *Participant Information Sheet*).
- The identities of co-research participants will be kept confidential in the results of the research, as far as is allowed by law, except where a participant elects to be named in the research, in which case they may choose how they wish to be named.

- Participants can opt out of the research at any time without explanation or fear of negative consequences, up until the research is prepared for publication, and in the knowledge that where possible all data associated with their involvement will not be used except by formal agreement.
- In view of the collaborative nature of the Focus Group Workshops participants will be made aware that it may not be possible to eliminate all data involved with their involvement prior to agreeing to participate (See: *Participant Information Sheet*).
- Participants will be provided with the option to consent or not to consent to the audio or audio-visual recording of Focus Group Workshops, prior to agreeing to participate in the research. (See: *Consent Form*).
- Information about remuneration and/or other incentives will be communicated and agreed to prior to participation in the research (See: *Participant Information Sheet*).
- Co-research participants will be provided with information about support services available to them in the event of experiencing distress at any time during the research (See: *Participant Information Sheet*).
- Co-research participants will have the opportunity to develop experientially-informed knowledge and understanding of the following key features of co-design:
 - Co-design as a human-centred research-based process
 - Co-design as process-oriented research that emphasises a wide-input approach in the form of meaningful contribution, and negotiation and co-creation of results by a range of stakeholder participants
 - Co-design as an inclusive process in which all stakeholder participants are respected in sharing their knowledge and expertise
 - Co-design as a process where there is an emphasis on in-depth and collaborative approaches that incorporate input from a multiplicity of stakeholder viewpoints
 - Co-design as a process in which development of shared understanding, collective clarity of vision and direction about expectations and the purposes and processes of the research is important
 - Co-design as a structured process comprising divergence (exploration) and convergence (focussing), based in Discovery (insight into the problem), Definition (the specific focus), Development (of solutions) and Delivery (of solutions that work)
 - Co-design as a process that incorporates defining both the problem and the solution
 - Co-design as a process that is ‘vision oriented’ and focussed on aspirations and ‘the desired end as the starting point’ rather than looking simply at ‘what is, or what is wrong’
 - Co-design as a process in which there is a commitment to change and where the process is solution oriented and focussed on practical real-world outcomes
 - Co-design as a process that includes an understanding of the potential for limitations on outcomes and determination as to whether these are negotiable or not, seeking to strike a balance between ‘what’s desirable, what’s possible and what’s viable’
 - Co-design as a process in which there is an understanding that communication between co-research participants will be based on equality, respect, openness, transparency, active listening, empathy, mindfulness, and confidentiality

- Co-design as a process where adopting a ‘co-design mindset’ or ‘participatory mindset’ rather than an ‘expert mindset’ is important
- Co-design as a process where courage and assuming an optimistic ‘can do attitude’, and believing anything is possible is important
- Co-design as a process where open mindedness, curiosity, humility, being non-judgemental, having a willingness to learn and to change one’s mind and compromise, and accepting the possibility of multiple or varied opportunities and solutions are important
- Co-design as a process where creative thinking, asking the right questions, and seeking new connections that lead to learning and new understandings are important
- Co-design as a process where seeking to foster cooperation and trust and building wider community relationships between co-research stakeholder participants is valued

Appendix C:

Risk Management Strategy

Project Title:

Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator:

Jennifer Newsome, PhD Candidate, ANU School of Music
ANU School of Music Office +61 2 6125 5700
jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au

Potential risks of participation in the research:

- Potential risks in the research have been identified as a standard aspect of the formal ethics approval process for the research
- There are identified risks associated with all four components of the research and all participants may therefore potentially be exposed to a degree of risk or even harm as a consequence of participation in the research.
- Potential risks include:
 - Psychological/emotional distress
 - Economic loss
 - Risk of third-party identification
- Every effort has been made in the design of the research to minimise risks for participants.
- These risks are mainly though not exclusively associated with the collaborative nature of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops component.
- It is recognised that risk and/or negative consequences of participation in the research may not only be more prevalent but also more serious for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants as a legacy of racism and socio-cultural-economic exclusion and discrimination.
- Economic harm may also be more impactful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants due to existing socio-economic disadvantage, and pressures arising from other responsibilities, including those related to unusually high workloads for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and volunteers in institutions and organisations.
- Given the community/institution contexts of the research at the ANU and ANU School of Music there may also be a potential risk of social harm due to the fact that the research involves participants with differing levels of institutional and/or community power and influence and may also involve those with whom the ANU has collaborative or commercial arrangements.

To whom do the risks apply:

- All participants directly involved in the research may be subject to a degree of potential psychological/emotional risk and risks associated with confidentiality and third-party identification. Some participants may also be impacted by potential economic harm.
- Risks apply to participants in the following components of the research:
 - The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group
 - The Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops
 - Interview
 - Survey Questionnaire
- Risks are mainly though not exclusively associated with the collaborative nature of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop component.
- School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (post-research recommendations implementation phase): After completion of the research project there may also be significant risks to ‘cultural safety’ for ongoing members of the Reference Group where there are strongly conflicting views about the direction the School of Music should take in implementing the recommendations of the research (e.g. educational programs), and which may arise in the context of competing priorities in an environment of limited available funding.

Strategies for monitoring and communicating risks during the research:

- Providing opportunities for prospective participants to discuss the risks of involvement in the research prior to consent, including weighing of risk in relation to benefits and how any potential risks will be monitored, communicated and managed in the research
- Including discussion about risk of coercion in consultation and/or communication about the research with potential participants
- Taking time to establish relationships of mutual trust and open communication with potential participants
- Maintaining transparent, dialogic, respectful communication with all participants throughout the research
- Communicating in plain English, and employing flexibility in language use and communication modes, taking into account linguistic and socio-cultural diversity
- Monitoring risk and or negative consequences of the research by discussing risks and ways to minimise and manage risks openly with participants on an ongoing basis throughout the research and as specifically relevant to each of the four separate components of the research
- Providing participants with opportunities to communicate any concerns about risks and to discuss risks and strategies for their mitigation confidentially with the Principal Researcher throughout the research, either in person, on a one-to-one or group basis, or via phone/email/social media
- Demonstrating openness, readiness and responsiveness to the need for ongoing adaptation to participant needs and requirements throughout the research
- Establishing circumstances and conditions favorable to the establishment of relations of trust between research participants, based in respect, equality and mutual intent
- Establishing a ‘safe process’ in the research by which different voices and opinions are supported to be heard free from the possibility of negative consequences

- Discussing the ‘Hawthorne effect’ with participants (where participants might feel they should agree with one another) and its possible impacts in the research, including in relation to the integrity of the research results
- Establishing effective communication modes and strategies for dissemination of information about the research and its recommendations and results to the different stakeholder members and communities
- Obtaining expert advice and ongoing support for the design, logistics and conduct of the research

Strategies for minimizing, mitigating and managing risks in the research:

Every effort will be made to minimise, mitigate and effectively manage risks to participants throughout the research. Strategies to achieve this include:

Information for Participants

A *PhD Project Brief* document provides preliminary briefing information about risks in the research for interested stakeholders and potential participants.

The research incorporates six guiding documents that identify and inform participants about risks in the research. These documents will be confirmed by the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group prior to participant recruitment and commencement of the data collection phases of the research:

- *Participant Information Sheets* and related *Consent Forms* (individual ones for each of the four components of the research) (for all participants)
- *Research Agreement* (for all participants)
- *Risk Management Strategy* (for all participants)
- *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* (primarily for the co-research participants involved in the Co-design Focus Group Workshops and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group)
- *Covid-19 Safety Protocols*

Voluntary Prior Informed Consent

- Participation in the research is voluntary and by free, prior informed consent only
- Provision of information about risks to prospective participants is included in the Participant Information Sheets for the components of the research

Withdrawal and Opt out Provision

- Prospective participants will be able to opt out of the research at any time without fear of negative consequences, and in the knowledge that where possible all data associated with their involvement will not be used, except by written agreement.

Research Context and Methodology

- The ANU case-study context/environment

- The institutional environment supports the ethical and safe conduct of the research and includes ready access to relevant expertise and resources
- Indigenous oversight and guidance in the research
 - Associate Professor Christopher Sainsbury (ANU School of Music Indigenous Convenor) is providing PhD supervision for the research and will also participate in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group component of the research
 - The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will provides specialist project-specific Indigenous expertise and guidance in the research
- Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred research principles and co-design
 - The Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design methodology embeds Indigenous principles, ethics and protocols in the research and facilitates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, control and ownership in the research
 - The Indigenous-informed and Indigenous-centred co-design methodology provides an evidence-based means for facilitating collaborative, dialogic approaches to creating and maintaining ‘safety’ in the research, including in managing recognised complexities in participatory research
 - The participatory nature of co-design provides a means for management of inherent risks through transparent, direct and open communication and immediate on-the-ground responses to identified risks throughout the research
- Indigenous data sovereignty and governance, and protection of Indigenous cultural knowledges and intellectual property rights
 - The research seeks to ensure ownership, control and representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the processes, products and results of the research and protection of Indigenous cultural knowledges and intellectual property rights
 - The details of these strategies are outlined in the “Indigenous data sovereignty and governance, and copyright and intellectual and cultural property rights management” section of the Research Agreement
- Third-party identification
 - Where a participant is potentially identifiable via third-party identification, every effort will be made to eliminate the possibility of third-party identification in research documents, the Summary of Results Final Report, the Indigenous Focus Group Recommendations Report, the PhD thesis and any subsequent published or public accounts of the research.
 - Given the community/institution contexts of the research at the ANU and the ANU School of Music there may however be particular risks associated with potential third-party identification, including with respect to impacts on university operations and politics and individual relational and reputational risk.
- Recognition of unequal and/or dependent relationships in the research
 - A statement is included in this *Research Agreement* regarding respect for the input of all participants in achieving the aims and objectives of the research, and confirming the freedom of participants to express a diversity of views and perspectives, and to provide input from their own points of view
 - The Participant Information Sheet for the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops provides information about the risk of unequal power relations in the research.
 - There will be discussion with prospective co-research participants about the potential risk of inequality and/or dependent relationships in the research as a part of the consultation process prior to consent.

- The *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* guiding document addresses the risk of inherent inequalities and/or power differentials in participatory research
- There will be discussion with participants about ways to minimise potential impacts of inequality and inherent power differentials in the research and between participants, and in particular for participants in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group and Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops
- The research will facilitate communication in ways that take into consideration relational dynamics and the potential for impacts of unequal and/or dependent relationships in the research
- The research will provide avenues for participants to convey concerns about unequal and/or dependent relationships on a confidential basis to the Principal Researcher
- The Principal Researcher will respond sensitively and proactively in seeking to resolve any concerns that might arise about unequal and/or dependent relational dynamics in the research, and will refer participants with unresolved concerns or distress to the ANU Human Ethics Officer and/or to the ANU Counselling Service (available only to ANU staff and students), Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and/or Lifeline
- School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (post-research recommendations implementation phase):
 - If there are strongly conflicting views about the direction the School of Music should take in implementing the recommendations of the research, the Reference Group will seek to resolve any such conflicts through transparent, inclusive group discussion, and negotiation with a view to reaching a reasonable consensus on ways forward that consider the ‘cultural safety’ of all members. This might include in consultation with the Head of School.
 - For any matters requiring resolution or mediation, members should feel free to raise these with the Chair. Matters requiring a resolution will be determined by consensus of the members present. The Chair will have the deliberative and casting vote where consensus cannot be reached.

Confidentiality in the research:

- The collected identifying information about participants will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer
- Participants will be asked to confirm in writing whether they wish their identities to remain confidential (on Consent Forms)
- For those participants who indicate that they wish their identities to remain confidential, identifying information (i.e. including contact details) will be stored separately in the first instance during the data collection phase, and then deleted prior to storage and publication
- Identities of participants will not be included in the Summary of Results Final Report, PhD thesis, and any publication or public presentations of the results of the research without prior written consent
- Risk of third-party identification will be included in the Risks section of the Participant Information Sheets, and will state that every effort will be made to eliminate potential for third-party identification in the final report of results and any subsequent publications
- Where a participant withdraws from the research, their contribution will be deleted from transcripts, meeting notes, minutes and summaries (with an indication that there is a deletion)
- The following information will be included in the Confidentiality section of the Participant Information Sheet/s:

- Participant identities will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, unless the participant elects to be named in the research
- Participants can choose not to be named in the research, and if they choose to be named, how they wish to be named
- Identifying details will be stored separately from the rest of research data
- Use of participant data
- Access to participant data (access will be restricted to myself as the Principal Researcher, except as specified otherwise in the relevant Participant Information Sheet)
- After completion of the research and publication of results, any subsequent use by me of the information provided by participants will only be with participant written consent
- Where a participant withdraws from the research, their contribution will be deleted from transcripts, meeting notes, minutes and summaries (with an indication there is a deletion)
- A confidentiality statement will also be included in the *Research Agreement* and *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* documents
- A privacy statement will be included in the Survey Questionnaire component of the research

Additional measures for each of the four separate components of the research will include:

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group:

- Participants will be advised in the Participant Information Sheet that, with their consent, their contribution to discussions and decision making will be recorded in the form of audio-visual recordings (but only where necessary to assist with accuracy of minute taking where meetings are held on-line), written meeting notes and formal meeting minutes
- Advice will also be included in the Confidentiality section of the relevant Participant Information Sheet, requesting that participants maintain confidentiality of group discussions and that participants refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person
- Any inadvertent reference to any confidential matter will not be noted or included in the final minutes or summaries of meetings
- All documents shared during the research will be considered confidential
- Access to and use of the information provided will only be with the written consent of the participants in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group
- Records of meetings in the form of audio-visual recordings, discussion notes and meeting minutes will be stored on a ANU password protected server and password protected computer

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops:

- Participants will be advised in the Participant Information Sheet that, with their consent and the consent of the other participants, their contribution to discussions and decision making will be audio or audio-visually recorded and written up as transcripts (or meeting minutes if not recorded) and summaries
- A statement will also be included in the Confidentiality section of the relevant Participant Information Sheet, requesting that participants maintain confidentiality of group discussions and that participants refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person. This statement will also be included in the *Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research* document.

- Any inadvertent reference to any confidential matter will be noted but not included in the meeting minutes or summaries of meetings.
- Copies of confidential discussion notes and summaries or confirmed minutes will be provided to participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops in hard copy form and/or via email for their use, but only for developing the set of recommendations to the School of Music during the period of the research.
- All documents shared during the research will be considered confidential.
- Access to the information provided by participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops – in the form of minutes or summaries of meetings – will be restricted to myself as the Principal Researcher, the other participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops, and to the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (to assist them in providing advice and guidance to the Principal Researcher in the research).
- Any other access to and use of the information provided will only be with the written consent of the participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops
- Participants will be advised that if they wish their identity to remain confidential, the Principal Researcher will remove their name, and to the extent possible, any information that might tend to identify them, in the information provided to the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.
- Records of meetings in the form of discussion notes, minutes, summaries and recommendations to the School of Music will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer.
- The original recordings of meetings and transcripts will be stored on the ANU password protected server and archived at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS protocols) unless agreed otherwise collectively by the participants.

Interview:

- Participants will be advised in the Participant Information Sheet that, with their consent, an audio or audio-visual recording will be made of the interview (to enable accurate transcription), otherwise a summary of interview will be made
- Advice will be also included in the Confidentiality section of the relevant Participant Information Sheet, requesting that participants maintain confidentiality and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person
- Any inadvertent reference to any confidential matter will be noted but not be included in the final confirmed transcript or summary of interview
- Advice will be provided in the relevant Participant Information Sheet advising that with the written agreement of the participant, a de-identified summary of main points drawn from the final confirmed transcript of interview will be provided to the Indigenous co-design focus group participants and to the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group to inform their deliberations.
- All documents shared during the research will be considered confidential
- Participants will be advised that the information provided will be restricted to the Principal Researcher, the Indigenous co-design focus group participants and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group
- Access to and use of participant data for any other purpose will only be with the written consent of the participants.
- The original recording of interview and transcript, or summary (if not recorded), will be stored on the ANU password protected server, and archived at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS protocols) unless agreed otherwise by the participants.

- The summary of interview provided to the Indigenous co-design focus group participants and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer.

Survey Questionnaire (to be distributed via email and social media):

- A Privacy Statement will be displayed prominently on the Survey page. The statement will include:
 - What information will be collected about the participant when they use the email or social media transmission method (i.e. email address and/or social media account contact information)
 - Why the information is being collected (i.e. for communication)
 - How it will be used (i.e. for communication)
 - If it will be disclosed (it will not)
 - A warning that there are risks associated with using the internet
 - An offer to provide other options (i.e. in person, phone or paper response)
 - An outline of the measures to ensure the security of data
- Advice will be provided in the ‘What does participation in the research entail’ section of the relevant Participant Information Sheet advising that a de-identified copy of the Survey will be provided to the Indigenous co-design focus group participants and to members of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group to inform their deliberations.
- The Participant Information Sheet will also include advice that access to the de-identified information provided will be restricted to the Principal Researcher, the participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops and the members of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.
- Access to and use of participant data for any other purpose will only be with the written consent of the participants.
- Advice will be included in the Confidentiality section of the Participant Information Sheet, that it is important that participants maintain confidentiality and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.
- Any inadvertent reference to any confidential matter will not be included in the reported data.
- Completed Survey questionnaires and a de-identified copy will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer, and a de-identified copy will be archived at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS protocols).

Data storage and management, and access to data during and after the research:

Audio or audio-visual recorded data and transcripts

The audio or audio-visual recorded data and transcripts of the Focus Group meetings and the Interviews (or Focus Group meeting minutes and Interview summaries if not recorded) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, and archived at AIATSIS indefinitely (under AIATSIS protocols), unless elected otherwise by the participants. Draft versions of transcripts provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the recorded data and transcripts will only be with the prior written consent of the participants.

Participants in the Focus Group and the Indigenous Reference Group will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage

period will be included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants will be provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

Participants in the Interviews will have an opportunity prior to and following the interview to discuss and elect what they would like done with the recording and transcript of the interview.

Written and electronic data

- ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group:

Audio-visual recordings and transcripts of meetings, and discussion will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by the participants. Confirmed minutes of meetings will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer indefinitely, unless elected otherwise by the participants. All shared documents during the period of the research will be considered confidential. Draft versions of transcripts provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the recordings, transcripts of meetings and discussion notes held at ANU will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period will be included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants will be provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Focus Group Workshops:

Minutes and summaries of the meetings of the Focus Group will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by the participants, in which case they will be stored indefinitely. All shared documents during the period of the research will be considered confidential. Draft documentation provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. Access to and use of the minutes and summaries will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will be provided with opportunities for collective decision making about the handling of data after the required storage period. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period will be included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants will be provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Interviews:

Transcripts and summaries of interviews will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless elected otherwise by participants, in which case they will be stored indefinitely. Details identifying participants with this data will be stored separately. Drafts of transcripts provided to participants will be deleted when confirmed. All shared documents

will be considered confidential. Access to and use of the transcripts and summaries will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Participants will have an opportunity prior to and following the interview to discuss and elect what they would like done with the transcript and summaries of the interview. Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period will be included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants will be provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Survey:

The completed surveys and a de-identified copy of them will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted. De-identified copies of the surveys will be archived at AIATSIS indefinitely (under AIATSIS protocols). Access to and use of the de-identified copies of the survey held at AIATSIS will only be with the prior consent of the participants.

Information about access to and use of data following the required storage period will be included in the relevant Participant Information Sheet, and participants will be provided with options regarding archiving and authorization for access and use in the relevant Consent Form.

- Set of Recommendations to the ANU School of Music:

The set of recommendations provided to the ANU School of Music by the Focus Group will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer indefinitely. Access to and use of the recommendations will be at the discretion of the ANU School of Music directorate in consultation with the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.

Queries, concerns and complaints procedures:

Contact Details for More Information:

For more information or queries please contact the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au

Concerns and Complaints:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If participants have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Contact Details if in Distress:

If participants experience distress at any time during the research, they should contact the Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator who will be able to refer them to a counselling or other health service if they wish. Or research participants can contact:

- For ANU staff and students only: ANU Counselling Service: +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14

Appendix D:
Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research Project

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

PhD Research Project Brief

Role of the SoM Indigenous Reference Group in the Research

The *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* constitutes a key component in the PhD Research Project.

An overview of the involvement and participation of the members of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in the research is outlined in the relevant *Participant Information Sheet (PIS)* and *Consent Form*.

Key guiding documents for the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* as a part of the Research Project are the: *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)*.

Other key documents are the: *Draft Research Agreement*, *Draft Benefits of the Research*, *Draft Risk Management Strategy*, *Draft Stakeholder Participation Plan*, *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*.

Role in the Research

The role of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in the research is to:

- a) provide informed First Nations oversight, guidance, and support to the Principal Researcher in the Research Project
- b) act as a key touchstone for the overall protocols and conduct of the research.

This may include in consultation/collaboration with the Head of School.

Consistent with the principles of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous co-design in the research, the involvement of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in the research is flexible and open to adjustment as the Research Project unfolds.

The proposed role and participation of the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in the Research Project constituted an important component in the formal Ethics Protocol approval process for the research.

The following important key points arose from this process:

Scope of Involvement

- The Research Project and the role of the *Indigenous Reference Group* in it will be considered complete at the point of delivery of the set of formal recommendations to the School of Music.
- The implementation of the set of formal recommendations resulting from the research will be beyond the scope of the Research Project and will be a matter for consideration by the ongoing members of the *Indigenous Reference Group* in collaboration with the Head of School.
- The ongoing involvement in the *Indigenous Reference Group* as an advisory body for the School of Music after completion of the research will be a matter for discussion outside the remit of the Research Project and will be taken up by the Chair (or nominee), and members of the *Indigenous Reference Group* and School leadership after the Research Project is complete.

Key Activities in the Research

The core activities of the Indigenous Reference Group are outlined in the *Participant Information Sheet (PIS)*. These will include:

- Participating in face-to-face (or online) meetings and email/online communications with the Principal Researcher, and in consultation with the Head of School as needed
- Providing project-specific guidance and advice on the ethics, protocols and overall conduct of the research to the Principal Researcher, and in consultation with the Head of School as needed
- Providing advice on potential participants for the *Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop* component of the research
- Contributing to review and confirmation of the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* for the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* together with the Principal Researcher, and in consultation with the Head of School as needed
- Confirming the key guiding documents for the research: *Draft Research Agreement*, *Draft Benefits of the Research*, *Draft Risk Management Strategy*, *Draft Stakeholder Participation Plan*, *Draft Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*
- Providing feedback on the deliberations of the *Indigenous Reference Group* to the SoM through the Chair (or nominee). This feedback will be conveyed to a General SoM Staff Meeting in the form of a *Summary of Meeting Minutes* which will convey: the main points of discussion; current initiatives and/or project suggestions; recommended directions/actions; and/or any issues, questions or future directions for consideration, but will not identify the individual contributions of the participants, unless the members of the *Indigenous Reference Group* agree or wish to be identified.

The Principal Researcher will report back regularly to the *Indigenous Reference Group* on the Research Project as it unfolds.

Special Ethical Considerations

There are special ethical considerations for the *SoM Indigenous Reference Group* in its participation in the Research Project, including the following:

- There may possibly be institutional and/or financial constraints on the implementation of the set of formal recommendations (arising from the Research Project) to the School, and these may be beyond the control of the members of the *Indigenous Reference Group*.
- There may potentially be conflicts of interest for members of the *Indigenous Reference Group* who also perform other roles in the School and are therefore privy to information which might constrain the implementation of the set of formal recommendations, contrary to the expressed interests of stakeholders (e.g. budget information).
- If there are strongly conflicting views about the direction the School should be taking in implementing the set of formal recommendations (arising from the Research Project), the *Indigenous Reference Group* will seek to resolve any such conflict through transparent, inclusive group discussion and negotiation with a view to reaching a reasonable consensus on ways forward, and that considers the ‘cultural safety’ of all members, based in respect for Indigenous cultures, appreciation of cultural diversity and adherence to Indigenous protocols.¹ This could include in consultation with the Head of School.
- For any matters requiring resolution or mediation, members should feel free to raise these with the Chair (or nominee). Matters requiring a resolution will be determined by consensus of the members present. The Chair (or nominee) will have the deliberative and casting vote where consensus cannot be reached.

Data use and access after completion of the research

Provisions for use and access to data resulting from the participation of the *Indigenous Reference Group* in the Research Project (i.e. recordings/transcripts/minutes/discussion notes/summaries of meetings) are outlined in the relevant *Participant Information Sheet* and in the *Research Agreement*.

Special Note: The ANU Ethics Committee made the following suggestions which the *Indigenous Reference Group* may find useful in reviewing and confirming the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* and the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)*:

“In terms of agreement on issues concerning access, there are several mechanisms that

¹ With the aim of ensuring an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe for all members of the *Indigenous Reference Group*, based in recognition of diversity, respect for individual views, and sharing of knowledge and understanding.

could be applied: consensus, majority; or, unanimity. It would be useful to establish SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) to sit aside the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the group to establish the ground rules for such matters. Such a set of procedures could align with the Agreement [*Research Agreement*] and Principles [*Principles of Indigenous Co-design in the Research*] documents to formalise how matters will be decided and how to manage potential disagreements.”

JN/CS: March 2023

Appendix E:
Research Recommendations to the ANU School of Music

PhD Research Project – Jennifer Newsome

CONFIDENTIAL

INDIGENOUS CO-DESIGN FOCUS GROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ANU SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

The following recommendations are the principal outcome of an Indigenous centred co-design case study research project conducted at the ANU School of Music (SoM) from 2022–2025.¹ The research project comprised an Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and development of a set of non-binding formal recommendations to inform the strategic direction of the ANU School of Music (SoM). The recommendations are drawn from the findings of the research which were derived from the combined results of a nationally focussed Survey Questionnaire, three in depth Interviews, and four Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops.

Preamble

The research is aligned with the mission and strategic policy of the Australian National University (ANU) with the aim of promoting national leadership by the ANU School of Music in addressing the rights and interests of First Nations’ Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system, and reliant upon the endorsement of School management.

The stated purpose of the Australian National University is to “serve society through transformational research and education”² and to be “a standard-bearer for equity and

¹ Conducted by PhD candidate Jennifer Newsome.

² Australian National University (2021, p. 4).

inclusion”³. ANU has a declared responsibility to “lead the way and fully commit to making Australia, and the world, a better place for all First Nations people” and to contribute to addressing inequalities and actively working towards righting the wrongs of past dispossession, displacement, and cultural disruption experienced by Indigenous Australians.⁴ This includes by acknowledging and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; fostering an environment where Indigenous perspectives are central to the university’s mission; and by driving systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives.⁵

As a part of the Australian National University, the ANU School of Music has a responsibility and a unique role to play in upholding and fulfilling these commitments. The ANU School of Music is ideally positioned to play a leading national role in Australian tertiary music education by honouring the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples, including as articulated in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, to which Australia is a signatory. These rights include the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination⁶ and to the fulfillment of educational and cultural rights⁷. This includes the right to the “dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations, which shall be appropriately reflected in education”⁸; the right to “practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs”; and the right to “maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures”, including through the performing arts⁹.

First Nations’ Peoples have the right to be free to practice culture and to not be limited in the expression of that right. The ANU School of Music can play a proactive role in this by walking *with* us and empowering First Nations Peoples through the creation of opportunities to practice cultural rights. This means honouring, privileging, respecting, and upholding the cultural rights of the individual as best practice; and ensuring “cultural safety” by adopting anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and truth-telling, based in healing informed and culturally responsive practice.

³ Australian National University (2021, pp. 22–24).

⁴ Australian National University (2024, p. 4).

⁵ Australian National University (2024, p. 4).

⁶ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) Articles 3, 18, 19, 38.

⁷ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) Articles 5, 8, 11, 14, 15.1, 21, 31, 34, 39, 40.

⁸ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) Article 15.

⁹ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) Article 11.1.

Everyone in the institution has an important role to play in this. For non-Indigenous people this means taking up the responsibility to address biases, and in doing so, to prevent further harm:

Our First Worlds should be restored, because we know that that makes us our resourceful selves for taking on any other world. There is no one way to create music, of doing music. We want to be in spaces where our “safety” is upheld, where our cultures are celebrated, and privileged, and where our musical worlds are respected. This includes restoring how we practise music, how we create music, and supporting whatever we want to create. Universities can fulfil their commitments and responsibilities by acknowledging, embracing, and building on this understanding, thereby bringing mutual benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and to the university.
(Indigenous Co-design Focus Group, 2024)

These recommendations are presented to the ANU School of Music through the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group with the aim of supporting the School of Music in progressing the rights and interests of diverse First Nations Peoples and communities through the work of the School into the future.

Summary of the research findings

The research findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations people and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which tertiary music education institutions can address these, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music.

The research confirms the critical importance of support for First Nations rights, encompassing educational and cultural rights, and the essential role of Indigenous self-determination in progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Realisation of Indigenous rights, including to self-determination, in tertiary music institutions requires involvement of First Nations people in decision making in every aspect and at every level of the institution, together with proactive equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and antiracism policies and strategies. Recognition of the vital role and special contribution of First Nations people to the work of tertiary music education institutions is essential. Proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing and support First Nations staff are also essential. Targeted investment, funding and resourcing are

also critical to progressing First Nations rights and interests in tertiary music education institutions.

Tertiary music institutions need to be welcoming, culturally affirming, and “culturally safe” places for all First Nations people, and institutional environments need to be empowering, and supportive. Recognition and respect for First Nations peoples, cultures, and knowledges is essential. This means implementing culturally inclusive and responsive policies and practices that make space for First Nations voices and are inclusive of First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, and doing, encompassing diversity. Acknowledgment of custodianship of Land and respect for First Nations protocols are essential. Connection with Country, culture, and community are also fundamental to inclusive practice; and institutions need to have strong ongoing collaborative relationships with First Nations communities and community members, particularly those local to institutions. Culturally rich, safe, and affirming First Nations “spaces and places” for gathering, learning, and making music are also essential.

Facilitating increased access by First Nations musicians to Australian tertiary music education institutions needs to be a high priority. This means promoting awareness of programs and their benefits for First Nations musicians; addressing barriers to access; and providing genuine pathways responsive to First Nations priorities. First Nations students should have access to all available programs and to dedicated cultural programs with a focus on First Nations learning priorities and needs. Study programs need to take into full account the cultural heritage; musical and educational backgrounds; and knowledges, skills, and achievements of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity.

Programs need to also facilitate the participation and success of First Nations students. This requires institutional flexibility and responsiveness to individual learning interests and needs, accommodating alternative learning approaches, and supporting the professional goals and career aspirations of students. First Nations teachers, mentors, and community members play a critical role in supporting learning outcomes for First Nations students, and all staff need to have cultural understanding and a commitment to empowering and supporting First Nations students. Targeted support for First Nations students is also essential and needs to be empowering and based in proactive and holistic approaches across the full range of student learning and support needs. Research training and practice in tertiary music institutions needs to support identified First Nations priorities and promote Indigenous self-determination, including for students.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, these findings highlight the critical importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights; align with First Nations cultures and values; support the learning priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; recognise First Nations diversity; and above all, observe Indigenous self-determination as the guiding principle.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – Indigenous self-determination: That the ANU School of Music implement proactive policies and strategies to progress Indigenous rights and self-determination as core business and drive systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives.

Recommendation 2 – First Nations cultural rights: That the ANU School of Music create and support opportunities for First Nations musicians to practice cultural rights, in partnership with First Nations people, and through First Nations-led cultural solutions – including by offering culturally inclusive curricula responsive to the aspirations and needs of First Nations musicians and reflecting the diverse musical traditions of First Nations people.

Recommendation 3 – Contribution of First Nations people: That the ANU School of Music actively promote First Nations leadership and the contribution of First Nations people in all arenas and at every level of institutional activity, including through community-institution partnerships and Indigenous-led initiatives.

Recommendation 4 – Equal opportunity: That the ANU School of Music develop Indigenous specific strategies to address discrimination and racism and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff, including through cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.

Recommendation 5 – Funding and resourcing: That the ANU School of Music take proactive steps to ensure adequate targeted funding and resourcing in addressing the priorities and needs of First Nations people and supporting First Nations initiatives.

Recommendation 6 – Recognition and respect: That the ANU School of Music implement inclusive policies and practices that acknowledge First Nations custodianship of Land and facilitate respect for and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols, and demonstrate recognition and respect for First Nations people, knowledges, and cultures, inclusive of diversity.

Recommendation 7 – Culturally inclusive and responsive practice: That the ANU School of Music offer culturally inclusive and responsive programs that address the priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations musicians and provide opportunities also for non-

Indigenous learning – including through new program design, which should be Indigenous-led.

Recommendation 8 – Diversity: That the ANU School of Music offer programs that are inclusive of First Nations students from a range of cultural and educational backgrounds, encompassing First Nations cultural and musical diversity.

Recommendation 9 – Health and wellbeing: That the ANU School of Music support First Nations health and wellbeing, including by ensuring a “culturally safe” environment for all First Nations staff and students, and through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.

Recommendation 10 – Connections and connecting: That the ANU School of Music foster connections of benefit to First Nations students, staff, and First Nations communities – including through collaboration/partnerships with First Nations communities; schools; and First Nations artists, organisations, professions/industry; and between First Nations people and with non-Indigenous people within the university.

Recommendation 11 – Research priorities: That the ANU School of Music provide proactive support for First Nations-led research, and research instigated by First Nations researchers or endorsed by First Nations people, including research by First Nations students.

Recommendation 12 – Access: That the ANU School of Music take a proactive approach to facilitating access for First Nations musicians, by addressing barriers and offering flexible and inclusive study options responsive to the learning priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations musicians.

Recommendation 13 – Spaces and places: That the ANU School of Music provide culturally rich, safe, and affirming “spaces and places” for all First Nations people, including dedicated First Nations cultural spaces, targeted cultural programs, and opportunities for “two-way” sharing and learning. A strong working relationship with the ANU Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre is also recommended.

Recommendation 14 – Priorities in Teaching and learning: That the ANU School of Music offer study programs inclusive of and responsive to the teaching and learning priorities of First Nations musicians, including through curriculum innovation.

Recommendation 15 – Staffing: That the ANU School of Music implement proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing, involve First Nations community members in the work of the School, and ensure a supportive environment for all First Nations staff.

Recommendation 16 – Participation and success: That the ANU School of Music implement targeted strategies to support the participation and success of First Nations students.

Recommendation 17 – Supporting students: That the ANU School of Music implement targeted holistic strategies to support First Nations students across the full range of student learning and support needs.

Recommendation 18 – Aspirations and goals: That the ANU School of Music offer programs that are inclusive of and responsive to the aspirations, goals, and needs of First Nations musicians.

Recommendation 19 – ANU School of Music-First Nations programs: That the ANU School of Music support and build on existing First Nations programs and provide national leadership in charting the way forward.

Recommendation 20 – Implementation plan: That the School of Music develop a Recommendations Implementation Plan, including in collaboration with the SoM Indigenous Reference Group; and a process for ongoing monitoring, evaluating, and reporting outcomes as a part of core business. Implementation will need to be based in an Indigenous-led “whole-of-School” approach, taking into account the location and particular circumstances of the School.

Recommendation 21 – Equity data monitoring and reporting: That the ANU School of Music develop a process for monitoring and tracking the equity participation rate of First Nations students and staff as a part of standard evaluation, monitoring, and reporting.

Recommendation 22 – Program and policy evaluation: That the ANU School of Music develop a robust process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all programs and policies with respect to addressing First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs, including through qualitative evaluation strategies aligned with Indigenous methodologies.

Recommendation 23 – Australian Universities Accord – Final Report (2024): That the ANU School of Music consider the findings and recommendations of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord – Final Report with respect to progressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in and through the work of the School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are presented thematically and comprise Theme 1. Principles and values (Subthemes: Indigenous rights and social justice; Recognition and respect); Theme 2.

Culturally inclusive and responsive practice (Subthemes: Diversity; Health and wellbeing; Connections and connecting; Research priorities); Theme 3. Facilitating access (Subtheme: Spaces and places); and Theme 4. Priorities in teaching and learning (Subthemes: Staffing; Facilitating participation and success; Supporting students; Aspirations and goals). The themes (and subthemes) are interconnected. Five non-thematic recommendations drawn from the background research are also included at the end.

Theme 1: Principles and values

The research identified key principles and values that were considered essential to addressing First Nations priorities, requirements and needs in the Australian tertiary music education system. These fall into two categories: Indigenous rights and social justice; and Recognition and respect.

Indigenous rights and social justice

The research found that support for Indigenous rights and social justice was essential to addressing the interests of First Nations people and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. This encompassed Indigenous self-determination; educational and cultural rights; the contribution of First Nations people; equal opportunity and non-discrimination; and funding and resourcing.

Indigenous self-determination

Indigenous self-determination was found to be essential to addressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. This corroborates the findings of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord, which affirms the importance of a “strong commitment to the fundamental principle of self-determination” (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 246), and to policymaking in “full and genuine partnership” with First Nations people (p. 242).

The research found that Australian tertiary music education institutions needed to recognise and support Indigenous self-determination as core business and actively promote First Nations leadership and representation in all aspects and at all levels of decision making. It was important that institutions were proactive in actively advocating for rights and taking action to bring about change. This included by supporting Indigenous self-determination in teaching and learning. There was very strong support for Indigenous-led cultural programs in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and when asked what an “ideal” tertiary music program for First Nations people would look like, many participants cited

Indigenous-led programs. Recommendations included Indigenous-led curricula developed and taught by Indigenous educators and musicians; co-designing programs together with First Nations musicians, professionals, and community; and involving First Nations musicians and community members in the assessment of the value of programs.

These findings confirm the importance of proactive efforts to progress Indigenous self-determination “as core business” (Bracknell, 2022; Bracknell & Barwick, 2020 p. 70) and offer evidence-based insights that can support the School in progressing “systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives” (Australian National University, 2024, p. 4).

Recommendation 1: That the ANU School of Music implement proactive policies and strategies to progress Indigenous self-determination as core business and drive systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives.

Educational and cultural rights

Indigenous rights encompass educational and cultural rights. This has significant implications for tertiary music institutions with respect to advancing social equity (Heard et al., 2023) and the dual concerns of music sustainability and social justice (Grant, 2022). The research found it was critical that tertiary music institutions recognise the cultural rights of First Nations people.

The main argument was that everyone has the right to practice cultural rights, and that First Nations musicians have the right to freedom of expression in creating and playing music, and to study music on their own terms. For Australian tertiary music institutions this means creating opportunities for First Nations musicians to practice cultural rights, in partnership with First Nations people and through First Nations-led cultural solutions. This includes by offering culturally inclusive curricula responsive to the identified aspirations and needs of First Nations musicians and reflecting the diverse musical traditions of First Nations peoples. These findings lend weight to the call for a critique of “who and what” Australian music institutions and scholarship are sustaining (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020) and draw attention to the special role and responsibilities of tertiary music education institutions in supporting “freedom of cultural expression” for First Nations people (UNESCO *Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, 2005, p. 7).

Recommendation 2: That the ANU School of Music create and support opportunities for First Nations musicians to practice cultural rights, in partnership with First Nations people, and through First Nations-led cultural solutions – including by offering culturally inclusive

curricula responsive to the aspirations and needs of First Nations musicians and reflecting the diverse musical traditions of First Nations people.

Contribution of First Nations people

The research found that the contribution of First Nations people to the work of Australian tertiary music institutions was highly valued and considered essential to beneficial outcomes for First Nations people.

Participants highlighted the valuable expertise, skills, cultural knowledges and understanding, historical perspectives, lived experience, and First Nations ways of knowing that First Nations people bring to the learning environment. There was very strong support for Indigenous-led programs; programs taught by First Nations practitioners; programs that offer opportunities to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners; and programs that provide mentoring for First Nations students by First Nations practitioners.

First Nations people were seen as playing critical roles in leadership, teaching, mentoring, and support; in developing and implementing curricula inclusive of First Nations music, musicians and cultures; and in First Nations research. Other arenas of valued contribution included in-residence programs for Elders and First Nations musicians; guest lecturing by Elders and First Nations knowledge holders and musicians; and in First Nations collaborations with non-Indigenous musicians and staff and students.

The valuable contribution of First Nations people extended also to collaboration with First Nations communities, where long-term community-institution relationships and partnerships were considered essential. Recommendations included discussions with First Nations Elders, leaders, and community members to establish student and community learning priorities and needs; strong connections with First Nations communities and organisations to better understand their needs, aspirations, and cultural practices; creation of “on Country” and “in community” learning opportunities for First Nations students; and facilitating community-based education and music making initiatives.

The findings confirm the vital contribution of First Nations people in Australian universities (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 206) and the wealth of cultural knowledge, and perspectives, expertise, and skills that First Nations people bring to universities (Larkin, 2011, p. 6). This has significant implications for Australian tertiary music institutions, including with respect to attracting students (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 6), and in developing curricula and pedagogy better suited to education for First Nations students (Biddle, 2010, p. 29).

Recommendation 3: That the ANU School of Music actively promote First Nations leadership and the contribution of First Nations people in all arenas and at every level of institutional activity, including through community-institution partnerships and Indigenous-led initiatives.

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination were found to be critical to addressing the priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Key findings were the importance of equal access to education, resources, and opportunities; culturally inclusive and responsive curricula and pedagogy; inclusive hiring practices for First Nations staff; and gender equality. Non-discrimination was essential. This included acceptance of Indigenous identification; promoting equal representation; ensuring equality of treatment; recognising diversity; and supporting anti-discrimination and anti-racism.

The findings highlighted the importance of equality of treatment for First Nations staff and students.¹⁰ This meant understanding and accommodating First Nations students' cultures, aspirations, interests, and needs; taking into account institutional and personal circumstances, and cultural and family responsibilities. This confirms the importance of "an environment that understands the obligations of culture, family and community", which is known to contribute to much better outcomes for Indigenous students (University of Melbourne, 2023, p. 2). These findings attest to the importance of deliberative approaches to equality for First Nations students, which, in the context of diversity of student backgrounds and individuality of circumstances, need to be determined on a student-by-student basis (Rochecouste et al., 2017). The research found it was also important that First Nations staff were paid for their cultural knowledge and work, and for the extra load they carry.

Exclusion is institutional in nature (Larkin, 2011, pp. 8–9) and it is recognised that racism, discrimination, and marginalisation are contributors to low outcomes for First Nations students (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association (NATSIPA) and Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), 2023, p. 22).

Racism can take many forms, including "conscious or unconscious bias" (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 243), and universities are advised to avoid making

¹⁰ Recognising that equality of treatment does not infer sameness of treatment but means looking at "what individuals and communities need in order to achieve equity" (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b).

assumptions about First Nations students (Larkin, 2011, p. 5)¹¹. It is incumbent upon tertiary music education institutions to therefore take proactive steps to develop Indigenous-specific strategies that address discrimination and racism (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 46; Fredericks et al., 2022) and to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff. The research found it was critical that non-Indigenous people understand that their biases and discriminatory conditioning could harm, but that it was also possible to practice anti-racism and anti-discrimination. Non-Indigenous cultural awareness training was identified as critically important.¹²

These findings draw attention to the need for Australian tertiary music education institutions to address the “marginalisation and inequalities that reduce wellbeing and opportunity” and to support equity for First Nations people within tertiary education (Australian Universities Accord – Final Report. 2024, pp. 11, 60, 213). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights that can support the School in “promoting positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies” (Australian National University, 2024d, p. 14) and in realising a “commitment to justice and equality” (p. 4).

Recommendation 4: That the ANU School of Music develop Indigenous specific strategies to address discrimination and racism and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff, including through cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous staff.

Funding and resourcing

The research found that targeted funding and resourcing for First Nations programs and initiatives was critical to achieving equity and addressing the priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

A strong critique of tertiary music institutions was that they had become too focussed on financial viability and profitability, rather than on the interests of First Nations musicians and the values of First Nations music. Investment needed to be strategic, and expenditure should be directed toward the results desired by First Nations people, highlighting the critical importance of First Nations decision making in determining funding and resourcing priorities. It was considered critical that First Nations programs were well-funded and that existing

¹¹ The research identified assumptions about the interests and capabilities of students; levels of cultural knowledges; and what students would benefit from.

¹² See also Theme 2: Subtheme Health and well-being.

programs were protected from cuts, downsizing, closure, or assimilation. Expanding existing programs was also considered important.

Priorities included facilities and resources for First Nations musicians and music students; and funding for First Nations musicians, lecturers, and community members to support First Nations music and culture, and to bring First Nations people to institutions and take institutional resources and expertise out into First Nations communities. Recommendations included diverting resources to First Nations music programs and engagements and to support employment of First Nations culture owners, via funding pools such as HEPPP.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, these findings support the call for a commitment by institutions to sustained material investment “commensurate to need” in achieving equity as a priority (Larkin, 2023, quoted in Danenberg, 2023. p. 25), and in ensuring that Indigenous initiatives to advance the interests of First Nations people are “appropriately resourced” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., p. 40).

Recommendation 5: That the ANU School of Music take proactive steps to ensure adequate targeted funding and resourcing in addressing the priorities and needs of First Nations people and supporting First Nations initiatives.

Recognition and respect

Recognition and respect for First Nations people, cultures, and knowledges were found to be fundamental to addressing the priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Cultural respect and inclusion were essential. This means acknowledging custodianship of Land and having respect for and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols; and recognising and respecting First Nations cultural knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and expressing, inclusive of diversity. Participants referred also to the importance of consultation and collaboration; honesty, integrity, and transparency; being listened to and understood; and communication that was respectful and inclusive.

The research found that First Nations musicians want to feel welcomed and accepted in tertiary music institutions, and to have their cultural backgrounds, music traditions, and creative expressions respected, understood, and valued. A key argument was that First Nations music and ways of playing and creating music were just as important as those of Western music, and that First Nations musicians should not have to change or leave their lived experience and culture outside the door in order to benefit from what tertiary music

education institutions could offer. Instead, institutions needed to ask themselves what they could do to become more inclusive.

These findings highlight the critical importance of inclusive policies and practices that recognise and respect First Nations musicians, music, and music making. This means engaging with First Nations voices and perspectives “on a deeper level” not only to increase the numbers of First Nations students entering the system but to ensure that the “value of First Nations knowledge is recognised and incorporated into all institutional systems” (Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, 2023, p. 98).

For the ANU School of Music the findings offer evidence-based insights and strategies aligned with institutional commitments to “respecting, celebrating and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” (Australian National University, 2021a, p. 5) and with ensuring that the “knowledge, cultural expression and lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians [is] acknowledged and celebrated” (Australian National University, 2024d, p. 15).

Recommendation 6: That the ANU School of Music implement inclusive policies and practices that acknowledge First Nations custodianship of Land and facilitate respect for and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols; and demonstrate recognition and respect for First Nations people, knowledges, and cultures, inclusive of diversity.

Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

The research found that culturally inclusive and responsive practice was fundamental to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

What was clear was that First Nations people want to be able to gain the benefits of a tertiary music education without having to losing sight of culture. There was very strong support for programs offering performance studies inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles and genres in supporting teaching and learning, and for programs with opportunities to learn about and perform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles and genres in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture. There was strong support also for programs with opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture; learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages; and learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance. Programs with opportunities to learn “traditional” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances

and instruments, and learn an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language were also supported.

Participants referred to the importance of a curriculum that was inclusive of First Nations musical traditions, musicians/artists, histories, languages, techniques, and musical instruments, encompassing diversity. This needed to recognise the interconnectedness of First Nations knowledge systems and interrelationships between song, story, art, dance and language, and the richness and significance of cultural and contemporary music practices. Approaches to teaching needed to also be culturally inclusive and responsive.

The research found there was also very strong support for First Nations-centred and First Nations-led programs, including programs specifically for First Nations people; and programs based in First Nations culture, embedded in First Nations cultural practices and ways of teaching and learning. There were also considered to be opportunities for cross-cultural learning and for institutions and non-Indigenous people to learn from First Nations people, including through programs based in First Nations ways of teaching and learning.

In combination these findings suggest the need for a paradigm shift in tertiary music institutions consistent with calls to “decolonize music education and decentre the study of Western classical music” in Australian music institutions (Bracknell, 2022). A critical perspective would examine the institution rather than the individuals within the institution, challenging a deficit approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and shifting the perspective from “pathological *people* to pathological *institutions*” (Larkin, 2011, p. 9). Participants recommended unpacking Western systems; deconstructing curricula; creating a new framework; and designing new programs.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, and music making continue to be situated on the fringe of Australian tertiary music institutions (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020), and First Nations pedagogies and epistemologies “remain at the periphery of academic practice” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 101). There is an evident need for another approach, one that embraces “alternative pedagogies and different ways of thinking and doing” to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Larkin, 2011, p. 9). For the ANU School of Music, these findings offer evidence-based insights and strategies that can support the School in driving “systemic change” through Indigenous-led initiatives, and “ensure that the knowledge and traditions of First Nations people are integrated into the institution” (Australian National University 2024, p. 4). A strong First Nations workforce “will help achieve this goal” (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 11).

Recommendation 7: That the ANU School of Music offer culturally inclusive and responsive programs that address the identified priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations musicians and provide opportunities also for non-Indigenous learning, including through new program design, which should be Indigenous led.

Diversity

The research found that recognition of diversity of First Nations cultural and educational backgrounds and music and music making practices was essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

There was very strong support for programs offering performance studies inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres, and programs inclusive of a wide range of music performance styles/genres. Of significance was the considerably lower level of support for programs where students learn mainly about one music style/genre (i.e. just jazz, just classical, just pop/rock), highlighting the importance of programs inclusive of a range of music styles/genres in addressing First Nations priorities.

There was also very strong support for programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds in facilitating access to tertiary music education, and strong support for “mainstream” programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a diversity of cultural/educational backgrounds in supporting First Nations music and culture. Of special significance was the strong support for the ANU School of Music to lead the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds.

The research found it was important that there was an understanding of and respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds, histories, and artistic expressions of First Nations people, and that curricula were inclusive of the diversity of First Nations musical traditions. This included recognition of the diversity of First Nations lived experiences, cultures, and ways of sharing culture, inclusive of contemporary First Nations cultures. It was important also that cultural understanding was understood as being different for each person and that First Nations spaces were inclusive of First Nations cultural diversity and diverse voices. This means understanding that what “culturally based” or “culturally appropriate” looks like in practice will be context dependent, and that what is suitable for one person or community may not be so for another (Creative Australia, 2018, p. 117).

These findings confirm the importance of tertiary music education programs that are responsive to the cultural and educational diversity of First Nations musicians, consistent with a higher education system “characterised by quality, diversity and equity of access” (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 44). For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights that can support the School in ensuring that student and staff cohorts “represent[s] the diversity of our nation” (Australian National University, 2024, p. 19), and that learning respects and values diversity, where “all Australians [can] come together to engage with their chosen disciplines in culturally rich learning and research environments” (p. 5).

Recommendation 8: That the ANU School of Music offer programs that are inclusive of First Nations students from a range of cultural and educational backgrounds, encompassing First Nations cultural and musical diversity.

Health and well-being

The research found that support for First Nations health and well-being in the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions was essential.

To thrive in higher education, First Nations students need to feel “culturally safe” which means being in an “inherently safe and respectful environment” (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 4). Universities can ensure culturally safe environments by providing “culturally safe spaces, culturally appropriate curriculum, support services and investment in First Nations academics and staff” (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 6). It is well documented that cultural determinants are central to the health and wellbeing of First Nations people (Sunderland et al., 2023), and the research found it was important that tertiary music institutions recognise the value of the arts and music for First Nations health and wellbeing, and the healing power of music for First Nations people. The research found that “cultural safety” was essential to the wellbeing of First Nations people in Australian tertiary music education institutions, and it was important that institutions were places of “cultural safety” for all First Nations people, whatever their background. Participants referred to the importance of feeling welcomed, respected and supported, including in mainstream environments. The research found that students want their cultural knowledge and ways of creating music to be valued, and to feel encouraged and empowered, and to have an opportunity to achieve and thrive. This means having a culturally rich learning environment, with opportunities to connect with and express and share First Nations culture, and where there is “cultural safety” as people create music. It was also

important that there was an understanding that First Nations people walk in two worlds, and for there to be awareness of the Stolen Generations, and an understanding of the impacts of intergenerational trauma. Access to pastoral/cultural care programs was considered very important for First Nations students.

To provide “cultural safety” an organisation must be “culturally competent” (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 4). The research found it was important that First Nations staff were recognised for their role in creating “culturally safe” environments, and that First Nations staff were treated with respect and cultural safety. The research also found that everyone in the institution had a role to play in creating “cultural safety”, which for non-Indigenous people means addressing biases, becoming healing informed, and taking on culturally responsive practice. Cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff was considered essential and needed to go beyond basics and be an ongoing process.

Ensuring culturally safe environments for First Nations Australians should be a priority for higher education (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 6). For Australian tertiary music institutions this means ensuring that institutions are places where First Nations staff and students “can actively participate and be proud to excel in an environment that celebrates their cultural identities, knowledges, histories and ways of knowing, being and doing” (Universities Australia, n.d.-b, p. 48).

<u>Recommendation 9:</u> That the ANU School of Music support First Nations health and wellbeing, including by ensuring a “culturally safe” environment for all First Nations staff and students, and through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.
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Connections and Connecting

The research found that connections and connecting were essential to addressing the priorities, requirements and needs of First Nations people and communities in Australian tertiary music education institutions.

Key findings were the importance of connections with Land and Country; strong ongoing relationships with First Nations communities and community members; collaboration with the school sector; networking, collaboration, and partnerships with First Nations musicians, organisations, professions, and industry; and connections between First Nations people and with non-Indigenous people in tertiary music institutions.

The research found there was very strong support for programs with opportunities for First Nations students to learn on Country, including from Elders and community members; and for programs with opportunities to participate in music performances/projects/events in

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contexts. Participants highlighted the importance of connections to heritage and culture, with opportunities for cultural sharing and exchange, and for creating and performing on Country.

The research found that it was important that institutions establish and maintain strong long-term relationships and collaborative partnerships with First Nations communities, particularly those local to the institution. This highlights the need for mutually beneficial institution-community strategies that support First Nations priorities. Discussions with Elders, leaders, and community members could help tertiary music institution understand both the cultural learning needs of students and the cultural practices, aspirations, and needs of community. It was important that tertiary music institutions take time really getting to know people and doing things that supported community priorities, including ensuring resources to follow through with any plans or commitments. Equally important was bringing First Nations people to universities, which could support mutual learning and understanding so that it was a two-way street for everyone involved.

The research found it was also important that tertiary music institutions develop long term collaborative relationships with the school sector to support First Nations school students and encourage their transition to tertiary education. This was seen as especially important given that a lack of opportunity or support for First Nations music students and/or music education in schools could have flow on effects with respect to First Nations access and learning support needs at the tertiary level.

Networking, collaboration, and partnerships with First Nations artists, organisations, professions, and industry were also considered essential in supporting the career aspirations and prospects of First Nations students, and for developing music programs, workshops and performances celebrating and promoting First Nations music and culture.

Within universities, connections between First Nations students and with First Nations musicians, students, staff, Elders, and community members were also considered important, as were collaborations and cultural exchange with non-Indigenous students, staff, and musicians to promote cross-cultural learning, mutual understanding, and respect.

For the ANU School of Music, these findings offer evidence-based insights that can help the School realise institutional commitments to advancing knowledge through community engagement and “partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Australian National University, 2024d, p. 5) and in supporting “the aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities” (p. 6).

Recommendation 10: That the ANU School of Music foster connections of benefit to First Nations students, staff, and First Nations communities – including through collaboration/partnerships with First Nations communities; schools; and First Nations artists, organisations, professions/industry; and between First Nations people and with non-Indigenous people within the university.

Research priorities

The research identified research priorities that were important to First Nations people and communities in the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions.

Key priorities were First Nations practice-based research; research into First Nations music, culture and history; working with First Nations communities and musicians to support and sustain First Nations music, language and cultural heritage; initiatives to help “close the gap”; and Indigenous self-determination.

The research found that First Nations practice-based research was a high priority. There was very strong support for creative music making projects; for working with First Nations’ community members to develop music events and initiatives; and for supporting First Nations’ musicians and music making in regional and remote areas of Australia. Research directed towards sustaining First Nations cultural heritage was also identified as a priority. There was strong support for working with First Nations’ song owners and community members to help revitalise and sustain First Nations’ “traditional” music and culture, and for helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations languages through music. Research supporting improved life outcomes for First Nations people was also a priority, with strong support for music initiatives to help “close the gap” in improving the life circumstances of First Nations people.

The research found that research into First Nations music and culture, including the historical contexts of First Nations music and music making, was important. High priorities included increasing knowledge and understanding of First Nations music and culture; supporting, reviving and preserving First Nations cultural heritage to pass on to future generations; and Indigenous-led research, including by First Nations students. Other important priorities included researching community knowledge and working with community musicians to record and document “traditional” and contemporary First Nations music; developing First Nations music archives; developing and disseminating First Nations music resources and repertoires; working with communities to revive and teach First Nations culture; and investigating best practice for teaching and learning First Nations music.

Support for research by students was also considered a priority. The research found it was important that First Nations students had the freedom to research whatever was relevant to them, which could include family history research and research into family songs and dances to help keep culture alive. It was also important that First Nations students were equipped to specialise in research into their own cultural heritage if they wished.

The research found it was important that First Nations research projects were Indigenous designed and led. Research instigated by First Nations researchers should be highly valued and supported, and projects with First Nations endorsement should also be prioritised, especially those with a performance and/or other industry orientation. Respectful and ethical behaviour in community research and settings was essential.

These findings confirm the importance of Indigenous self-determination in research (AIATSIS, 2020) and of “strategic approaches to support[ing] First Nations researchers and their research” (Behrendt et al., 2012, pp. 116–120), including through “greater collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous communities” (Australian Universities Accord Final Report, 2024, p. 249). For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer evidence-based insights and strategies aligned with commitments to furthering “impactful, collaborative, Indigenous-led research and policy development” (Australian National University, 2024, p. 5).

Recommendation 11: That the ANU School of Music provide proactive support for First Nations-led research, and research instigated by First Nations researchers or endorsed by First Nations people, including research by First Nations students.

Theme 3: Facilitating access

The research identified ways that Australian tertiary music institutions could facilitate increased access by First Nations people to the Australian tertiary music education system. Given the ongoing underrepresentation of First Nations students in tertiary music education institutions (Cakitaki et al. 2022), facilitating increased access to the opportunities and benefits tertiary music education should be considered a high priority. The research identified contributing factors to underrepresentation and ways in which tertiary music institutions could be proactive in facilitating increased access. The most significant finding was the link between access and inclusion. The research found it was essential that tertiary music institutions were inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of musical and educational backgrounds and were responsive to the learning priorities, needs, and circumstances of First Nations students.

Identified inhibiting factors were perceptions of institutional exclusivity; limited availability of suitable education programs; overly restrictive prerequisites and application requirements; financial constraints; and geographic isolation. Other significant factors were a lack of knowledge about what was available and how tertiary study could benefit First Nations musicians, and inadequate music education and preparation for tertiary music study in schools.

The research identified a range of ways that tertiary music institutions could facilitate access, the most significant being accessible learning environments and flexible study options inclusive of the diverse needs and circumstances of First Nations students.¹³ There was very strong support for programs inclusive of First Nations musicians from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds; programs for First Nations students who did not have a formal music education background; programs inclusive of a range of music styles and genres; and programs offering a range of qualifications.

Distance learning options were considered essential in overcoming geographic barriers. There was very strong support for programs offered in regional and remote locations and programs combining on-campus and in-community delivery, both of which would offer flexible study options for those who were not able or did not wish to leave their home communities. Other significant recommendations included entry level courses for students with no formal music training,¹⁴ and a First Nations music degree offering¹⁵. There was also strong support for bridging programs into “mainstream” programs in supporting both access and teaching and learning; and support also for direct entry into “mainstream” music programs for all First Nations students (i.e. *without* a bridging requirement), however this was found to be a slightly lower priority.

In overcoming access barriers there was also support for alternative entry systems that were not reliant solely on ATAR or HSC. There was very strong support for programs with flexible entry options recognising merit based on musical and academic aptitude and previous musical experience. Recommendations included video applications, community referees, and evidence based on prior music practice rather than on auditions. Other recommendations included recognition of prior music learning and course credit provisions for prior study and musical experience. Support for admissions processes was also considered very important.

¹³ Suggestions included part-time study; online courses; short intensives; programs with multiple levels and entry and exit streams; micro credentials; and accelerated programs.

¹⁴ Which could potentially also be offered in schools.

¹⁵ See Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning.

Recommendations included personal points of contact, flexible application timelines, and plain language and translated application options.

The research found there was a need to increase awareness of the availability and accessibility of programs. Recommendations included promotion and advertising, and community connections and outreach, confirming the value of community-centred strategy (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report (2024, p. 130). Opportunities for First Nations people to experience what is available and possible were also considered important. Recommendations included visiting tertiary music institutions and having “hands on” experiences that were inspiring and built confidence. The research found it was also important for tertiary music institutions to collaborate with the school sector. This was considered particularly important where there was inadequate support for the musical aspirations and educational needs of First Nations music students in schools, including a lack of information about, and preparation for tertiary music education.

These findings highlight the importance of proactive targeted strategies to address barriers to access for First Nations people consistent with a “flexible, responsive and inclusive higher education system” as the key to making this happen (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 9). Notably, the research found that there was strong support for the ANU School of Music to have graduates from around the country and from many different communities. These findings provide evidence-based insights and strategies that can support the School in realising its national role as a leader in the recruitment of First Nations students (Australian National University, 2021).

Recommendation 12: That the ANU School of Music take a proactive approach to facilitating access for First Nations musicians, by addressing barriers and offering flexible and inclusive and study options responsive to the learning priorities, needs, and circumstances of First Nations musicians.

Spaces and places

The research found that culturally safe and affirming “spaces and places” were essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Culturally safe spaces and practices are recognised as important to supporting First Nations student outcomes (University of Melbourne, 2023, p.2); and having a space on campus that feels “safe” and where students can “create a peer environment” is known to impact on the ability of First Nations students to continue with their studies (Behrendt, 2015).

Many participants commented on the importance of supportive environments and dedicated “cultural spaces” where First Nations students could gather, learn together, and create a sense of community. Institutional “spaces” needed to be physically and culturally safe, and culturally rich and affirming. They needed to also champion First Nations ways of knowing, expressing, and sharing; and be respectful, welcoming, supportive, empowering, and inclusive of First Nations diversity. This means having environments that are comfortable for all First Nations people, including for students who may be the only First Nations person in a course. Participants emphasised the importance of a curriculum where First Nations students could learn in a First Nations’ cultural context, including together with other First Nations people. First Nations spaces needed to be controlled by First Nations people; have positive outcomes for students and for First Nations people more broadly; and be non-tokenistic, and places for two-way sharing and learning.

The research found that First Nations programs and dedicated First Nations cultural spaces were a high priority. There was very strong support for Indigenous cultural programs for First Nations musicians and for programs with dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces for First Nations musicians and music making in supporting First Nations music and culture. There was also strong support for identified First Nations spaces in supporting teaching and learning.

There was very strong support also for programs with strong First Nations staff and student cohorts, and strong support for programs specifically for First Nations students in supporting teaching and learning. It was considered essential that First Nations cultural programs had First Nations teachers and were Indigenous led. In combination, these findings confirm the importance of dedicated First Nations spaces and cultural programs, and strong cohorts of First Nations staff and students in supporting First Nations musicians, music education, and music making in tertiary music institutions.

First Nations “spaces” encompass engagement spaces both within and external to the institution. These include admission spaces and engagement with First Nations institutions and community, professional, and industry spaces. The research found that Indigenous Support Units in universities were very important in supporting First Nations students; contributing to recruitment; providing connections with other First Nations students; and helping students feel more comfortable. Building strong relationships between tertiary music institutions and Indigenous Support Units is therefore essential.

These findings have very significant implications for Australian tertiary music education institutions, highlighting the importance of culturally rich, safe, and supportive “spaces and

places” in addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations musicians. For the ANU School of Music, the findings offer valuable evidence-based insights and strategies that can support the School in offering a “meaningful education” and in providing a “culturally appropriate, stimulating, enriching and supportive environment” for both First Nations students and staff alike (Australian National University, 2024, p. 19).

Recommendation 13: That the ANU School of Music provide culturally rich, safe, and affirming “spaces and places” for all First Nations people, including dedicated First Nations cultural spaces, targeted cultural programs, and opportunities for “two-way” sharing and learning. A strong working relationship with the ANU Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre is also recommended.

Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

The research identified key priorities in teaching and learning for First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Bracknell and Barwick (2020) argue that without a dramatic shift, post-secondary music institutions in Australia will continue to “essentialize, gloss over and ultimately repel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and musics” (p. 75). The overarching finding was the importance of study programs that take into full account the cultural heritage, and musical and educational backgrounds, knowledges, skills, achievements, and aspirations of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity.¹⁶ For First Nations musicians this means having access to inclusive and responsive programs encompassing the full range of available programs and targeted cultural programs with a focus on addressing First Nations learning priorities and needs¹⁷.

Like other music students, First Nations musicians want to gain knowledge, skills and experience, and build individual confidence, capacity, and career readiness. The research found that First Nations students want to learn the foundations of music and gain an understanding of the music profession/industry, including through real-world and industry-integrated learning opportunities. There was very strong support for study programs with a focus on creative outcomes. It was important that programs nurture students’ vision, aims, and creativity; foster personal and artistic growth; and help students gain an understanding of themselves as a musician and artist, and explore and express their artistic voice. This would

¹⁶ This means having programs that cater to all music styles and levels, and a flexible curriculum that is responsive to individual student backgrounds, learning styles, and needs.

¹⁷ These should not be separated from the university environment so that First Nations students have access to the full range of facilities, resources, and opportunities.

include through support for creation of original material, including expression of cultural heritage through songwriting and composition, and in First Nations languages. First Nations students also want opportunities for sharing; and to learn from non-Indigenous people, work with musicians from different fields, explore diverse musical perspectives, and experience “mainstream”, and be able to progress into the “mainstream”.

The research found there was a disconnect however between what is currently available and what First Nations people want. It was important that tertiary music institutions consider why they want to have First Nations students, what First Nations musicians want, and what institutions can do for First Nations people and communities. The overriding view was that programs should be built around the interests and needs of First Nations musicians and be based in self-determination and autonomy in how music is learned. Participants highlighted the importance of programs with a Western music industry focus, and programs specifically for First Nations students embedded in cultural practice and with opportunities to study in First Nations cultural contexts, thereby supporting both career readiness and cultural pathways.

Recommendations included curricula prioritising First Nations music and encompassing First Nations knowledges, cultures, and languages, drawing on First Nations ontologies and epistemologies, and with opportunities for cultural immersion. This includes opportunities to learn on Country and participate in “traditional” music workshops, ceremonies, and community events. Programs also need to include opportunities to learn about First Nations music, history, composers, artists, and achievements; and to learn “traditional” First Nations music and contemporary music styles. It was important that students also had opportunities to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage, and to be able to research music, culture, and language of their own choice, including specialising in their own cultural heritage.

Approaches to teaching and learning should be adaptable and inclusive of multiple ways of learning and expressing, including those embedded in cultural practice.¹⁸

A particularly significant finding was the strong support for a degree program with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture. In Australia it is currently still not possible for a First Nations person (or anyone else) to undertake an undergraduate program coordinated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander instructors and majoring in Indigenous music (Bracknell & Barwick, 2020). Such an offering would make a valuable

¹⁸ This includes learning through experience, and learning based on oral/aural approaches and through story, song, and dance.

contribution to more culturally inclusive and responsive practice in Australian tertiary music education. This is something the ANU School of Music might wish to consider.

For Australian tertiary music education institutions, these findings confirm the need for “innovative programs” grounded in evidence of “what works” and aligned with the aspirations, requirements, and needs of Indigenous students and community (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 2). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights essential to informing transformative change aligned with a “culturally appropriate” and meaningful educational experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Australian National University, 2024, p. 19).

Recommendation 14: That the ANU School of Music offer study programs inclusive of and responsive to the teaching and learning priorities of First Nations musicians, including through curriculum innovation.

Staffing

The research found that First Nations staff were essential to realising the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system.

More than a decade after the 2012 Behrendt Review called for parity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the higher education sector (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. xvii), First Nations staff remain underrepresented in Australian higher education.¹⁹ Key findings were the very strong support for the involvement of First Nations staff in the work of Australian tertiary music education institutions, and the strong support for working together with First Nations community members in supporting teaching and learning, including in community contexts.

Participants highlighted the role of Elders, traditional custodians, and knowledge holders, and the need for employment of high profile First Nations musicians and First Nations industry specialists and support staff. First Nations employment should be non-tokenistic and system wide, with a commitment to long term engagement; and institutions need to employ multiple First Nations teachers/staff.²⁰ Non-Indigenous staff were also considered important in providing opportunities for First Nations students to learn from educators from a diversity of backgrounds, and in working in partnership with First Nation staff, and supporting cross-cultural learning.

¹⁹ The First Nations workforce represents under 2% of staff in Australian universities, with an average staffing level of 1.42% (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 3).

²⁰ Including from different creative backgrounds and inclusive of contemporary music practice.

It was considered important that tertiary music institutions implement inclusive employment practices, including observing gender equity. The research found the staff selection criteria needed to focus on outcomes desired by First Nations people. Recommended criteria included maturity, wisdom, and lived experience; First Nations cultural/musical knowledge, expertise and experience; First Nations cultural connection and understanding; affinity for First Nations music and people; commitment to the development of First Nations musicians and music; and an understanding of how to support First Nations students. Staff should be highly educated, and institutions need to recognise both formal and non-formal qualifications, inclusive of First Nations cultural knowledge and professional and community expertise and experience. Support for First Nations staff was found to also be essential. This means treating staff with respect and ensuring their cultural safety, and facilitating positive relationships, taking into consideration historic power imbalances. Mentorships and support programs were considered important in helping staff to build skills and advance their careers. Support was essential also for visiting lecturers to ensure that they did not feel like outsiders.

Increasing First Nations staffing is critical to increasing access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 132) and to progressing Indigenous self-determination and creating “a safe and inclusive academy” (Larkin, 2011, p. 7). In seeking to increase First Nations staffing, institutions will need to move “beyond aspiration to implementation” through concrete action (Universities Australia, 2024, p. 1). The research found that Heads of Schools had a critical role to play in this by being proactive and facilitating employment opportunities. Resourcing also needs to be increased (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023, p. 2). For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights that can support efforts by the School to increase First Nations staffing and ensure a “supportive” environment” for First Nations staff (Australian National University, 2024, pp. 5, 20).

Recommendation 15: That the ANU School of Music implement proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing, involve First Nations community members in the work of the School, and ensure a supportive environment for all First Nations staff.

Facilitating participation and success

The research found that targeted support for the participation and success of First Nations students was essential to improving outcomes for First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait students can face multiple challenges (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 59) and that the Australian higher education system does not do well at supporting some groups of students to succeed, especially students from underrepresented groups (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 138). What is known is that the key to success lies in being responsive to students and customising programs to meet student needs (Anderson et al. 2008, p. 7). This means understanding the institutional and personal circumstances faced by students in their everyday lives (Larkin, 2011, p. 5). Key findings were the need for flexible teaching approaches and curriculum delivery that was responsive to individual First Nations student learning interests and needs; empowering and supportive learning environments; involvement of First Nations staff and teaching staff with cultural understanding; and inclusive definitions of success and excellence.

The research found there was a need for flexible teaching approaches and tailored learning pathways that were responsive to individual student learning interests and needs, recognising that each student is unique, and allowing students to focus on their own interests and cultural contexts. This means listening to and connecting with students; developing an understanding of students' backgrounds and life experiences; and assessing student learning interests and needs on an individual basis. Ensuring that students have a sense of agency and feel seen and heard was considered essential.

Indigenous student success is known to be linked to the presence of Indigenous academic and professional staff (Western Sydney University Indigenous Professoriate, 2023). The research found there was very strong support for the involvement of First Nations staff in teaching and learning. It was critical that teaching staff had cultural understanding and an understanding of students' cultures and situations; and were encouraging, supportive, and collaborative, walking/performing alongside students and helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Universities Australia (n.d.-b.) has defined student success as “a university experience that fosters the successful completion of a degree that sets up students for favourable outcomes” (p. 22). The research found there was a need to redefine “success” based on outcomes designed by First Nations people, and for a definition of “Indigenous excellence” more aligned with First Nations cultural values. Programs need to be genuinely student centred, which means ensuring meaningful inclusion and self-determined outcomes that are of value to First Nations students. It is important to ask students what they want to do, what kind of music they like, and to discuss with them what studying music would mean for them and where it could take them.

Targeted support for learning was also considered essential, including for students who do not have a formal music education background. This includes support for learning music theory and written work. The research also found that programs offering separate First Nations classes in “traditional” song and dance were important for reasons of “cultural safety”. Other recommendations included dedicated oversight by program coordinators, flexible study workloads taking into consideration employment and external obligations; access to First Nations specific learning resources and literature; and provision of course credit for music work/performances undertaken during study.

These findings highlight the need for flexible program delivery and individually tailored and supportive learning pathways for First Nations music students. For the ANU School of Music, the findings provide evidence-based insights that can inform targeted strategies for “engaging Indigenous students and enhancing [their] participation and successful completion” (Anderson et al. 2008, p. 3).

Recommendation 16: That the ANU School of Music implement targeted strategies to support the participation and success of First Nations students.

Supporting students

The research found that targeted student support was essential to addressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations students in the Australian tertiary music education system.

It is recognised that First Nations student outcomes are impacted by the level of support they receive from the institution, which depends on institutional “flexibility and capability to respond to First Nations students support needs” (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2023, p. 6).²¹ Key ingredients include “a culturally appropriate and supportive environment” (Larkin, 2011, p. 5, and “responsiveness to students and the tailoring of specific programs to directly meet students’ needs” (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 7).

The key finding was the need for a proactive and holistic approach to student support across the full range of student learning and support needs. This encompasses supportive staff and teaching and learning environments, and targeted learning, financial, accommodation, and well-being support. Institutions need to empower students; advocate for their rights; and provide support that is ongoing. Participants commented on the importance of sensitive

²¹ Noting that while Indigenous student support is largely delivered through Indigenous Support Units, student support is also a shared responsibility which needs to be provided also within faculties (Universities Australia, n.d.-b., pp. 22, 24).

guidance and informative advice; individualised support; opportunities to speak with staff; and teaching staff who were empathetic and supportive. There was very strong support for mentoring by leading First Nations’ practitioners, and many participants referred to the value of mentoring by senior First Nations staff, and by Elders and knowledge holders.

Recommendations for supportive teaching and learning environments included one-to-one teaching; small classes allowing a tailored approach for each student; a ‘see one, do one, teach one’ approach; practical group lessons; opportunities for performing and recording; writing retreats; and opportunities for shared reflection on learning. Access to additional academic support and tutoring, including by First Nations tutors, was also considered essential, including for reading and written work.²²

The research found it was also important that students had access to First Nations course advisors, liaison officers, and appropriate emotional and mental health support, including counselling and mental health care workers. Accessibility is important, which means have ready access to teaching staff, mentors, and mental health supports. Accommodation and financial support²³ were found to be critically important, accommodation support being particularly important for students from regional and remote communities. It is important too that First Nations students have opportunities to connect with other First Nations students and support networks, including on campus support, and to be involved in broader campus life (e.g. sports, clubs, social activities, bands etc.).

For the ANU School of Music these findings provide evidence-based insights that highlight the importance of targeted strategies to support First Nations music students, aligned with providing a “culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment” (Larkin, 2011, p. 5).

Recommendation 17: That the ANU School of Music implement targeted holistic strategies to support First Nations students across the full range of student learning and support needs.

Aspirations and goals

The research identified key aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians in considering tertiary music education and ways in which tertiary music institutions can support these.

²² Recommendations also included translation of core course materials and mentoring of students on a course-by-course basis. ITAS (Indigenous Tutoring Assistance Scheme) is also an important strategy for assisting students to complete their degrees (Fredericks et al. 2022).

²³ Financial support included help with tuition fees, living costs, and education expenses (scholarships, grants, bursaries, work study programs, industry opportunities, and other forms of financial assistance), and access to financial aid counselling services to help students understand their options and navigate financial aid application processes.

The 2012 Behrendt Review reported “lower levels of aspiration to participate in higher education among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Indigenous Australians” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 20). Reasons cited for this included “a lack of confidence in academic ability, low expectations of academic achievement by teachers and career advisors, and a lack of understanding among friends and family about the opportunities that higher education offers” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 20).

The research identified several other contributing factors specific to the aspirations of First Nations musicians. These included a lack of knowledge about what is available and how tertiary study could benefit First Nations musicians; perceptions of institutional exclusivity; and limited availability of suitable programs. Strategies to “nurture aspiration and help people convert aspiration into action” are therefore vitally important (Australian Universities Accord-Final Report, 2024, p. 125).²⁴ This means ensuring that First Nations students have access to high quality learning opportunities “aligned with their aspirations” and which allow them to fulfil their potential (Zacharias & Brett, 2018, p. 7).

The research found there was very strong support for programs with a focus on meeting the aspirations, goals, and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians. The research identified a range of aspirations and goals, which would be different for each person. Key findings were the desire to attain knowledge, skills, tools and capabilities; develop confidence and leadership capacity; gain experience and qualifications; become a professional in one’s chosen field/s; develop a sustainable career (and attain financial security); and fulfil cultural responsibilities and contribute to culture, community, and the wellbeing of First Nations people.

The research found that First Nations musicians want to know how undertaking tertiary music education would benefit them and make a difference to their musicianship, music making, and career trajectory. Throughout the research, participants emphasised the importance of both gaining First Nations cultural knowledge and strengthening links to culture, and of developing professional and industry knowledge, expertise, skills, and capabilities.

Support for career pathways was considered critical. Many participants spoke of the importance of access to “real-world” learning experiences in professional and industry spaces,

²⁴ Behrendt et al. (2012) argues that universities need to be places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people “feel they belong” (p. 51) and provides a range of strategies for achieving this which are relevant to the addressing the interests of First Nations musicians (pp. 51–54).

inclusive of First Nations cultural performing arts.²⁵ There was very strong support for programs that help First Nations musicians gain access to the music profession/industry, and strong support also for programs with opportunities to study in multiple areas of the performing arts, consistent with First Nations artists often having multiple artistic practices (Sainsbury et al., 2022). There was an identified lack of First Nations people in sound production, management, and as music agents, with a need for training in these areas. Notably, there was strong support for programs teaching sound engineering from scratch, which would contribute to achieving this. Other recommendations included co-designing programs to address First Nations aspirations; providing support through career development services and/or an employment agency; and having opportunities to participate in local, national, and international industry events.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, it is important to inform First Nations musicians about what is available and what the possibilities are; find out what First Nations musicians are interested in and what their career aspirations are; and then provide suitable options and opportunities.²⁶ Institutional flexibility and responsiveness to the identified aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians is therefore imperative.²⁷

What is essential is that tertiary music education institutions promote higher education as a pathway that is “consistent with and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values rather than [being] at odds with it” (Behrendt et al., 2012, p. 52), and offer programs that nurture and support the dreams, aspirations, and goals of First Nations musicians. For the ANU School of Music these findings provide evidence-based insights that can support the School in achieving this.

Recommendation 18: That the ANU School of Music offer programs that are inclusive of and responsive to the aspirations, goals, and needs of First Nations musicians.

Additional Comments and Recommendations

ANU School of Music – First Nations programs

The First Nations programs currently hosted by the ANU School of Music were commented on very positively numerous times in the research, including in the Survey Questionnaire,

²⁵ This could be facilitated by having teaching staff with real world experience as working musicians; through mentorships; through industry-integrated learning opportunities and work experience; and by having access to information about internships, training workshops, and ongoing education options.

²⁶ Program and course audits/reviews were recommended to evaluate the suitability of programs in addressing First Nations priorities.

²⁷ This can be supported by ongoing institutional reflection and improvement to maintain responsiveness to First Nations aspirations and needs.

Interviews, and discussions of the Indigenous Co-design Focus Group. Participants referred in glowing terms to the *Ngarra-burria: First Peoples Composers* and *Space to Create* programs, which were cited as examples of “excellence”; and the *Yil Lull Studio* was highlighted as an exemplary example of working effectively in the First Nations space. One of the interviewees commented also on how appreciated it was when the School of Music takes its resources, expertise and skills out into the community; supports the priorities of the community; and applies its expertise to supporting also within the university. The *Wamburang Women’s Choir* was also cited as being a highly valued and valuable community program.²⁸

The research found it was critical that First Nations programs were well-funded and that existing programs are protected from cuts, downsizing, closure, or assimilation. Expanding existing programs was also identified as important. It is essential therefore that the School continues to support these successful programs, including through long term investment in staffing, funding, and resourcing.²⁹

The strong reputation and national and local scope of these programs demonstrate that the School of Music is already achieving outstanding successes in the First Nations space. This suggests that the School is currently very well-positioned to build on these existing initiatives and provide national leadership in charting the way forward.

Recommendation 19: That the ANU School of Music support and build on existing First Nations programs and provide national leadership in charting the way forward.

Implementation strategy

It is recommended that the School of Music develop a Recommendations Implementation Plan, including in collaboration with the SoM Indigenous Reference Group. In charting the way forward this should build on the current strengths of the existing ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, which should be elevated to a governance body in the School. The implementation process will need to be an Indigenous-led and “whole-of-School” one. It will be critically important that the School also develop a process for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the outcomes of the implementation process, which should be a

²⁸ Other cited examples of excellence included Bangarra Dance Theatre; CASM (Adelaide University) foundation program (and previous three level courses, with multiple entry and exit points, and opportunities to learn and perform “traditional” music); Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre-Leadership Program; Kennel & Co 3-day workshop program; Abmusic Aboriginal Corporation; Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) First Nations acting program (Edith Cowan University).

²⁹ See also, Newsome, J. K. (2022); Sainsbury, C. (2019); Sainsbury, C. (2022); Sainsbury et al. (2022); Sainsbury, C.; Newsome, J. (2024).

part of core business. This could productively be folded into a process of evaluation and reporting on all equity initiatives impacting on First Nations people in the work of the School. It is recognised that there can be no “one size fits all” approach to implementing institutional change (Behrendt et al. 2012, p. 5), therefore it is recommended that the School take a strategic approach that considers the particular location and circumstances of the School.

Recommendation 20 That the School of Music develop a Recommendations Implementation Plan, including in collaboration with the SoM Indigenous Reference Group; and a process for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of outcomes as a part of core business. Implementation will need to be based in an Indigenous-led “whole-of-School” approach, taking into account the location and particular circumstances of the School.

Equity outcomes data monitoring and reporting

Analysis of publicly available Australian Government higher education statistics shows that in 2021, Indigenous students comprised 1.65% of all Creative Arts students, not including non-award courses (Australian Government Department of Education, 2023). There is a lack of publicly available data on the participation and success of First Nations’ tertiary music students, and on First Nations’ staffing in Australian tertiary music education institutions. However, research by Cakitaki et al. (2022), based on data released only to universities, reports the equity access rate for Indigenous students in music and the performing arts as 1.2% (p. 38),³⁰ which is below the population parity of 3.8%.³¹ Clearer information regarding equity participation is therefore needed at the narrow field of education level in order to better understand the extent of under-representation (Cakitiki et al., 2022, p. 8). It is recommended that individual institutions monitor and track equity participation rates by course and discipline as part of their standard evaluation and monitoring processes (Cakitaki et al. 2023, p. 3; ATSIHEAC, 2015).

Recommendation 21: That the ANU School of Music develop a process for monitoring and tracking the equity participation rate of First Nations students and staff as a part of standard evaluation, monitoring, and reporting processes.

Program and policy evaluation

Measurement and evaluation of equity initiatives in Indigenous higher education contexts is critical to an understanding of what is working, what is not, and what needs to change.

³⁰ Based on commencing bachelor level cohort statistics 2014–2019 (Cakitiki et al., 2022, p. 36).

³¹ National Indigenous Australians Agency (2023, p. 3).

Research reveals a paucity of robust evaluation of program and policy effectiveness in Indigenous higher education (Smith et al., 2018, p. 81). There is an urgent need for more robust and comprehensive evaluation of existing programs and policies, at national, state and local levels, which needs to be mirrored by high quality action-oriented research to develop “strategies that make a difference” (Frawley et al., 2017, p. 276). Smith et al. (2018) recommends qualitative evaluation processes aligned with Indigenous methodologies to complement existing quantitative data sets and provide greater contextual information to inform future policy, program development and reform (p. 7). For the School of Music these suggestions highlight the importance of robust monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of programs and policies in addressing First Nations priorities and needs, and to inform future First Nations developments in the School.

Recommendation 22: That the ANU School of Music develop a robust process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all programs and policies with respect to addressing First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs, including through qualitative evaluation strategies aligned with Indigenous methodologies.

Australian Universities Accord – Final Report (2024)

The Australian Universities Accord – Final Report (2024) has adopted the principle that First Nations should be “at the heart of the tertiary education system” and affirms the importance of a “strong commitment to the fundamental principle of self-determination” (p. 246). This is consistent with the findings of the research. Many of the suggestions and recommendations of the Universities Accord Final Report are relevant to the work and future direction of the School of Music in the First Nations space and may prove useful to the School in guiding, validating, and charting the way forward.

As a part of the Australian National University and as a leading tertiary music education provider with a strong reputation and record of national contribution in the First Nations space, the School of Music might like to consider making a submission, through the SoM Indigenous Reference Group, to the upcoming First Nations-led review of higher education (Australian Universities Accord – Final Report, 2024, p. 34). It may also prove productive for the School of Music to engage directly with the proposed First Nations Council once it is established (Australian Universities Accord – Final Report, 2024, p. 10).

Recommendation 23: That the ANU School of Music consider the findings and recommendations of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord – Final Report with respect to

progressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people in and through the work of the School.

Jennifer Newsome – PhD candidate, ANU School of Music (July 2025)

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Appendix F:

Research Results and Recommendations Final Report

Jennifer Newsome – PhD Research Project

Research Results and Recommendations

Research topic: Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.

Research focus: The research comprised a nationally focussed Indigenous-centred investigation of the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system.

Why the research was needed: The research responds to long standing inequities in which Australian First Nations music, musicians, and music making remain on the periphery of the work of Australian tertiary music institutions and First Nations musicians continue to encounter systemic barriers to equitable access, participation, and success.

Type of study and where it took place: The research comprised a first time bespoke Indigenous centred co-design case study conducted at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU) from 2022–2025.

Research goal: The overarching goal of the research was to develop Indigenous-informed empirical evidence grounded in the insights and perspectives of experientially informed First Nations people, as a means for improving outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system, and specifically at the ANU School of Music.

Research aims: The aims of the research were to identify the priorities, requirements, and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and to develop Indigenous informed recommendations to improve outcomes of benefit for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at the ANU School of Music.

Research approach: The research was based in Indigenous rights, social justice, and Indigenous self-determination. The research comprised a place-based extended case study and

employed an Indigenous-centred participatory mixed-methods methodology embedded in an overarching framework of Indigenous-informed and Indigenous centred co-design.

Research design: The research design comprised four integrated components, which in combination provided a depth, breadth, and diversity of contribution by experientially informed First Nations people (Elders/community members/musicians/educators/researchers).

The four components comprised:

1. The ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group which was established to provide input, support, and oversight in the research, and as an ongoing body for the ANU School of Music (9 participants)
2. A nationally focussed Survey Questionnaire (38 participants)
3. A series of four Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops (6 participants)
4. Three in-depth Interviews (3 participants)

The four integrated components may be represented in the following way:

Indigenous-centred Co-design Framework



The mixed methods components (Survey Questionnaire, Focus Group Workshops, and Interviews) constituted the data collection components which formed the basis for development of the formal set of recommendations for the ANU School of Music. The research collected data contributed by forty-five experientially informed First Nations People: Focus Group Workshops (4 participants); Survey Questionnaire (38 participants); Interviews (3 participants).

Research results: The research results comprised data drawn from the responses to the Survey Questionnaire (21 demographic questions – quantitative statistical data); 49 closed-ended opinions questions – quantitative statistical data); 15 open-ended opinions questions (qualitative data); Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshop Summaries (x4) (qualitative data); and Interview Summaries (x3) (qualitative data).

Research findings summary:

The research findings were drawn from a thematic analysis and synthesis of the research results. The findings provide comprehensive and detailed evidence-based insights into the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system, and ways in which Australian tertiary music education institutions can address these, with specific reference to the ANU School of Music.

The research confirmed the critical importance of support for First Nations rights, encompassing educational and cultural rights, and the essential role of Indigenous self-determination in progressing the rights and interests of First Nations people in the Australian tertiary music education system. Realisation of Indigenous self-determination requires the involvement of First Nations people in decision making in every aspect and at every level of the institution, together with proactive equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and antiracism policies and strategies. Recognition of the vital role and special contribution of First Nations people to the work of tertiary music education institutions is essential. Proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing and support First Nations staff are also essential. Targeted investment, funding and resourcing is critical to progressing First Nations rights and interests in tertiary music education institutions.

Tertiary music institutions need to be welcoming, culturally affirming, and “culturally safe” places for all First Nations people, and institutional environments need to be empowering, and supportive. Recognition and respect for First Nations peoples, cultures, and knowledges is essential. This means implementing culturally inclusive and responsive policies and practices that make space for First Nations voices; are inclusive of First Nations knowledges and ways of knowing, being, doing, and creating; and are inclusive of diversity. Acknowledgment of custodianship of Land and respect for First Nations protocols are essential. Connection with Country, culture, and community are fundamental to inclusive practice, and institutions need to have strong ongoing collaborative relationships with First Nations communities and community members, particularly those local to institutions. Culturally safe and affirming First Nations “spaces and places” for gathering, learning, and making music are also essential.

Facilitating access by First Nations musicians to Australian tertiary music education institutions should be a high priority. This means promoting awareness of programs and their benefits for First Nations musicians; addressing barriers to access; and providing genuine pathways that are responsive to First Nations priorities. First Nations students should have access to all available programs and to dedicated cultural programs with a focus on First Nations learning priorities and needs. Study programs need to take into full account the cultural heritage; musical and educational backgrounds; and knowledges, skills, and achievements of First Nations musicians, inclusive of diversity.

Programs need to also facilitate the participation and success of First Nations students. This requires institutional flexibility and responsiveness to individual learning interests and needs, accommodating alternative learning approaches and supporting the professional goals and career aspirations of students. First Nations teachers, mentors, and community members play a critical role in supporting learning outcomes for First Nations students; and all staff need to have cultural understanding and a commitment to empowering and supporting First Nations students. Targeted support for First Nations students is also essential and needs to be based in proactive and holistic approaches across the full range of student learning and support needs. Research and research training in tertiary music institutions should address identified First Nations priorities and promote Indigenous self-determination, including for First Nations students.

For Australian tertiary music institutions, the findings highlight the critical importance of inclusive and responsive policies, programs, and practices that recognise First Nations rights; align with First Nations cultures and values; support the learning priorities, aspirations, and needs of First Nations musicians; recognise First Nations diversity; and above all, observe Indigenous self-determination as the guiding principle.

Significance and contribution of the research:

This study demonstrates the efficacy of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous-centred co-design in developing evidence-based approaches to enhancing outcomes of benefit for diverse First Nations Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. The research contributes nationally significant Indigenous-informed empirical data that adds to an understanding of the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music system; and provides Indigenous informed recommendations for enhancing institutional responsiveness to the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples and communities, and specifically at the ANU

School of Music. The findings are applicable to implementation in other Australian tertiary music education institutions, and potentially also in other educational contexts.

Recommendations

The recommendations are applicable in a range of Australian tertiary music education contexts. However, they need to be adapted to suit the site/location and particular circumstances of the institution.*

Recommendation 1 – Indigenous self-determination: That tertiary music education institutions implement proactive policies and strategies to progress Indigenous rights and self-determination as core business and drive systemic change through Indigenous-led initiatives.

Recommendation 2 – First Nations cultural rights: That tertiary music education institutions create and support opportunities for First Nations musicians to practice cultural rights, in partnership with First Nations people and through First Nations-led cultural solutions. This includes by offering culturally inclusive curricula responsive to the aspirations and needs of First Nations musicians and reflecting the diverse musical traditions of First Nations people.

Recommendation 3 – Contribution of First Nations people: That tertiary music education institutions actively promote First Nations leadership and contribution of First Nations people in all arenas and at every level of institutional activity, including through community-institution partnerships and Indigenous-led initiatives.

Recommendation 4 – Equal opportunity: That tertiary music education institutions develop Indigenous specific strategies to address discrimination and racism and ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for First Nations students and staff, including through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.

Recommendation 5 – Funding and resourcing: That tertiary music education institutions take proactive steps to ensure adequate targeted funding and resourcing in addressing the priorities and needs of First Nations people and supporting First Nations initiatives.

Recommendation 6 – Recognition and respect: That tertiary music education institutions implement inclusive policies and practices that acknowledge First Nations custodianship of Land and facilitate respect for and understanding of First Nations cultural protocols; and that demonstrate recognition and respect for First Nations people, knowledges, and cultures; inclusive of diversity.

Recommendation 7 – Culturally inclusive and responsive practice: That tertiary music education institutions offer culturally inclusive and responsive programs that address the

identified priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations musicians and provide opportunities also for non-Indigenous learning. This includes through new program design, which should be Indigenous led.

Recommendation 8 – Diversity: That tertiary music education institutions offer programs that are inclusive of First Nations students from a range of cultural and educational backgrounds and First Nations cultural and musical diversity.

Recommendation 9 – Health and wellbeing: That tertiary music education institutions support First Nations health and wellbeing, including by ensuring a “culturally safe” environment for all First Nations staff and students, and through ongoing cultural awareness/safety training for non-Indigenous staff.

Recommendation 10 – Connections and connecting: That tertiary music education institutions foster connections of benefit for First Nations students, staff, and communities, including through collaboration/partnerships with First Nations communities; collaboration/partnerships with schools; networking and collaboration/partnerships with First Nations artists, organisations, professions/industry; and connections between First Nations people and with non-Indigenous people within the institution.

Recommendation 11 – Research priorities: That tertiary music education institutions provide proactive support for First Nations-led research and research instigated by First Nations researchers or endorsed by First Nations people, including research by First Nations students.

Recommendation 12 – Access: That tertiary music education institutions take a proactive approach to facilitating access for First Nations musicians by addressing barriers and offering flexible and inclusive study options that are responsive to the learning priorities, needs, and circumstances of First Nations musicians.

Recommendation 13 – Spaces and places: That tertiary music education institutions provide culturally rich, safe, and affirming “spaces and places” for all First Nations people, including dedicated First Nations cultural spaces, targeted cultural programs, and opportunities for “two-way” sharing and learning. Strong working relationships with Indigenous Support Units within institutions are also recommended.

Recommendation 14 – Priorities in Teaching and learning: That tertiary music education institutions offer study programs inclusive of and responsive to the teaching and learning priorities of First Nations musicians, including through curriculum innovation.

Recommendation 15 – Staffing: That tertiary music education institutions implement proactive strategies to increase First Nations staffing, involve First Nations community

members in the work of institutions, and ensure a supportive environment for all First Nations staff.

Recommendation 16 – Participation and success: That tertiary music education institutions implement targeted strategies to support the participation and success of First Nations students.

Recommendation 17 – Supporting students: That tertiary music education institutions implement targeted holistic strategies to support First Nations students across the full range of student learning and support needs.

Recommendation 18 – Aspirations and goals: That tertiary music education institutions offer programs that are inclusive of and responsive to the aspirations, goals and needs of First Nations musicians.

Recommendation 19 – First Nations programs: That tertiary music education institutions support and build on existing successful First Nations programs within the institution.

Recommendation 20 – Implementation plan: That tertiary music education institutions develop an implementation plan for introducing change, in collaboration with First Nations stakeholders/staff; and a process for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting outcomes as a part of core business. Implementation should be based in an Indigenous-led “whole-of-institution” approach, taking into account the location and particular circumstances of the institution.

Recommendation 21 – Equity data monitoring and reporting: That tertiary music education institutions monitor and track the equity participation rate of First Nations students and staff as a part of standard evaluation, monitoring, and reporting processes.

Recommendation 22 – Program and policy evaluation: That tertiary music education institutions develop robust processes for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all programs and policies with respect to addressing First Nations priorities, requirements, and needs, including through qualitative evaluation strategies aligned with Indigenous methodologies.

Recommendation 23 – Australian Universities Accord – Final Report (2024): That tertiary music education institutions consider the findings and recommendations of the 2024 Australian Universities Accord – Final Report with respect to progressing the priorities, requirements, and needs of First Nations people.**

* The formal set of recommendations were developed for the ANU School of Music as the principal outcome of the research and have been adapted here for the broader Australian tertiary music education sector.

** Australian Universities Accord-Final Report. (2024): <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report>

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contribution of all the First Nations participants to this research, without whom the research could not have taken place.

Jennifer Newsome

ANU School of Music, Australian National University (ANU), August 2025

Appendix G:

Benefits of the Research

Project Title:

Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator:

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Overview:

The participants in the research will be involved in considering the potential benefits for diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the core research question.

Primary intended beneficiaries:

The primary intended beneficiaries of the research are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the key stakeholders. It is anticipated that there will be both direct and indirect, and short and longer term benefits for all the participants in the research and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in particular.

Principal anticipated benefits:

The principal anticipated benefit will be the set of Indigenous recommendations aimed at enhancing engagement by the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at the ANU School of Music.

Secondary beneficiaries:

Secondary beneficiaries of the research are the ANU and ANU School of Music, and potentially the Australian tertiary music education and performing arts sectors and the community more broadly.

To whom will the benefits flow:

1. The primary intended beneficiaries of the research are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the key stakeholders
2. Secondary intended beneficiaries are the ANU and the ANU School of Music (staff, students and visitors)
3. Other potential beneficiaries are:

- The Australian tertiary music education and performing arts sectors
- The broader community

Direct Benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participants in the Research:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in the research will benefit directly in the following ways:

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through:

- A closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition of contribution in research outcomes and products (by name if preferred)
- Acquiring of transferable knowledge and skills.

Indigenous co-design Focus Group Workshops: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through:

- A closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition of contribution in research outcomes and products (by name if preferred)
- Acquiring of transferable knowledge and skills

Interviews: Participants will personally benefit from involvement in the research through

- A closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music
- Recognition of contribution in research outcomes and products (by name if preferred)
- Acquiring of transferable knowledge and skills

Survey Questionnaire: Participants will not personally benefit from involvement in the research, however they may benefit in the longer term through:

- The anticipated overall benefits of the research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities
- Recognition of contribution in the Final Report Summary of Results (by name if preferred)

Broad Benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities:

It is anticipated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities will benefit more broadly from the research in the following ways:

- Enhanced engagement by the ANU School of Music with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Systemic, structural and cultural change at the ANU School of Music and enhanced responsive to the identified interests of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, music-making, music production and music scholarship and research at/through the ANU Schools of Music

- Access to a wider range of culturally and socially responsive educational opportunities and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at the ANU School of Music
- Access to a wider range of culturally and socially responsive research training and research opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased employment opportunity and higher levels of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People at the ANU School of Music
- Improved support mechanisms and provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the ANU School of Music
- More productive research relationships and increased research of benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of ‘in community’ engagement and project activity in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making by the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of ‘community engaged/integrated’ teaching and learning with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities at/through the ANU School of Music
- Increased profiling and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, musicians, and music scholars and research by the ANU School of Music
- Increased levels of cooperation and collaboration between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in music-making, music production, music education, and music scholarship and research at/through the ANU School of Music
- Application of the Indigenous-informed research results to improve the engagement of other tertiary music institutions and music/performing arts institutions and providers with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

Longer Term Benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities

It is anticipated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities will also benefit more broadly from the research through potential flow-on effects in the Australian tertiary music education system, in the following ways:

- Enhanced engagement by the Australian tertiary music education sector with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Beneficial systemic, structural and cultural change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system
- Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music, music-making, music production and music scholarship and research in the Australian tertiary music education system
- Enhanced educational options and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Australian tertiary music education and research
- Increased levels of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in music-making, music production, music education, and music scholarship and research in the Australian tertiary music education system and more broadly

- Enhanced research relationships and increased research of benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Australian tertiary music education system
- Increased cooperation and collaboration between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in Australian tertiary music education and in music, music-making, music education, music scholarship and music research
- Increased contribution to and support for the vitality, growth and sustainability of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian music cultures and traditions by Australian tertiary music education institutions
- Increased cultural wealth and improved education, economic and health and well-being outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities through increased levels of support for Indigenous music-making, music production, music education, and music scholarship and research by Australian tertiary music institutions

Benefits to ANU and the ANU School of Music

It is anticipated that the ANU and ANU School of Music will also benefit directly from the research, including:

- A more inclusive institutional culture and enhanced responsiveness to the priorities and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in tertiary music education and research
- Educational and cultural benefits through engagement with increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, composers/song-writers, technicians, educators, researchers and producers in tertiary music education and research
- Educational and cultural benefits for staff and students and the broader community through a more central focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and music-making in teaching, learning and research
- Student body diversification through increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Staffing diversification through increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Program, course and curriculum diversification and enrichment through an increased focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, music-making, scholarship and research, including through input by increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Enhanced institutional knowledge about, and responsiveness to the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in tertiary music education and research
- Increased cross/intercultural understanding, appreciation and collaboration between non-Indigenous staff/students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in music, music-making, music education and music scholarship and research
- Increased awareness of and responsiveness to the priorities and interests of First Nations Peoples more generally with respect to music, music-making, music production, music education and music scholarship and research
- Enhanced institutional profile and status through a more proactive focus on meeting the identified aspirations, priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in music, music-making, music production, music education and music scholarship and research

Potential Flow-on Benefits to the Broader Australian Community:

It is anticipated that benefits may also flow more broadly to the Australian community in the longer term as a result of the research through:

- Application of the results of the research to enhance engagement by Australian tertiary music education institutions with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Increased institutional and public recognition of and responsiveness to the interests and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, composers, educators, researchers, technicians, curators, managers, arts administrators, business leaders etc.
- Educational innovation and advances in Australian music education more broadly, and in particular in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music education and in Indigenous and collaborative developments in Indigenous music and music education
- Research innovation and advances in research, including in Indigenous and collaborative developments in Australian music research and with respect to enhanced responsiveness to the identified interests and priorities of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Job creation and increased employment options and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, composers, educators, researchers, technicians, producers, curators, managers, arts administrators, business leaders etc.
- Greater inclusivity in the Australian performing arts and music industries, including with respect to audience development and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Greater cultural inclusivity, enrichment and diversity in Australian music and music-making
- Improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander socio-economic status and health and well-being

Appendix H:

Stakeholder Analysis Framework

Project Title:

Expectations and Opportunities: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

Principal Researcher/Research Coordinator:

Jennifer Newsome, PhD Candidate, ANU School of Music
 ANU School of Music Office +61 2 6125 5700
jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au

All stakeholders who are affected by, or can be affected by the research issue	Degree to which stakeholders are affected by, or can be affected by the research issue (low, medium, high)	Purpose of involving stakeholders in the research
Stakeholders directly affected by the research issue		
<u>ANU School of Music</u> Indigenous staff Indigenous students	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Benefit from outcomes Influence strategy
Director and management staff	High	Views, perspectives Influence strategy, policy
Potential Indigenous music students	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Benefit from outcomes
<u>ANU Indigenous Senior Management</u>	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, policy
<u>ANU Indigenous Centres</u> <u>Leadership/staff</u> NCIS Tjabal	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, policy

CAEPR		
<u>Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community</u> Musicians and representatives of music industry and music education organisations	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, benefit from outcomes
Elders and families	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, benefit from outcomes
<u>Non-local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community</u> Indigenous musicians, future potential students, representatives of music industry and music education organisations	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, benefit from outcomes
Stakeholders indirectly affected by the research issue		
<u>ANU School of Music</u> Staff and students	Medium	Benefit from outcomes
Future Indigenous music students	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Benefit from outcomes
Stakeholders who can affect or influence the research issue		
<u>ANU School of Music</u> Management and administration Indigenous staff Indigenous students	High	Influence policy, planning and strategic outcomes

Indigenous project participants (e.g. Ngarra Burria: First Peoples Composers) Indigenous alumni		
<u>ANU Indigenous Senior Management</u>	High	Influence policy, planning and strategic outcomes
<u>ANU Indigenous Centres</u> <u>Leadership/staff</u> NCIS Tjabal CAEPR	High	Influence policy, planning and strategic outcomes
<u>ANU Management</u>	High	Influence policy, planning and strategic outcomes
Other relevant stakeholders		
artsACT and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network	High	Views, perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy, policy
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music/performing arts education providers/companies (e.g. Eora Centre, Moogahlin Performing Arts Inc.)	High	Views perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy and outcomes
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music/performing arts bodies (e.g. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office)	Medium	Views perspectives, needs, requirements Influence strategy and outcomes
AIATSIS	Medium	Influence strategy and outcomes

(Adapted from Guitj & Mayne, 2019)

Appendix I:

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group Participant Information Sheet

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: My name is Jennifer Newsome and I am a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU).

Project Title: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** I am conducting research into how to improve the way Australian tertiary music institutions engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research involves a case study at the ANU School of Music and will result in a set of recommendations to the School of Music to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research is based in Indigenous self-determination and is Indigenous-informed.
- **Participants:** I will be collecting information from about 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. I will do this by conducting co-design focus group workshops (5-8 members), a survey questionnaire (30-40 participants) and interviews (up to 10 participants). The research will be advised by an ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (6-8 members). The people providing information will include Indigenous musicians and community and music industry leaders, and some School of Music non-Indigenous staff who will also participate in some of the focus group workshops.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** The data will be used to develop recommendations for the School of Music, a summary of results report, my PhD thesis, public presentations, and possibly peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, book chapters and on websites. If you are interested in being informed about ongoing First Nations' news and developments at the School of Music following completion of the research, please see the ANU School of Music website home page. The recommendations and summary of results report will be shared with participants at this link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Final%20Summary%20of%20Results>

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the research is voluntary and you may decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time until the work is prepared for publication. However, because the research is collaborative, if you withdraw, it may not be possible to completely eliminate all the data you have provided.
- **What does participation in the research entail?** You are being invited to participate in the research as a member of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group. This would involve providing advice and guidance to me about the research and helping to develop a Terms of Reference and set of operating procedures for the

Reference Group, together with myself and the Head of the School of Music. It would also involve reviewing the guiding documents for the research through face-to-face (or online) meetings and email/online communications. With your consent, I would record your contribution to discussions and decision making in the form of written meeting notes and confirmed meeting minutes. If a meeting were held online, then with your permission I would make an audio-visual recording of the meeting, but only to help me with writing accurate minutes. Your involvement in this research project as a member of the Indigenous Reference Group will end when the research project is completed and the recommendations are provided to the School of Music. Any involvement in the Indigenous Reference Group as an ongoing advisory body for the School of Music after that would not be a part of this project and would be something that was discussed by the Indigenous Reference Group and School leadership after the project has finished. When the research is completed I will make sure that you have an opportunity to debrief and discuss what you thought about the Reference Group and its discussions, and any other aspect of your participation in the research.

- **Location and Duration:** There will be 3 ANU School of Music Reference Group meetings held at the ANU School of Music or online, one at the beginning of the research, one in the middle and one at the end, each lasting approximately 2 hours. Other discussions will take place in person/online or via phone or email. I will try to minimise the time demand on you in undertaking this role in the research whilst at the same time providing plenty of opportunity for your input.
- **Remuneration:** In recognition of your time and contribution you will be reimbursed for travel and other expenses (e.g. parking), and will receive an honorarium of \$100 (for each 2 hour meeting) to be paid following each meeting, and a small gift of appreciation. Refreshments will be provided during meetings (if held face-to-face).
- **Risks:** The research carries some risk.
 - In the Reference Group discussions you would be considering and making decisions together with others concerned with inequality in universities. It is possible that this might cause you some distress. If you did experience any distress as a result of being involved in the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - You would also be working together with people who might have various levels of institutional or community power and influence. If you were to experience any concerns or distress about this during the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - You might also experience some economic loss as a consequence of being involved in the research, but I will compensate you for this as explained in the Remuneration section of this sheet.
 - Your contribution to the research will be treated as confidential as far as is allowed by law, except where you have given written permission to be identified.
 - It is possible that someone might be able to identify you from the written meeting notes and formal meeting minutes. I will be making every effort though to eliminate this possibility in the final report of the results and in any other subsequent publications of the research. However, since people may know each other in the community or at the university, if you were identified there might possibly be some risk, such as impacts on operations and politics in the university and on peoples' reputations and relationships.
 - It is important that you also know that not all the recommendations of the research will necessarily be implemented, for reasons outside the research project such as other priorities or not enough funding.

- If while you are a member of the Reference Group you also perform another role in the School of Music you might experience a conflict of interest if you know about things that could might prevent the implementation of the recommendations of the research, and which could be against the wishes of other participants in the research (e.g. budget information).
- It would be OK though to opt out of the research without fear of negative consequences.
- **Benefits:** The research is intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. Your participation in the research would make a valuable contribution to achieving this. An important anticipated benefit will be improved support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making in the Australian tertiary music education system and in particular at the ANU School of Music. You may also personally benefit from your participation through a closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music, through recognition of your contribution in the research results and publications (by name if you wish), and by gaining knowledge and skills that you could use elsewhere.
- **Implications of Participation:** You would not be expected to continue as a member of the Reference Group after completion of the research. The research project and the role of the Reference Group in it will finish when the set of formal recommendations is provided to the School of Music. Implementation of recommendations will happen after the research is finished and will be conducted by ongoing members of the Reference Group together with the Head of School. It is possible that not all the recommendations will be implemented for financial or other reasons that the Reference Group cannot control.

Exclusion criteria:

- **Participant Limitation:** Participation in the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group is restricted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People aged 18 years or older.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Your identity will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, unless you elect to be named in the research, in which case you can choose how you wish to be named. Access to the information provided by you would be restricted to me and to other members of the Reference Group. The details identifying you would be stored separately from the rest of the research data. And, after the research is finished and the results are published I would only use your information with your written consent. It is important to the integrity of the research that participants maintain confidentiality of group discussions and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppi/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** The information from your participation in the research in the form of written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings (if meetings are recorded) and confirmed minutes will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer.
- **How long:**
 - The discussion notes and audio-visual recordings of meetings (if recorded) will be stored for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted, unless the Reference Group participants elect otherwise.
 - The confirmed minutes of meetings will be stored as a permanent record on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer indefinitely, unless the Reference Group participants elect otherwise.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:**
 - Due to the collaborative nature of the Reference Group meetings, you would have an opportunity, together with the other participants, both before and towards the end of the research, to decide together what should be done with the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings. This would include who could access and use them in the future and any conditions of their access and use.
 - Access to and use of the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings would only be with the collective written consent of you and all the other Reference Group participants.
 - To protect the confidentiality and rights of all the Indigenous Reference Group participants, the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings will be classified as **Closed** (meaning that there would be no future access or use permitted) unless all the participants collectively decide otherwise before the research has ended. If everyone cannot agree by the end of the research, then the research data would remain classified as **Closed**.
 - If you decide to withdraw from the research your contribution would be deleted where possible, including from the confirmed minutes of meetings (with an indication that there is a deletion).
 - Any other access to or use of the information you contribute will only be with your written consent.
 - Please see the **Consent Form**.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For more information or queries please contact: Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au
- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you experience distress at any time during the research, please contact me. I will be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service if you wish. Or you can contact:
 - ANU Counselling Service (available only to ANU staff and students): +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
 - Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14

Ethics Committee Clearance: The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix J:

ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group Consent Form

WRITTEN CONSENT: ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group

Project Title: *Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system*

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project (listed here:

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to the audio-recording of meetings of the Indigenous Reference Group (this may not be necessary if face-to-face meetings can be held).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I understand that there is a risk of third-party identification in the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings.

YES ☐

I understand that in view of the collaborative nature of the Indigenous Reference Group meetings, if I withdraw from the research, it may not be possible to eliminate all data associated with my involvement in the research.

YES ☐

I understand that, together with the other participants, I will have opportunities, both prior to and towards the end of the research, to participate in collectively determining what will be done with the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings after the required storage period (including who can access or use them in the future and any conditions of access and use).

YES ☐

I understand that to protect the confidentiality and rights of all the Indigenous Reference Group participants, the written/electronic discussion notes, audio-visual recordings of meetings and confirmed minutes of meetings will be classified as **Closed** (no future access or use permitted without permission) except where the participants collectively authorise otherwise before the research has ended. If a consensus agreement is not reached by the end of the research, the data will remain **Closed**.

YES ☐

I agree to being quoted in the outputs of the research (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to be identified in the following way within research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters):

By my name YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, the name I wish used: _____

Pseudonym YES ☐ NO ☐

No attribution YES ☐ NO ☐

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix K:

Focus Group Participant Information Sheet

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group Workshops

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: My name is Jennifer Newsome and I am a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU).

Project Title: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** I am conducting research into how to improve the way Australian tertiary music institutions engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research involves a case study at the ANU School of Music and will result in a set of recommendations to the School of Music to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research is based in Indigenous self-determination and is Indigenous-informed.
- **Participants:** I will be collecting information from about 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. I will do this by conducting co-design focus group workshops (5-8 members), a survey questionnaire (30-40 participants) and interviews (up to 10 participants). The research will be advised by an ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (6-8 members). The people providing information will include Indigenous musicians and community and music industry leaders, and some School of Music non-Indigenous staff who will participate in some of the focus group workshops.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** The data will be used to develop recommendations for the School of Music, a summary of results report, my PhD thesis, public presentations, and possibly peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, book chapters and on websites. If you are interested in being informed about ongoing First Nations' news and developments at the School of Music following completion of the research, please see the ANU School of Music website home page. The recommendations and summary of results report will be shared with participants at this link: <https://www.dropbox.com/home/Final%20Summary%20of%20Results>

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the research is voluntary and you may decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time until the work is prepared for publication. However, because the research is collaborative, if you withdraw, it may not be possible to completely eliminate all the data you have provided.
- **What does participation in the research entail?:** You are being invited to participate in the focus group workshops as a co-researcher. This would involve attending workshops to consider what the priorities, requirements and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are in the Australian tertiary music education system, and to develop a set of recommendations for the ANU School of

Music about how they could improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities. With your consent, and the consent of the other participants, I would make audio or audio-visual recordings of the workshops to help me with keeping an accurate record and for writing up meeting minutes and summaries of the main points of the discussions for us to use in the workshops. If there is no recording made I will take minutes and create the summaries from these. The recordings (and transcripts) and the minutes and summaries will be the research data. You will have an opportunity to review these and make sure you are happy with the minutes and summaries before they are used. When the research is completed I will make sure that you have an opportunity to debrief and discuss what you thought about the workshops and any other aspect of your participation in the research.

- **Location and Duration:** There will be 4 focus group workshops. These will be held face-to-face and/or online at the ANU School of Music, and each would last about 2 hours. I will also make sure to keep up good communication with you throughout the research via phone and/or email or online, which ever suits you.
- **Remuneration:** In recognition of your time and contribution you will be reimbursed for travel and other expenses (e.g. parking), and will receive an honorarium of \$100 (for each 2 hour meeting) to be paid following each meeting, and a small gift of appreciation. Refreshments will be provided during meetings (if held face-to-face).
- **Risks:** The research carries some risk.
 - In the workshops you would be considering and making decisions together with others about matters concerned with inequality in universities. It is possible that this might cause you some distress. If you did experience any distress as a result of being involved in the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - In the workshops you would be working together with people who might have various levels of institutional or community power and influence. If you were to experience any concerns or distress about this during the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - You might also experience some economic loss as a consequence of being involved in the research, but I will compensate you for this as explained in the Remuneration section of this sheet.
 - Your contribution to the research will be treated as confidential as far as is allowed by law, except where you have given your permission in writing to be identified.
 - It is possible that someone might be able to identify you from the recordings or the transcripts and minutes of the workshops. I will be making every effort though to eliminate this possibility in the final report of the results and in any other subsequent publications of the research. However, since people may know each other in the community or at the university, if you were identified there might possibly be some risk, such as impacts on operations and politics in the university and on peoples' reputations and relationships.
 - It is important that you also know that not all the recommendations of the research will necessarily be implemented, for reasons outside the research project such as other priorities or not enough funding.
 - It would be OK though for you to opt out of the research without fear of any negative consequences.
- **Benefits:** The research is intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. Your participation in the research would make a valuable contribution to achieving this. An important anticipated benefit will be improved

support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making in the Australian tertiary music education system and in particular at the ANU School of Music. You may also personally benefit from your participation through a closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music, through recognition of your contribution in the research results and publications (by name if you wish), and by gaining knowledge and skills that you could use elsewhere.

Exclusion criteria: Participation is restricted to people aged 18 years and over.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Your identity will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, unless you elect to be named in the research, in which case you can choose how you wish to be named. Access to the information provided by you would be restricted to me and the other participants in the workshops and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group. The details identifying you would be stored separately from the rest of the research data. You will also have the option of contributing your views on a confidential basis directly to the Principal Researcher. If you did so your views would then be communicated in de-identified form (without your name attached) to the participants in the Focus Group and/or to the SoM Indigenous Reference Group participants, whichever you preferred. And, after the research is finished and the results are published I would only use your information with your written consent. It is important to the integrity of the research that participants maintain confidentiality of group discussions and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp1/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** The information from your participation in the research would be stored as follows:
 - The audio or audio-visual recordings and transcripts of the workshops (or written minutes if the discussions are not recorded) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer, and also archived at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS storage protocols) unless the workshop participants elect otherwise.
 - The summaries of the workshop discussions and the set of recommendations for the School of Music will also be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer.
- **How long:**
 - The recordings and transcripts of the workshops (or the minutes if they are not recorded) will be archived at AIATSIS indefinitely, unless elected otherwise by the workshop participants, in which case they would be stored at ANU for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research, and then deleted.

- The summaries and minutes of the workshops would be stored at ANU for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research, and then deleted, unless the workshop participants elect otherwise, in which case they would be stored indefinitely.
- The set of recommendations to the School of Music would be stored on the ANU password protected server indefinitely.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:**
 - Due to the collaborative nature of the focus group workshops, you would have an opportunity, together with the other participants, both before and towards the end of the research, to decide together what should be done with the recordings, transcripts, minutes and summaries of the workshops. This would include who might be able to access and use them in the future, and any conditions of their access and use.
 - Access to and use of the recordings, transcripts, minutes and summaries of the workshops would only be with the collective written consent of you and all the other workshop participants.
 - To protect the confidentiality and rights of all the workshop participants, the recordings, transcripts, minutes and summaries of the workshops will be classified as **Closed** (meaning that there would be no future access or use permitted) unless all the participants collectively decide otherwise before the research has ended. If everyone cannot agree by the end of the research, then the research data would remain classified as **Closed**.
 - If you decided to withdraw from the research your contribution would be deleted from the transcripts, summaries and minutes (with an indication that there was a deletion).
 - Access to and use of the set of recommendations provided to the School of Music and held at ANU would be at the discretion of the Head of the ANU School of Music in consultation with the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group.
 - Please see the **Consent Form**.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For more information or queries please contact: Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au
- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you experience distress at any time during the research, please contact me. I will be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service if you wish. Or you can contact:
 - ANU Counselling Service (available only to ANU staff and students): +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
 - Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14

Ethics Committee Clearance: The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix L:
Focus Group Consent Form

WRITTEN CONSENT: Indigenous co-design focus group workshops participants

Project Title: *Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system*

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project (listed here:

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops being audio or audio-visually recorded.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I understand that there is a risk of third-party identification in the recordings, transcripts, minutes and summaries of the focus group workshops.

YES ☐

I understand that in view of the collaborative co-design nature of the research, if I withdraw from the research, it may not be possible to eliminate all data associated with my involvement in the research.

YES ☐

I understand that, together with the other participants, I will have opportunities, both prior to and towards the end of the research, to participate in collectively determining what will be done with the recordings, transcript, minutes and summaries of the focus group workshops after the required storage period (including who can access or use them in the future and any conditions of access and use).

YES ☐

I understand that to protect the confidentiality and rights of all the workshop participants, the recordings, transcripts, minutes and summaries of the workshops will be classified as **Closed** (no future access or use permitted without permission) except where the participants collectively authorise otherwise before the research has ended. If a consensus agreement is not reached by the end of the research, the data will remain **Closed**.

YES ☐

I agree to being quoted in research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to be identified in the following way within research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters):

By my name YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, the name I wish used: _____

Pseudonym YES ☐ NO ☐

No attribution YES ☐ NO ☐

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix M:
First Nations Music Survey Questionnaire

First Nations Music Survey Questionnaire

Survey Flow

Block: INTRODUCTION (3 Questions)
Standard: CONSENT (12 Questions)
Standard: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (22 Questions)
Standard: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS (6 Questions)
Standard: ACCESS TO TERTIARY MUSIC EDUCATION (13 Questions)
Standard: TEACHING AND LEARNING (27 Questions)
Standard: SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS MUSIC AND CULTURE (13 Questions)
Standard: RESEARCH PROJECTS (9 Questions)
Standard: FINAL QUESTIONS (6 Questions)
Standard: THANK YOU (1 Question)

Q1 Welcome!

Q2 We would like to thank you very much for completing this Survey

Your responses will make a valuable contribution to improving outcomes for First Nations' People in the Australian tertiary music education system.

We are seeking the views of First Nations' People about how to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system.

This Survey is part of a PhD research project being conducted at the ANU School of Music, at the Australian National University (ANU).

Your response to this Survey will be kept de-identified (i.e. your name will be removed).

Privacy Statement: The Survey will protect your privacy. In collecting your personal information within the Survey, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007 and contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Your email address and/or social media contact details have been collected by the Principal Researcher Jennifer Newsome so that the Survey could be sent to you. These details will only be used for communicating with you, and will be stored on an ANU password protected computer and not disclosed to anyone else. Please be aware that there are general risks to information security associated with using the internet, including for this Survey.

If you would prefer to receive the Survey in paper form, please contact the Principal Researcher using this link: [Jennifer Newsome](#)

Prior to commencing the Survey, if you have any questions or concerns about the research project or this Survey, please contact the Principal Researcher Jennifer Newsome: jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au

Q3 INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

This Survey is **for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People only**.

You must be **18 years or older** to participate in the Survey.

You will need to **provide your consent** to participate in the Survey.

To do this you will need to answer **ALL** the questions in the next section and then click **Agree and Continue**

For all the other sections it is helpful if you answer all the questions, but it is also OK for you to answer only those questions you wish to.

The length of time it will take to complete the Survey will depend on how long you take to give your answers. **It is likely it will take you about 1/2 an hour to complete**, but it could take longer depending on how much detail you wish to provide.

You can provide as much or as little detail as you like!

Your personal opinion is important to us. There are no right or wrong answers!

The Survey will first ask you some **demographic questions**. It is helpful if you could please complete **all** the questions in this section.

The Survey will then ask a series of questions that will help us to understand the **priorities, requirements and needs** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities in the Australian tertiary music education system. You can answer **all or any** of these questions.

In the Survey **tertiary music institutions** refers to university tertiary music education institutions (i.e. conservatoriums and tertiary music schools).

In the Survey **program** means a course, diploma, degree, workshop or other practical or learning experience offered by a tertiary music institution.

You don't have to complete the Survey all in one sitting! You can come back to it when it suits you using the link in the email you originally received to access the Survey.

Please use the **BACK** and **NEXT** buttons to move through the Survey.

End of Block: INTRODUCTION

Start of Block: CONSENT

Q4 To give your consent to participate in the Survey, please make sure that you have read the **Participant Information Sheet** that was included in the email invitation, and which informs you about the research project and your participation in this Survey.

I confirm that I have read and understood the **Participant Information Sheet** provided to me about the research project, and have had any questions and concerns about the project addressed to my satisfaction. Click **Yes** to continue the Survey. Click **No** if you have questions or concerns that have not been addressed. This will take you to the end of the Survey. You can then contact the Principal Researcher Jennifer Newsome to discuss your questions or concerns, and if you are satisfied with the response, you can then take the Survey if you like.

☐ **Yes (to continue the Survey) (1)**

☐ **No (2)**

Skip To: End of Survey If Q4 = No

Q6 I am an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Q6 = No

Q7 I am 18 years or older

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Q7 = No

Q8 I understand that **I can withdraw from the research** at any time and all attempts will be made to eliminate data associated with my involvement in the research.

☐ **Yes (I knew that)** (1)

☐ **No (but I do now)** (2)

Q9 I understand that there is a risk of **third-party identification** in the Survey (i.e. where someone might be able to identify you from your responses to the Survey).
Every effort will be made to eliminate this possibility in the reports of the research.

☐ **Yes (I knew that)** (1)

☐ **No (but I do now)** (2)

Q10 I consent to the archiving of a **de-identified** copy of my Survey (with my name removed) at **AIATSIS indefinitely** (under AIATSIS protocols)

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: Q11 If Q10 = Yes

Skip To: Q12 If Q10 = No

Q11 I give permission for the **de-identified** copy of my Survey (with my name removed) to be held at **AIATSIS**, to be made **available to the public**, but only for the purposes of **private study and copying**

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q12 I agree to being **quoted** in the material **outputs of the research** (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters)

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: Q14 If Q12 = No

Skip To: Q13 If Q12 = Yes

Q13 I wish to be **identified** in the following way within the **research outputs** (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters etc.)

☐ **By my name (please write the name you would like used):** (1)

☐ **A pseudonym** (i.e. a fictitious name will be assigned to your comments) (2)

☐ **No attribution** (i.e. participant x) (3)

Q14 I wish to have an **opportunity to discuss** the research and my participation in it **after** completion of the research

☐ **Yes (please provide your name and contact details)** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q15 I wish to receive a **formal letter of recognition and appreciation** for my contribution to the research

☐ **Yes (please provide your name and contact details)** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q16 I agree to participate in the Survey

☐ **AGREE AND CONTINUE** (1)

☐ **NO** (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Q16 != AGREE AND CONTINUE

End of Block: CONSENT

Start of Block: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Q17 It is important that the research reflects the **diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**.

The following questions will help us to understand the **range and diversity of people who have completed the Survey**.

If possible, please answer all the questions in this section.

Q18 How would you describe yourself?

☐ **Aboriginal** (1)

☐ **Torres Strait Islander** (2)

☐ **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** (3)

Q19 How would you describe your **gender**?

- ☐ **Woman/Female** (1)
- ☐ **Male/Man** (2)
- ☐ **Non-binary / third gender / gender fluid / non-conforming** (3)
- ☐ **Prefer not to say** (4)

Q20 What is your **age**?

- ☐ **18-19** (1)
- ☐ **20-29** (2)
- ☐ **30-39** (3)
- ☐ **40-49** (4)
- ☐ **50-59** (5)
- ☐ **60-69** (6)
- ☐ **70-79** (7)
- ☐ **80-89** (8)
- ☐ **90 or over** (9)

Q21 Where do you **currently** live?

- ☐ **Capital city** (1)
- ☐ **Large country town** (2)
- ☐ **Small country town** (3)
- ☐ **Remote area community** (4)
- ☐ **Overseas** (5)

Skip To: Q23 If Q21 = Overseas

Q22 What state/territory are you **currently** living in?

- ☐ **Australian Capital Territory** (1)
- ☐ **New South Wales** (2)
- ☐ **Northern Territory** (3)
- ☐ **South Australia** (4)
- ☐ **Victoria** (5)
- ☐ **Queensland** (6)
- ☐ **Western Australia** (9)

Q23 Which best describes the **location** where you **grew up**? You can choose more than one.

- ☐ **Capital city** (1)
- ☐ **Large country town** (2)
- ☐ **Small country town** (3)
- ☐ **Remote area community** (4)
- ☐ **Overseas** (5)

Q24 What **language/s** do you speak? You can choose more than one.

- ☐ **An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language as my first language** (1)
- ☐ **English as my first language** (2)
- ☐ **English as one of the languages I speak** (3)

Q25 Are you currently or have ever been a **practising musician** (i.e. performer, song-writer, composer)

- ☐ **Yes** (1)
- ☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: Q26 If Q25 = Yes

Skip To: Q28 If Q25 = No

Q26 How did you **learn** music? You can choose more than one.

- ☐ **Mainly self-taught (1)**
 - ☐ **From family and/or friends (2)**
 - ☐ **Through church (3)**
 - ☐ **By participating in "traditional" song and dance within the community (4)**
 - ☐ **Through a youth group (5)**
 - ☐ **Through participating in workshops or other one-off events (6)**
 - ☐ **Through a formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons (7)**
 - ☐ **Other (please indicate here) (8)**
-

Skip To: Q27 If Q26 = Through a formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons

Skip To: Q28 If Q26 != Through a formal music education program and/or instrumental/vocal lessons

Q27 Where did you undertake the **formal music education program** and/or **instrumental/vocal lessons**? You can choose more than one

- ☐ **From a private teacher (instrumental/vocal lessons) (1)**
 - ☐ **In primary school (2)**
 - ☐ **In secondary school (3)**
 - ☐ **At a local community organisation (4)**
 - ☐ **At TAFE (5)**
 - ☐ **At University (6)**
 - ☐ **At a specialist Indigenous institution (e.g. CASM, Abmusic, NAISDA, ACPA, Eora) (7)**
 - ☐ **Other (please indicate here) (8)**
-

Q28 In what ways have you been **involved in the music profession/industry** or the **arts** more generally? You can choose more than one.

- ☐ **Performer** (1)
 - ☐ **Songwriter/composer** (2)
 - ☐ **Teacher/lecturer** (3)
 - ☐ **Sound engineer** (4)
 - ☐ **Producer** (5)
 - ☐ **Promotions** (6)
 - ☐ **Event curation/management** (7)
 - ☐ **Stage management** (8)
 - ☐ **Radio/TV presenter** (9)
 - ☐ **Other (please indicate here)** (10)
-

- ☐ **I have not been involved in the music profession/industry** (11)

Q29 Did you complete a **formal music qualification** from an institution?

- ☐ **Yes** (1)
- ☐ **No** (2)

Skip To: Q30 If Q29 = Yes

Skip To: Q31 If Q29 = No

Q30 What **type of institution** did you receive your formal qualification/s from? You can choose more than one.

- ☐ High School (where music was one of your subjects) (1)
 - ☐ Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) (2)
 - ☐ TAFE (3)
 - ☐ Specialist Indigenous institution (e.g. CASM, Abmusic, NAISDA, ACPA, Eora) (4)
 - ☐ University (5)
 - ☐ Other (please indicate here) (6)
-

Q31 Have you completed a **university bridging program** that prepared students for entry into a "mainstream" music degree?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q32 Do you have a formal qualification that includes **multiple areas** of the performing arts (e.g. dance, theatre/drama, music, film, sound engineering, stage management etc.)?

- ☐ Yes (please indicate which areas) (1)
-

- ☐ No (2)

Q33 Have you studied music at a tertiary music institution but **did not receive a formal qualification** because you **did not complete** the full study program?

- ☐ Yes – please say what type of institution that was (e.g. TAFE, University) (3)
-
- ☐ No (4)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (5)

Q34 Do you have a **formal qualification** in a field of study **other than music**?

☐ **Yes (please indicate which area/s)** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q35 Are you currently **studying music** at an Australian university?

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q36 Are you currently **studying** in a field **other than music** at an Australian university?

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q37 Have you ever **taught music** in a tertiary music institution?

☐ **Yes** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

Q38 Are you currently **employed** in an Australian university

☐ **Yes (please indicate in what capacity)** (1)

☐ **No** (2)

End of Block: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Start of Block: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Q39 The following question are **open ended ones** about what tertiary music institutions should be doing in the First Nations' space.

This provides an opportunity for you to give **your personal views**.

Please feel free to **answer any or all of the questions**, and provide **as little or as much** information as you like.

Q40 What **key principles** should underpin the work of tertiary music institutions in the First Nations' space?

Are any of these non-negotiable?

Q41 What are the **most important things** that tertiary music institutions should be doing for First Nations' Peoples and communities?

Q42 What **outcomes** do you think First Nations' musicians expect and want from tertiary music institutions?

Q43 How can tertiary music institutions **support First Nations' musicians** to achieve their goals and dreams?

Q44 What would your **ideal dream music program** for First Nations' People look like?

End of Block: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Start of Block: ACCESS TO TERTIARY MUSIC EDUCATION

Q45 The following questions are about **improving access** to tertiary music institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Please feel free to **answer any or all** of the questions, and provide **as little or as much information** as you like.

Q46 How can tertiary music institutions be **more accessible** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?

Please feel free to provide as little or as much detail as you like.

Q47 Thinking about how tertiary music institutions can be **more accessible** for First Nations' students, how important would the following be?

Q48 Programs that offer **direct entry** into "**mainstream**" music programs for **all** First Nations music students (i.e. no bridging requirement).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q49 Programs for First Nations' musicians who **do not** have a formal music education background.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q50 **Bridging programs** for First Nations' musicians into "**mainstream**" music programs.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q51 Programs that are **inclusive** of First Nations' musicians from a **range of educational and cultural backgrounds** (i.e. who may speak English as a second language, may not have finished high school, or who may not read music).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q52 Programs that are **inclusive** of a **range of music styles and genres** (i.e. reflecting diverse music backgrounds and influences)

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q53 Programs that are offered in **regional and remote locations** so that people don't have to leave their home community to learn music.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
 - ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
 - ☐ **Important** (3)
 - ☐ **Very important** (4)
 - ☐ **Essential** (5)
-

Q54 Programs that combine **on-campus and in-community delivery**, so that people can experience the benefits of learning on-campus while also remaining based in their home community.

- ☐ Not important (1)
 - ☐ Somewhat important (2)
 - ☐ Important (3)
 - ☐ Very important (4)
 - ☐ Essential (5)
-

Q55 Programs that provide **support** with **applications, admissions** and **orientation** .

- ☐ Not important (1)
 - ☐ Somewhat important (2)
 - ☐ Important (3)
 - ☐ Very important (4)
 - ☐ Essential (5)
-

Q56 Should the ANU School of Music, as a part of the Australian National University, be aiming to have First Nations' **graduates** from all around the country and many different communities.

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q57 Should universities have **flexible entry requirements** that recognise merit based on **musical and academic aptitude** and **previous musical experience**, not just high school

results and pre-determined audition requirements (i.e. play this piece, play this scale/arpeggio etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

End of Block: ACCESS TO TERTIARY MUSIC EDUCATION

Start of Block: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Q58 The following questions are about **teaching and learning programs** for First Nations' musicians in tertiary music institutions.

Q59 What sorts of **teaching and learning programs** should tertiary music institutions have for First Nations' musicians?

Please feel free to provide as little or as much detail as you like.

Q60 Thinking about **teaching and learning programs** for First Nations' musicians, how important would the following be?

Q61 **Bridging programs** for First Nations' students into "**mainstream**" music programs.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q62 Programs that teach **Western music theory** and how to **read and write music** from scratch.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q63 Programs that include opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **music and culture**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q64 Programs that offer performance studies that are **inclusive** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **music styles/genres**.

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q65 Programs that include opportunities for First Nations' students to participate in music performance/projects/events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **community contexts**.

- ☐ Not important (1)
 - ☐ Somewhat important (2)
 - ☐ Important (3)
 - ☐ Very important (4)
 - ☐ Essential (5)
-

Q66 Programs specifically for **First Nations' students** (like CASM, NAISDA, Eora, ACPA, Abmusic).

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q67 Programs that help First Nations' musicians gain **access** to the **music profession/industry**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q68 A **degree program** majoring in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q69 Programs that offer a **range of qualifications** (i.e. short courses, certificates, diplomas, degrees etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q70 Programs that help students to develop their **research skills**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q71 Programs that are inclusive of a **wide range of music performance styles/genres** (e.g. jazz, rock, classical, popular, hip hop, reggae, country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q72 Programs where you learn mainly about just **one particular music style/genre** (i.e. just jazz, just classical, just pop/rock etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q73 Programs that include opportunities to learn **"traditional" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander song and dance**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q74 Programs that teach **sound engineering** from scratch.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q75 Programs that offer **separate classes** in "traditional" song and dance for First Nations' students, for reasons of **cultural safety**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q76 Programs that offer opportunities for First Nations' students to learn **"on country"**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q77 Programs that offer opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q78 Programs taught by **First Nations' practitioners** (i.e. performers, song-writers, composers, sound engineers, researchers etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q79 Programs that provide **mentoring** for First Nations' students by First Nations' practitioners.

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q80 Programs that offer opportunities to **learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and culture owners**.

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q81 Programs with **strong** First Nations' staff and student **cohorts**.

- ☐ Not important (1)
- ☐ Somewhat important (2)
- ☐ Important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Essential (5)

Q82 Programs with **identified First Nations' spaces** (e.g. learning hubs, rehearsal spaces, recording facilities, community gathering spaces etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q83 Should the ANU School of Music, as a part of the Australian National University, be leading the way in offering tertiary music education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from a **diverse range of educational and musical backgrounds**?

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q84 Do you have any views on **First Nations' staffing** in tertiary music institutions that you would like to add (e.g. roles, criteria for appointment etc.)?

Please feel free to provide as little or as much detail as you like.

End of Block: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Start of Block: SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS MUSIC AND CULTURE

Q85 The following questions are about **support** by tertiary music institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **music and culture**.

Please feel free to **answer any or all** of the questions, and provide **as little or as much** information as you like.

Q86 How could tertiary music institutions provide more **support** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **music and culture**?

Please feel free to provide as little or as much detail as you like.

Q87 Thinking about **support** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **music and culture** by tertiary music institutions, how important would the following be?

Q88 Programs with a focus on meeting the **aspirations, goals and needs** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q89 Programs with a focus on creative outcomes (i.e. composition, song writing, music production).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q90 Programs that include opportunities for First Nations' students to learn about and perform **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music styles/genres**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
 - ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
 - ☐ **Important** (3)
 - ☐ **Very important** (4)
 - ☐ **Essential** (5)
-

Q91 Programs that include opportunities to study in **multiple areas of the performing arts** (i.e. music, dance, theatre, film, music production etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q92 Programs that include opportunities to learn **"traditional" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songs, stories, dances and instruments.**

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q93 Programs that include opportunities to learn an **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.**

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
 - ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
 - ☐ **Important** (3)
 - ☐ **Very important** (4)
 - ☐ **Essential** (5)
-

Q94 Programs that include opportunities to **learn from** and be **mentored** by leading First Nations' practitioners.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q95 Programs with **dedicated cultural centres, hubs or spaces** for First Nations' musicians and music making.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q96 "**Mainstream**" programs that are more inclusive of First Nations' musicians from a **diversity** of cultural/educational backgrounds.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q97 **Indigenous-led cultural programs** for First Nations' musicians (like CASM, Abmusic, ACPA, NAISDA, Eora).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

End of Block: SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS MUSIC AND CULTURE

Start of Block: RESEARCH PROJECTS

Q98 Thank you for keeping going!

You're nearly there!

The following questions are about what sorts of **research programs** tertiary music institutions should be prioritising in the First Nations' space.

Please feel free to **answer any or all** of the questions, and provide **as little or as much** information as you like.

Q99 What sorts of **research projects** should tertiary music institutions **prioritise** in the First Nations' space?

Please feel free to provide as little or as much detail as you like.

Q100 Thinking about the **research priorities and needs** of First Nations' People and communities, how important are the following?

Q101 **Creative music making** projects (i.e. performance, composition, song writing, recording, music production).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q102 Working with First Nations' community members to develop **music events and initiatives** (e.g. festivals, performances, in-school projects, community music groups/bands etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q103 Working with First Nations' song owners and community members to help **revitalise and sustain** First Nations' "**traditional**" **music and culture**.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q104 Helping to revitalise and sustain First Nations' **languages** through music.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q105 Providing support for First Nations' musicians and music making in **regional and remote areas** of Australia.

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

Q106 Developing music initiatives to help "**close the gap**" (e.g. health and well being initiatives, education/training programs, employment opportunities, working with young people, elderly, marginalised groups etc.).

- ☐ **Not important** (1)
- ☐ **Somewhat important** (2)
- ☐ **Important** (3)
- ☐ **Very important** (4)
- ☐ **Essential** (5)

End of Block: RESEARCH PROJECTS

Start of Block: FINAL QUESTIONS

Q107 Congratulations!

You have reached the final set of questions!

These last few questions are **open ended** ones that provide a final opportunity for you to give your **personal views** on what tertiary music institutions should be doing in the First Nations' space.

Please feel free to **answer any or all** of the questions, and provide **as little or as much** information as you like.

Q108 If you have studied music at a tertiary music institution, please tell us about **your experience?** (e.g. What did you think of it? Was it a positive experience? What could have been improved?)

Q109 What would the **aspirations and goals** of First Nations' musicians be in considering tertiary music study?

Q110 How can tertiary music institutions help First Nations' musicians achieve their **aspirations and goals?**

Q111 Have you seen or experienced any **excellent programs** for First Nations' People (either here or overseas) that you would like to recommend?

Q112 Is there anything else you would like to add?

End of Block: FINAL QUESTIONS

Start of Block: THANK YOU

Q117

We would like to thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this Survey.

Your contribution will make an important and valuable contribution to the research and its results and is very much appreciated!

PLEASE CLICK THE NEXT BUTTON TO SUBMIT THE SURVEY

End of Block: THANK YOU

Appendix N:

Survey Questionnaire Participant Information Sheet

Survey

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: My name is Jennifer Newsome and I am a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU).

Project Title: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** I am conducting research into how to improve the way Australian tertiary music institutions engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research involves a case study at the ANU School of Music and will result in a set of recommendations to the School of Music to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research is based in Indigenous self-determination and is Indigenous-informed.
- **Participants:** I will be collecting information from about 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. I will do this by conducting co-design focus group workshops (5-8 members), a survey questionnaire (30-40 participants) and interviews (up to 10 participants). The research will be advised by an ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (6-8 members). The people providing information will include Indigenous musicians and community and music industry leaders, and some School of Music non-Indigenous staff who will participate in some of the focus group workshops.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** The data will be used to develop recommendations for the School of Music, a summary of results report, my PhD thesis, public presentations, and possibly peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, book chapters and on websites. If you are interested in being informed about ongoing First Nations' news and developments at the School of Music following completion of the research, please see the ANU School of Music website home page. The recommendations and summary of results report will be shared with participants at this link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Final%20Summary%20of%20Results>

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the research is voluntary and you may decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time until the work is prepared for publication. Within the questionnaire you can determine the extent of your contribution, and can decline to answer any particular question. If you decide to withdraw from the research, the data you have provided will be destroyed and not used, unless you elect otherwise. However, due to the co-design nature of the research, it may not be possible to entirely eliminate all data associated with your participation.
- **What does participation in the research entail?** You are being invited to take part in the research by responding to a Survey questionnaire. The Survey will ask a range of questions about you and your music and education background, and also about your views and opinions on the priorities, requirements and needs of diverse Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system. You will also have an opportunity in the Survey to make suggestions about what you think the ANU School of Music (and other Australian tertiary music institutions) should do to benefit and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities. It would be useful to the research if you could answer all the questions, however it is also OK if you answer only those questions you wish to. I will use your answers as data in the research and will also be providing a copy of your Survey responses (with your name removed) to participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops (who will be considering the same research question), and to the members of the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group to help them in their deliberations about the research. When the research is completed you will have an opportunity to debrief and discuss the research and your participation in it if you wish. (Please see the **Consent Form**)

- **Location and Duration:** The Survey will be provided to you either in person, or via email/online message. The length of time it will take to complete the Survey will depend on whether you decide to answer all the questions and how long you wish to take in considering and writing your answers. The last set of questions provides an opportunity for you to write as much as you like. I would estimate that it might take up about an hour to complete the Survey if you answer all the questions in some detail.
- **Remuneration:** You will not receive any remuneration for your involvement in the research, however if you wish, I can send you a formal letter of recognition and appreciation for your personal contribution to the research if you provide your contact details. (Please see the **Consent Form**)
- **Risks:** The research carries some risk.
 - In the Survey you will be asked to consider matters concerned with inequality in universities. It is possible that this might cause you some distress. If you did experience any distress as a result of being involved in the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - Your contribution to the research will be treated as confidential as far as is allowed by law, except where you have given written permission to be identified.
 - It is possible that someone might be able to identify you from your responses to the Survey (even though your name will be removed from it). I will be making every effort though to eliminate this possibility in the final report of results and any other subsequent publications of the research. However, since people may know each other in the community or at the university, if you were to be identified there might possibly be some risk, such as impacts on operations and politics in the university and on peoples' reputations and relationships.
 - It is important that you also know that not all the recommendations of the research will necessarily be implemented, for reasons outside the research project such as other priorities or not enough funding.
 - It would be OK though for you to opt out of the research without fear of any negative consequences.
- **Benefits:** The research is intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. Your participation in the research would make a valuable contribution to achieving this. An important anticipated benefit will be improved support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making in the Australian tertiary music education system and in particular at the ANU School of Music. You will not benefit directly from the research in the short term, however you may benefit in the longer term through the anticipated overall benefits of the research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities. You can

also elect to be acknowledged by name for your contribution to the research in the final report of results if you wish (Please see the **Consent Form**).

Exclusion criteria: Participation in the Survey questionnaire is restricted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People aged 18 years and over.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Your identity will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, unless you elect to be named in the research, in which case you can choose how you wish to be named. Access to the information provided by you will be restricted to me and to the participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group. The details identifying you with this information will be stored separately from the rest of the research data. And, after the research is finished and the results are published I would only use your information with your written consent. It is important to the integrity of the research that participants maintain confidentiality and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp1/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** Your completed Survey and a de-identified copy of it (with your name removed) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and password protected computer, and a de-identified copy (with your name removed) will also be stored at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS protocols).
- **How long:** Your completed Survey and the copy of it (with your name removed) will be stored at ANU for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted. The de-identified copy (without your name) will be held at AIATSIS indefinitely.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** With your consent, access to and use of the de-identified copy of your Survey (with your name removed) held indefinitely at AIATSIS will be permitted, to allow later use of the data without exposing you to new or additional risk, but only for the purposes of private study and copying. If you do not wish this, the de-identified copy of your Survey held at AIATSIS will be classified as **Closed** (meaning that no-one will be permitted to access or use it). Please indicate your wishes for future access to and use of your data on the **Consent Form**.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For more information or queries please contact: Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au

- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you experience distress at any time during the research, please contact me. I will be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service if you wish. Or you can contact:
 - ANU Counselling Service (available only to ANU staff and students): +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
 - Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14

Ethics Committee Clearance: The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix O:
Survey Questionnaire Consent Form

WRITTEN CONSENT: Survey; Questionnaire Participants

Project Title: *Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system*

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project (listed here:

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project.

YES ☐ NO

☐

I understand that due to the co-design nature of the research, if I withdraw from the research, it may not be possible to eliminate all data associated with my involvement in the research.

YES ☐

I understand that there is a risk of third-party identification in the Survey.

YES ☐

I consent to the archiving of a **de-identified copy** of my Survey (with my name removed) at AIATSIS indefinitely (under AIATSIS protocols).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I give my permission for the **de-identified copy** of my Survey (with my name removed) held at AIATSIS to be made available to the public, but only for the purposes of private study and copying.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to being quoted in the material outputs of the research (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I wish to be identified in the following way within research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters):

By my name YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, the name I wish used: _____

Pseudonym YES ☐ NO ☐

No attribution YES ☐ NO ☐

I wish to have an opportunity to discuss the research and my participation in it after completion of the research. YES ☐ NO ☐

(If you answered YES, please provide your contact details at the bottom of the Consent Form)

I wish to receive a formal letter of recognition and appreciation for my contribution to the research.

YES ☐ NO ☐

(If you answered YES, please provide your contact details at the bottom of the Consent Form)

I wish to be acknowledged by name in the final report of the results of the research.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Contact Details (postal address, email or phone number)

Please provide these **ONLY** if you would like an opportunity to discuss the research and your participation in it after completion of the research **OR** if you would like to receive a formal letter of appreciation and recognition of your contribution to the research.

Name

.....

Postal address:.....

.....

.....

Email: Phone number:

Appendix P:

Interview Participant Information Sheet

Interview

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: My name is Jennifer Newsome and I am a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the ANU School of Music at the Australian National University (ANU).

Project Title: Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** I am conducting research into how to improve the way Australian tertiary music institutions engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research involves a case study at the ANU School of Music and will result in a set of recommendations to the School of Music to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research is based in Indigenous self-determination and is Indigenous-informed.
- **Participants:** I will be collecting information from about 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. I will do this by conducting co-design focus group workshops (5-8 members), a survey questionnaire (30-40 participants) and interviews (up to 10 participants). The research will be advised by an ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group (6-8 members). The people providing information will include Indigenous musicians and community and music industry leaders, and some School of Music non-Indigenous staff who will also participate in some of the focus group workshops.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** The data will be used to develop recommendations for the School of Music, a summary of results report, my PhD thesis, public presentations, and possibly peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, book chapters and on websites. If you are interested in being informed about ongoing First Nations' news and developments at the School of Music following completion of the research, please see the ANU School of Music website home page. The recommendations and summary of results report will be shared with participants at this link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Final%20Summary%20of%20Results>

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the research is voluntary and you may decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time until the work is prepared for publication. You will be able to determine how much information and what type of information you would like to contribute to the research. You can also decline to respond to any questions I might ask you. If you withdraw from the research, the data you have provided prior to your withdrawal will be destroyed and not used, unless you elect otherwise. However, because of the co-design nature of the research, if you withdraw, it may not be possible to completely eliminate all the data you have provided.

- **What does participation in the research entail?:** You are being invited to take part in an interview with me to provide your views on the priorities, requirements and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian tertiary music education system, and to make suggestions about what the ANU School of Music could do to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities. The interview would be relaxed and semi-structured, and I would not be asking any sensitive questions. With your consent I would make an audio or audio-visual recording of the interview so that I could transcribe it and then make an accurate summary of it (with your name removed) for use by the participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops (who will also be considering the same research question) and also to the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group to help them in their deliberations about the research. If you would prefer that I not record the interview I could just make a summary. When the research is completed I will make sure that you have an opportunity to debrief and discuss what you thought about the interview and any other aspect of your participation in the research.
- **Location and Duration:** The interview will take place either face-to-face at the ANU School of Music and/or by phone or online (which ever you prefer) and would last for approximately 1 hour.
- **Remuneration:** In recognition of your time you will receive a gift of appreciation and will be reimbursed for travel and other expenses (e.g. parking).
- **Risks:** The research carries some risk.
 - During the interview I would be asking about matters concerned with inequality in universities. It is possible that this might cause you some distress. If you did experience any distress as a result of being involved in the research, you could let me know and I would be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service.
 - You might also experience some economic loss as a consequence of being involved in the research, but I will compensate you for this as explained in the Remuneration section of this sheet.
 - Your contribution to the research will be treated as confidential as far as is allowed by law, except where you have given written permission to be identified.
 - It is possible that someone might be able to identify you from the summary of the interview, even though your name would not be on it. I will be making every effort though to eliminate this possibility in the final report of results and any other subsequent publications of the research. However, since people may know each other in the community or at the university, if you were identified there might possibly be some risk, such as impacts on operations and politics in the university and on peoples' reputations and relationships.
 - It is important that you also know that not all the recommendations of the research will necessarily be implemented, for reasons outside the research project such as other priorities or not enough funding.
 - It would be OK though for you to opt out of the research without fear of any negative consequences.
- **Benefits:** The research is intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. Your participation in the research would make a valuable contribution to achieving this. An important anticipated benefit will be improved support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, music and music-making in the Australian tertiary music education system and in particular at the ANU School of Music. You may also personally benefit from your participation through a closer and more influential involvement with the ANU School of Music, through recognition

of your contribution in the research results and publications (by name if you wish), and by gaining knowledge and skills that you could use elsewhere.

Exclusion criteria:

- **Participant Limitation:** Participation is restricted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People aged 18 years and over.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Your identity will be kept confidential as far as is allowed by law, unless you elect to be named in the research, in which case you can choose how you wish to be named. Access to the information provided by you will be restricted to me, and as a summary (without your name on it), to the participants in the Indigenous co-design focus group workshops and the ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group. The details identifying you would be stored separately from the rest of the research data. And, after the research is finished and the results are published I would only use your information with your written consent. It is important to the integrity of the research that participants maintain confidentiality of group discussions and refrain from making statements of a confidential nature or that are defamatory of any person.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at

https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** Data from your participation in the research in the form of an audio or audio-visual recording and transcript or summary (if the interview is not recorded) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer, and also archived at AIATSIS (under AIATSIS storage protocols) unless you elect otherwise. The summary for the Focus Group (with your name removed) will be stored on the ANU password protected server and computer.
- **How long:** The recording, transcript and/or summary (if the interview is not recorded) will be archived at AIATSIS indefinitely, unless you elect otherwise. The recording, transcript and/or summary (if the interview is not recorded) and the summary for the Focus Group held at the ANU, will be for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted unless you elect otherwise.
- **Handling of Data:** following the required storage period you will have an opportunity both before and after the interview to discuss and decide what you would like done with the recordings, transcript and summaries of your interview. This would include who might be able to access and use them in the future, and any conditions of their access and use. Access to and use of the recording, transcript and/or summary if held at AIATSIS would be subject to AIATSIS protocols. Access to and use of the recording, transcript and summaries, if held at ANU after the 5 year required storage period, would only be with your consent.
- Please see the **Consent Form**.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For more information or queries please contact: Jennifer Newsome +61 2 6125 5700 (ANU School of Music office) jennifer.newsome@anu.edu.au or PhD Principal Supervisor: Dr. Kim Cunio (Director, ANU School of Music) +61-2-6125-1386 kim.cunio@anu.edu.au
- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you experience distress at any time during the research, please contact me. I will be able to refer you to a counselling or other health service if you wish. Or you can contact:
 - ANU Counselling Service (available only to ANU staff and students): +61 2 6178 0455 or (counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)
 - Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah ACT 2604. (02) 6284 6222 or (<https://www.winnunga.org.au/>)
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14

Ethics Committee Clearance: The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/956). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Appendix Q:
Interview Consent Form

WRITTEN CONSENT: Interview Participants

Project Title: *Addressing the priorities and requirements of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities in engaging with the Australian tertiary music education system*

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project (listed here:

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project. YES ☐ NO

☐

I agree to this interview being audio or audio-visually recorded YES ☐ NO

☐

I understand that there is a risk of third-party identification in the recording and in the transcript and summaries of the interview.

YES ☐

I understand that because of the co-design nature of the research, if I withdraw from the research, it may not be possible to eliminate all data associated with my involvement in the research.

YES ☐

I understand that I will have an opportunity prior to and after the interview to discuss and elect what I would like done with the recordings, transcript and summaries of my interview.

YES ☐

I understand that if I do not elect otherwise (as above) the following will apply:

- a) The audio or audio-visual recording and transcript or summary of my interview will be archived indefinitely at AIATSIS (with my name and current contact details attached), and classified as **Closed**, meaning that no-one will be permitted to access or

use it without my permission and then only under the conditions that I determine. I would be able to change this later on if I wished.

b) In the event that I cannot be contacted (e.g. due to change of address) or cannot provide consent (due to illness, injury or death), the recording and transcript or summary of my interview will remain permanently classified as **Closed**.

c) The recording, transcript and summaries held at the ANU will be stored for a period of 5 years after all publications arising from the research and then deleted.

YES ☐

I agree to being quoted in the research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters).

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to be identified in the following way within the research outputs (summary of results report, PhD thesis, conference papers and other public presentations, peer reviewed articles, book chapters):

By my name YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, the name I wish used: _____

Pseudonym YES ☐ NO ☐

No attribution YES ☐ NO ☐

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Appendix R:
Interview Topics and Questions
Jennifer Newsome – PhD Project
Possible Interview Topics/Questions

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/PROMPTS

Overarching Research Question: What should Australian tertiary music institutions be doing for First Nations Peoples and communities?
Reflecting on your own experience what do you think should be happening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in our tertiary music institutions?
In your opinion what works? What doesn't work?
What should be done? What needs to change? What needs to be done differently?
How could things be better?
What are the key things that need to change? What practical changes could institutions make?
What's the vision? What would "best" look like? What would be an ideal outcome?
What would an excellent program look like?
How can music institutions engage better? Be more inclusive? Improve access?
What can music institutions do to be more supportive of First Nations musicians and music, and/or cultural and community priorities?
What outcomes do First Nations people want from these institutions? What are the aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians? How can music institutions best address these aspirations and goals?

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS

Values and Principles:

What key values or principles should underpin the work of tertiary music institutions in the First Nations space? Are any of these non-negotiable?

Priorities:

What are the most important things that tertiary music institutions should be doing for First Nations Peoples and communities?

Aspirations and goals:

What would the aspirations and goals of First Nations musicians be in considering tertiary music education? What do they want to achieve? How can tertiary music institutions help First Nations musicians achieve their aspirations and goals?

Outcomes: What outcomes do First Nations musicians expect and want from tertiary music institutions?

Support for First Nations musicians/students: How can tertiary music institutions support First Nations musicians/students to achieve their goals and dreams?

Ideal music program:

What would your ideal dream music program for First Nations People look like?

Access and inclusion:

How can tertiary music institutions be more accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students? What can music institutions do to be more inclusive?

Teaching and learning programs:

What sorts of teaching and learning programs should tertiary music institutions have for First Nations musicians?

Staffing: What are your views on First Nations staffing in tertiary music institutions (e.g. roles, criteria for appointment etc.)?

Support for music and culture:

How could tertiary music institutions provide more support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture?

Research priorities:

What sorts of research projects should tertiary music institutions prioritise in the First Nations space?

Institutional environments, spaces and places:

What sorts of environments, spaces and places should tertiary music institutions provide for First Nations Peoples?

Excellent programs:

Have you seen or experienced any excellent programs for First Nations People (either here or overseas) that you would like to recommend?

Appendix S:
Survey Opinions Thematic Analysis

Survey Questionnaire
Open-ended Questions Thematic Analysis
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NOTE: Themes and subthemes are interconnected.
FN = First Nations NN = Non-negotiable

Theme 1: Rights and social justice

Subtheme 1: Recognition and respect

Subtheme 2: Principles and values

Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

Subtheme 1: Health and well-being

Subtheme 2: Connections and connecting

Theme 3: Facilitating access

Subtheme 1: Spaces and places

Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

Subtheme 1: Facilitating participation and success

Subtheme 2: Supporting students

Subtheme 3: Aspirations, goals, and outcomes

Theme 1: Rights and social justice

This theme highlights support for Indigenous rights and social justice as essential to improving outcomes for First Nations' people and communities in the tertiary music education system and identifies ways in which tertiary music institutions can support Indigenous rights and social justice. This encompasses:

Supporting and advocating for Indigenous rights, Indigenous self-determination, and educational and cultural rights; supporting freedom of expression (NN); acknowledging FN status and identity (NN); ensuring FN representation at all levels; ensuring FN leadership (NN) and including FN people in leadership roles (i.e. department heads, deans etc.); supporting FN-led initiatives; ensuring equal opportunity and non-discrimination (NN); ensuring equal access to education, resources and opportunity; supporting equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives; supporting FN gender equity; investing in and diverting more resources to FN music programs and engagement; providing funding and resources to FN musicians, community and lecturers; and dealing with racism.

Subtheme 1: Recognition and respect

This subtheme highlights recognition and respect as essential to improving outcomes for First Nations people and communities in the tertiary music education system and identifies ways in which tertiary music education institutions can demonstrate recognition and respect. This encompasses:

Recognising and respecting FN cultural protocols; FN identity and FN diversity; FN people's knowledge, expertise and experience, and the roles, value and contributions of FN people (NN); FN cultures, community, and customs; FN knowledges, and ways of knowing, doing, being, sharing, teaching, learning, and expressing (NN); FN creative and cultural processes; and the diversity of FN backgrounds, histories, traditions, lived experience, and forms of artistic expression (NN); listening and being

understood, being welcomed and embraced; consulting and collaborating (NN); supporting FN programs and priorities; supporting cultural inclusivity (NN) and intercultural sharing; recognising the ongoing effects of colonisation (NN); ensuring cultural awareness within institutions that is ongoing and goes beyond basic understandings; and implementing ongoing institutional self-reflection, learning, and improvement.

Subtheme 2: Principles and values

This theme highlights principles and values essential or important to First Nations people in the work of the tertiary music education institutions.¹ This encompasses: Adhering to the principle of First Nations first; acknowledging custodianship of Land; having an understanding of FN protocols, customs and backgrounds; Yindyamarra (Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri) – respect and honouring – kindness and graciousness (NN); winnangaay (Ngunnawal) – look, listen and learn (NN); naraganawali (Ngunnawal) – well-being, being well together (NN); being transparent; having cultural sensitivity, honesty, integrity, and respect (NN); and facilitating family oriented group relationship building (NN).

Theme 2: Culturally inclusive and responsive practice

This theme highlights the critical role of culturally inclusive and responsive practice in responding effectively to the priorities and requirements of FN people in the tertiary music education system and identifies a range of effective practices. These encompass: Celebrating blak excellence; valuing the unique cultural perspectives of FN musicians; understanding and valuing FN cultural knowledges and ways of knowing, learning and being (NN) reflecting the diverse musical traditions of FN people (NN) and incorporating diverse techniques and artists; having the opportunity to learn within a FN cultural context; creating programs outside of “Western standards” and validating music experience through new program design; having FN culture at the core of policies and programs, run by FN people. Ngarrama – deconstructing colonial lesson patterns and unpacking and decolonising rigid institutional expectations and administrative systems; building programs around FN people; implementing a culturally responsive curriculum that caters to the unique needs and aspirations of FN students, incorporating FN culture, music, history, musical traditions and practices, language, song, dance, techniques, instruments – traditional and contemporary; having culturally responsive teaching and support; recognising that the marriage between song, dance and language plays a pivotal role in FNs culture and customs; connecting students to their heritage and having an emphasis on students’ own individual culture and language – creating a special and unique place for musical creativity and expression; providing a holistic education that recognises the interconnectedness of FN knowledge systems; and connecting with and learning and performing on Country. Recognising the knowledge of Elders and senior musicians and involving traditional custodians and employing FN musicians and support staff; employing FN staff with cultural expertise and experience; understanding that FN students walk in two worlds; recognising the healing role of music for FN musicians; creating Indigenous music archives and make them accessible; and supporting through research.

Subtheme 1: Health and well-being

This theme highlights the importance of support for the health and well-being of FN people in the work of the tertiary music education system and identifies ways in which tertiary music education institutions can contribute to this. This encompasses: Ensuring cultural safety (NN) and understanding what this really means; providing culturally safe and inclusive environments where FN students feel welcomed,

¹ Almost a third of Survey participants identifying certain principles and values as non-negotiable (NN), some of which are included under other themes/subthemes.

understood, respected, encouraged, empowered, and supported, and have the opportunity to achieve and thrive; having programs focussed on healing, cultural connection, expressing culture, sharing knowledge, language and stories, and being creative; learning about mental health in the music industry; having professional FN musicians, teachers and mentors; and treating FN staff with respect and cultural safety.

Subtheme 2: Connections and connecting

This theme highlights the important role of connections and connecting in responding effectively to the priorities, requirements and needs of FN people in the tertiary music education system and identifies ways in which tertiary music education institutions can facilitate these. This encompasses:

Connection to Land, Country, culture and heritage; engagement and connection with FN communities, culture and customs; connection with local mob; engaging, consulting, and developing working partnerships and research with FN Elders, communities, organisations and artists; working with FN people in the local region, town or city; supporting FN community programs; and working with schools.

Providing opportunities for creating on Country in authentic ways of cultural sharing and exchange; opportunities for FN musicians to work with musicians from many fields and backgrounds; opportunities for FN students to learn with other FN artists and build relationships; connecting FN musicians, students, Elders and community members; facilitating music industry network links and career development; supporting connections, collaboration, cultural exchange, and cross learning; and opportunities for non-FN people to engage with and learn from FN people.

Theme 3: Facilitating access

This theme highlights access and opportunities for FN people in the tertiary music education system and identifies ways in which tertiary music education institutions can facilitate access and provide opportunities. This encompasses:

Providing opportunities for mob that do not have opportunities to be in those spaces; addressing barriers to access and equity, including financial constraints, geographic isolation, and limited resources; supporting access for regional and remote students; providing information on what is available (including through advertising and promotion), and how it can benefit FN students; being more inclusive and accommodating the aspirations and goals of FN musicians; having flexible intake policies and programs, and providing alternative pathways and entry systems (not just ATAR or HSC); having no formal training entry requirements and providing course credit for prior study and experience; providing support for students who do not have a formal music education (e.g. in music theory); providing support for access and applications, with flexible timelines.

Providing opportunities and genuine pathways leading to qualifications; having accessible learning environments and opportunities, and flexible options, including on campus and distance learning options, multiple exit streams, micro credentials, small online courses, intensives, accelerated programs; implementing targeted outreach, and supporting community and school-based programs and projects; offering free programs; and offering a FN degree.

Subtheme 1: Spaces and places

This theme highlights “spaces and places” for FN people in the tertiary music education system and identifies approaches to implementing these in tertiary music education institutions. This encompasses:

Developing a culturally appropriate definition of FN space (NN); creating a space and a supportive environment for FN students; having dedicated spaces for mob (degrees, admission spaces); students to be FN (NN); FN spaces to be controlled by FN people, including FN voices (NN), and being inclusive of cultural diversity (NN); ensuring transparency with respect to benefits and methods in the design of FN spaces (NN);

FN spaces to have positive outcomes for students and all FN Australians (NN); and spaces to be non-tokenistic and places for two-way learning (NN).

Having inclusive, welcoming, empowering, family-oriented, supportive, physically safe, culturally affirming, rich, culturally safe places for creation and expression; having “on Country” learning; having free spaces, access to facilities and support (e.g. recording studios/producers), a physical space for gathering, and dedicated performance spaces and venues to showcase FN music; and maintaining support for and expanding existing FN programs.

Examples of excellence cited by Survey participants were:

Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers Program (ANU) – two-year part-time composer development program connected to the classical sector; Space to Create – one-week intensive skills development in song writing and recording; CASM (Adelaide University) – foundation program, three level courses and multiple levels and entry and exit points, opportunity to learn Pitjantjatjara and Torres Strait Islander music and transition to further education; Bangarra; Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre – Leadership Program; Kennel and Co. – three-day music workshop; Abmusic Corporation; and WAAPA – FN acting program.

Theme 4: Priorities in teaching and learning

This theme identifies priorities in teaching and learning for FN people in the tertiary music education system, and ways in which tertiary music institutions can support these. This encompasses:

Gaining knowledge, skills and tools, the same priorities as everyone else; facilitating everything relevant to the student’s aims, goals, and dreams, and necessary for succeeding in their chosen career; supporting career development and having a focus on the individual artist and their career readiness; expanding knowledge, building capacity and confidence; having teachers that help students to achieve their goals and aspirations; nurturing student vision and creativity, helping students to gain an understanding of themselves as an artist, and exploring artistic voice and vision; having programs in FN music that take into full account the student’s music and linguistic skills and heritage, and prior music learning and experience and achievements; and recognising cultural understanding as different for each individual, and as needing to be led by the individual (NN).

Having non-tokenistic FN employment, and FN roles that commit to long term engagement; employing high profile FN artists and industry specialists as lecturers, and FN people in cultural support roles; involving Elders and culture owners in teaching and support, including in teaching “traditional” music; learning from non-FN people, experiencing mainstream, seeing how others work, and being able to progress into the mainstream.

Implementing a holistic cultural approach to music; having a curriculum inclusive of FN music, dance, song, language, art (NN), instruments, techniques, artists, and ensuring diverse representation; prioritising FN music, “traditional” and contemporary, incorporating language and knowledge (as authentic as possible) and drawing on FN ontologies and epistemologies; having an opportunity to learn “traditional” music alongside contemporary studies in Western and other music styles; having a focus on maintenance and transmission of “traditional” FN music; learning about FN music history, Black history, and achievements; learning FN music from across the world; gaining access to and a better understanding of one’s own family history, culture, stories, and song lines; and having research development opportunities, with options for students to complete research on the music, culture and language of their own choice, and specialising in their own heritage music and language.

Having autonomy over how music is learned; having FN students learning together; facilitating collaboration between FN students, staff and students; having a mixture of cultural and community education; learning “on Country” and from remote communities;

implementing “traditional” FN approaches to teaching and learning; having less classroom, more outdoors; incorporating multiple ways of learning and expressing, embedded in cultural practice, and not focussed on Western systems (NN); having opportunities for cultural immersion; having flexibility and adaptability in teaching; having one-on-one learning and small classes, allowing tailored education for each student; walking alongside students and performing together; promoting cross-cultural learning and mutual respect.

Learning the foundations of music, how to read and write music, music theory, songwriting, practical group lessons, performing, recording, and how to play musical instruments; developing critical thinking skills; offering “Western music” industry-based programs with lots of practical and project-based outcomes; providing opportunities for using resources, such as studio time, and working with musicians from different fields; having opportunities to gain an understanding and experience of the music industry, including real world industry learning and application, and how to implement learning in the real world; songwriting and creation of original material; performing and recording, and notation, publishing, and distribution of FN repertoire; providing access to and ensuring availability of FN library resources; showcasing student talents and their development, on campus and in community; facilitating student involvement in local, national and international global events and exchange; providing free education on songwriting and recording; and having a FN degree program.

Subtheme 1: Facilitating participation and success

This theme identifies ways in which tertiary music institutions can facilitate the participation and success of FN students in the tertiary music education system. This encompasses:

Providing access to opportunities and the full range of tertiary music courses; providing programs that cater to all styles and levels; having a learning environment that champions FN ways of knowing, expressing and sharing, is respectful, supportive, encouraging, nurturing, enriching, and empowering, and where the unique perspectives, capacities and contributions, and achievements of FN people are recognised; having ongoing and meaningful support; understanding that holding space for FN students doesn’t necessarily mean changing courses; and accepting that FN musicians and students can work at the highest levels of the Western classical environment without being relegated to the “Indigenous space”.

Providing a range of options – foundation, certificates, diplomas, degrees, short courses (with credit), workshops, and project-based study options (albums, tours, staging, releasing etc.); offering programs that are music industry and cultural performing arts industry connected; and offering a bachelor degree specialising in FN music.

Connecting with students, having empathy, demonstrating understanding of the individual’s life experience, and having patience; supporting students’ dreams and aspirations; listening and assessing what each person needs on an individual basis and providing customised learning paths; helping students to know how a program could make a difference to their music making; providing assistance with writing music and telling important stories; and providing support for career building.

Allowing for alternative styles of learning, and adapting programs and teaching styles to be more flexible; supporting students to understand their own learning ability and style; recognising that academic language may be superfluous and discouraging; recognising FN cultural transmission practices (music, art, dance, language, talking, listening); providing opportunities for sharing, but with a focus on FN; and accommodating family responsibilities and cultural obligations.

Having a strong community network as a foundation, and young mob nurtured by older mob; learning with other FN people; providing mentoring and tutoring by senior

people, and FN people with lived experience, especially FN artists, Elders and knowledge holders, and in partnership with non-Aboriginal staff; having multiple FN teachers/staff; having diverse educator backgrounds; having staff with an affinity for and experience of FN music and people; and providing staff training.

Subtheme 2: Supporting students

This theme identifies ways in which tertiary music education institutions can support FN music students. This encompasses:

Implementing holistic approaches to learning and teaching; providing guidance and support (NN), and informative advice; being understanding, flexible, and accommodating FN student backgrounds and needs; recognising racism within our lives and the load in managing that; facilitating connections with other students and support networks; facilitating self-care when using creativity to share stories and emotions; providing mentoring and tutoring; being proactive across the full range of needs – academic, career, food, accommodation, financial, health and well-being, and pastoral/cultural care; providing access to instructors outside the traditional European model; providing reading, writing and language support; providing access to FN liaison workers and onsite access to counselling; and providing full time access to mentors and health support workers.

Ensuring staff are the right person for the job, are culturally sensitive, committed to the development of FN musicians, passionate about nurturing FN music and musicians, and know how to support FN students; providing mentoring by FN cultural Elders, established artists, and FN course advisors; counselling staff about racism; and ensuring support is not subject to racism by staff; and facilitating an “assertive” Indigenous Support Unit that has a close relationship with the music institution.

Subtheme 3: Aspirations, goals, and outcomes

This theme identifies aspirations, goals and outcomes important to FN people in considering undertaking tertiary music study. These encompass:

Having outcomes designed by mob; having outcomes centred around cultural connection, sharing, positive educational experiences, bridging the gap, cultural safety, and having FN staff criteria around outcomes desired by students, mob and community; having study that makes a difference for the student; having study that supports empowerment, and the development of Indigenous leadership; learning to be a leader; being able to use the platform as musicians to advocate for FN rights, raise awareness of FN issues, and increase representation of FN music and culture in the broader society; and being seen as an inspiration for other FN people to pursue their dreams.

Becoming a professional musician and gaining an understanding of what that can look like and what is involved; gaining qualifications and experience to secure professional opportunities; having a pathway to a long-term career in music that is valued and financially viable; gaining lived and industry experience, and connections to the music industry and wider FN performing arts; gaining performance opportunities, paid industry work, and financial security; having job opportunities and being able to have more of a mainstream presence in a Western world; and developing skills to go into the mainstream.

Soaking up opportunity and leaning into individual strengths and skills; developing musicianship and confidence; strengthening links to culture; learning about FN culture and language; learning about Country, one’s people and ones’ own cultural heritage and music traditions to help preserve and pass on; learning to research one’s own culture’s music history and knowledges; helping to revive threatened language and culture; being able to represent culture and self and express creativity; making music

that means something, and to fulfil cultural responsibility; sharing stories, experiences, sorrows, joys and hopes through music; supporting development and dissemination of FN music resources and repertoire; gaining an education for living as a responsible FN person who cares for Country and takes part in community activities; developing community service skills, and the ability to implement community projects and teach in our own FN communities; and contributing to improving the overall well-being of FN people.

Appendix T:
Interview 1 – Main Points Thematic Summary
Jennifer Newsome PhD Research Project

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Interview 1 – Main Points Summary

De-identified and thematically organised

The interviewee wished to emphasise that they were not speaking for the community: “I’m speaking from my own experience ... I’m not saying this is what community has to do or should do or would do ... if there’s any value in our discussions that will help that initial contact with community and bringing forth the better results, that’s what we’re about”.

Values and principles

- Values are important. And it is important to consider how things can benefit people.
- If a job’s worth doing its worth doing properly – to get the best results. This is about values and principles – integrity – preparation – not wasting money, time and effort.
- Sincere effort and hard work are therefore important to producing good results.
- How language is used and how people communicate is important too – this should always be respectful and based in a sense of doing things together – where people feel they are a part of the project –being inclusive and collaborating together – then people will come up with suggestions, and this will bring out the best results.
- White ‘spaces’ should not impose solutions – and decision making should be in the hands of First Nations People.
- In considering priorities – “the value of the product, you know is good, but what’s the cost?” It is necessary to consider “costs” – in terms of human intelligence, finances and resources – you need equipment like the SoM has – this is necessary to bring out the best results.

Engagement

- Number one is that the university should go out into the community, engage with the community, and support the priorities of the community.
- This is a practice that has been adopted by the ANU School of Music (SoM), one which is appreciated and should continue.
- People coming from the community to the university is also important.
- Knowing that people at the university are understanding is appreciated – that people want to hear from you, as well as you learning from them – so it’s something that’s a “two-way street” for all involved.
- Invitations for people to come to the university are also important – the university is a comfortable place and has a lot of equipment and expertise (including for recording) that is not readily available in communities.
- It is also valuable when universities apply their skills and “know how” to help develop “in community” projects – and it is important that there are also the resources to be able to follow through with any recommended changes and/or plans.

- The approach taken to “perfection” is also appreciated. This level of expertise can provide support both in the university and out in the community.
- It is appreciated when the university takes its resources and expertise out into the community.
- It is also appreciated when people from the university make a contribution to a particular issue that has been raised.
- It is good to invite people to the ANU. It is also important that the university provides funds to bring people to the university – as it is in “advancing any cause”.

Outcomes

- This is about “value of the product” we’re dealing with – in this case “it’s music – beautiful music – from the School of Music”.
- Modern equipment these days (i.e. music recording equipment) provides a means for preserving “the product” – one that didn’t exist before – and this provides the opportunity to go over things until it “fits, hand and glove with what we’re about”. This is appreciated at the ANU because “we sit together and we talk together and we do these things in a way that the best results comes out”.
- Budgets are a big issue – if your budget doesn’t allow you to do certain things you just can’t do them – however, there are ways and means around that too.
- Expenditure needs to be properly budgeted and directed towards producing results. It needs to demonstrate “value for money” and ensure that available money goes to the right area, is spent properly, and brings about the results that we require.

Access and inclusion

- Both inclusivity and access are important.
- Programs need to be more inclusive – including of First Nations musicians who might not have finished their final year of school – who might not know how to read and write music – or read and write very well. People should not have to “change” in order to benefit from what university-based music programs can offer. And universities can use the gifts and talents of the people they already have to help achieve this.

Diversity

- Being inclusive of diversity is also an important consideration.
- This means recognising the diversity of languages, cultural traditions, places where people live – including rural and remote – educational background, music background, age, family and community responsibilities and so on.
- And also the needs of students coming to the university – including those who might not have a ‘mainstream’ education or formal music education background – and who otherwise would not be able to get into study programs and benefit from what they have to offer.

Teaching and Learning Programs

- It is also important to consider the needs of people who might wish to stay in their communities for whatever reason but who would like to benefit from university music programs. In fact – there’s a “compulsion – we must do something about it”. This might

include for example designing programs that could be delivered “in community” – potentially using modern technologies – and working for example with young people – helping them to develop their skills and knowledges and put on music performances – these sorts of things. This is what needs to happen.

- As far as “in community” work is concerned (including “in community” delivery of education programs) – it is important for an assessment to be made first about what is needed – examining the issue at hand first – and then planning accordingly. You can’t just go out and do things – you need to first go and examine what the issue is, what is needed, and how things could best be done, and who the best suited people are to do that work.
- In considering what the university could do for the interviewee’s community, a question would be “If there was to be a very special program for Aboriginal input, what would the cost be? And could the university sustain that sort of idea, because when you’re learning, you’re in a classroom that’s not divided, you know, you’re not black and white ... you’re not Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, you’re all one, learning the same things, you’re learning for your quality of life in the future ... so I’d have to say that if you had a separate class for Aboriginal people, what would the cost be? Is it sustainable? Is it desirable to have a – and it might already exist – I don’t know?”
- Referring again to targeted programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people “It’s an economy. Is the economy geared to carry the weight of that separatism – as it were – to fit the culture of the person? I’m not sure about that – I think it does come down to pounds, shillings and pence – it does come down to money in everything you do really”.
- However, if there were enough money, then it would be a priority to have targeted programs specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The interviewee explained that if there were a combined class of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people they would teach the whole class the Aboriginal way, and another class would be the English-Anglo way, so that you would not be separating the students but trying to give them an understanding – about Aboriginal people – where they would be taking in “the best results” and you would be trying to teach the “best product”. That way the student who doesn’t know Aboriginal people would develop a better understanding of Indigenous people. And so, it would be practical and better if we were to teach everyone the same “product”.
- However, in teaching Indigenous culture to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the same classroom – you would not necessarily spend a full three hours on a particular topic – you would “piece-meal it” to make it more digestible.

Student Support

- We need to be thinking and talking about how we can improve programs – so that we succeed. It shouldn’t just be left to “trial and error” – we want to get the best we can in the time that we have with our students.
- There may be some specific things that are needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students – things that are particular to their interests and needs.
- So, a mix of program options might be useful – mainstream and targeted.
- In the case of targeted programs for Indigenous students – that is, cultural programs to help develop Indigenous music and teach Indigenous music cultures – you would have an Indigenous teacher. There would be much more response from the students if there were an Indigenous teacher.

- The teacher would be saying “well that’s the way *we* do things” – rather than “that’s the way *they* do things”. That way you’d be identifying with the issues. It’s about supporting Indigenous students and an Indigenous cultural world view.
- We need to consider the “humanness” of our programs.

Staffing and Employment

- It is important to employ Aboriginal and Torres Islander people – including Elders – people who have expertise and knowledge – who understand Indigenous culture – because “the capability of the teacher is the product” for the student. This way students can get the best results out of their education.
- It is important to think about how Aboriginal people can be supported in the education system to gain the benefits of education, whilst at the same time not losing focus on culture. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lecturers can bring values and culture into the university – including ‘traditional’ cultures. This is a priority for Aboriginal people, and also for Torres Strait Islander people, who as Island people have a different cultural identity.
- The qualification for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in universities is that they are Aboriginal – people who have qualifications in the Aboriginal world. People should not necessarily have to be able to speak English well or be able to read and write well or have a formal qualification.
- However, the person you employ should be a “mature” person. It should be clear that they have “lived a life” and have things to teach young people. And they should not be employed simply because they are Aboriginal. They should have wisdom and life experience; they should have been through “the trials and errors of life”. This would produce the best “product”.
- In thinking about the vision for Indigenous music programs – when assessing someone for a position you should carefully gauge their capabilities and suitability for the position and role – and their maturity – being careful to avoid employing the wrong people – but without insulting people.
- Employing the right people to work in these kinds of complex cultural environments is “imperative” for the students. Such people might not necessarily be the ones with the “highest qualifications” – but the people who will look out for the students. This can be a matter of success or failure.
- The priority should be “to bring about the best results”.

Support for Culture

- There are two main Aboriginal musical instruments the gum leaf and the guitar. Aboriginal people love guitar music – “they love to hear the guitar and love to play the guitar”.
- On the question of mainstream education versus targeted programs for First Nations People to specifically support Indigenous musicians, music and music making (which could be delivered on campus, or “in community”, or both) – the interviewee observed that they had learned from very young that there were two cultures in Australia – one was Anglo-European – a type of culture that was – “it’s me, it’s me, it’s me” – in contrast with Aboriginal culture which was – “it’s us, it’s us, it’s us”. Aboriginal people had a “caring and sharing character” that a lot of non-Aboriginal people did not have, “so those two cultures were always in conflict”.

- This highlighted the idea of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music cultures as being of a collective nature and collectively important, in terms of sharing culture between/amongst First Nations People.
- In considering the question as to whether there should be special projects and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – that is, whether First Nations people should simply go into the mainstream – or whether there should be access to mainstream programs, but also other more targeted options, the interviewee explained that they had thought about this a lot – and in the past they had argued that programs should be “Aboriginalised” to take into account the “special cultural way of doing things” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – who should not have to forget about their culture, as in doing so, you would be actually “destroying our culture in the process” and “taking away [a person’s] potential to contribute”.
- And, if it were “still in their field” in a “caring and sharing way” it would be fine – but not if it were “me, I’m going to make a million dollars” ... and “never mind about you Jack, I’m OK” (i.e. emphasising collective benefit not just individual benefit).

Compiled and organised thematically – JN 31/08/2024

Appendix U:
Interview 2 – Main Points Thematic Summary

Jennifer Newsome PhD Research Project

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Interview 2 – Main Points Summary

De-identified and thematically organised

Values and principles

- Paramount is recognition and respect for Aboriginal knowledge and the power of “black knowing”.
- Also being respected, having a voice, and being heard. “We wanted the Voice in the Referendum, and they said no to that. So, the moving on – is the treaty”. This is the message in the song “Treaty”.
- Respectful and appropriate ethical behaviour in community settings and in community research is critical. This needs to place a high value on maintaining positive relationships.
- Music, dance, and art were “our ways of communicating” because we were a nation of no alphabet. Without alphabets, we don’t have documentation of history – “It’s in our song, it’s in our art, it’s in our dance”. “That’s why we dance, that’s why we paint, that’s why we run to the Aboriginal Arts Board for funding, so we can get our music on the road”.
- “In the music is the moral. In the music is the story. In the Dreamtime story is the moral. That’s who we are!”.
- Music is a universal language. Aboriginal people have their language, and their language is in the music, so their music becomes a universal language

Engagement

- “I have no idea of what opportunities are in those institutions, you know. Because I’ve been away from that education system for that long, and never, ever made any attempt to go into that institution and find out what might be available for an Aboriginal person like me”. “But now I walk in there, and its ‘Oh he’s an Elder [de-identified]. He who knows about the 70s and we need that as history’. I didn’t know I knew that much!”.
- It is very important that tertiary institutions go out into communities and do things in and for, and that are useful for communities, like recording and working with community.
- It is also important for community to come to the university – for musicians to come in and do recording and creative things like that – and for the institution to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians develop skills and gain access to the music industry.
- It is also important to engage with schools and support music outcomes in communities – such as organising music activities and performances, introducing new instruments, developing ensembles – to inspire, encourage and support young people, “strengthening their spirit” to play and create – putting “a flow of music going there”, just continuously, “something that will inspire them and change their direction”.

- It's good too when young people have an opportunity to get up on stage and perform alongside a professional Aboriginal band – this gives them confidence, and respect and support within the community too.
- It is important that engagement is inspiring and should “leave an impact” for that community.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians/music students from the university can play an important role, because they have that understanding.
- Universities need to develop long term, ongoing relationships with communities, and non-Aboriginal people need to spend time really getting to know Aboriginal people in communities – getting to know who the Elders are, who holds respect in that community, what that the habits of the people are who live there, and to understand why people behave as they do – this takes time.
- Non-Aboriginal people need to visit communities and see for themselves the real living circumstances of Aboriginal people.

Outcomes

- Important outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians are development of professional expertise and industry skills.
- Music is a “healer” with the potential for beneficial outcomes in the health and well-being area, for example, in addressing high rates of youth suicide.
- Music can also bring happiness and cheer people up where communities are full of anxiety and depression, and it can also relieve boredom in isolated communities.
- Music can also help you reminisce if you love Aboriginal history, and tertiary institutions need to understand that. It can be good for Aboriginal people “to go back, in his song, back to the Dreaming”. That's when the student and teacher are working together.
- Music can also play a positive role as a “soother” in multi-cultural contexts like universities.
- Tertiary music institutions have a role to play in supporting these outcomes

Access and inclusion

- As Aboriginal people “we needed that white man education to be called educated”, but “intellect” can also come from meeting people – Elders, other Aboriginal people – and from talking, and sharing songs, and so on. And “a few of my songs were written from reading articles and newspapers” too.
- It is important to recognise that Aboriginal people have other valuable knowledges, such as bush skills, herbal medicine, nutrition, and so on – things that are now in high demand by white people.
- And many Aboriginal people also have trade skills even though they may not have received a “tertiary trade certificate”.
- Some may see conservatoriums as being “for the jazz, the classical” not “the ones who sit around the campfire and play”.
- Opening up access and opportunities means getting to know Aboriginal people and having an understanding of their lives and interests.

- When Aboriginal people arrive at the university door, what they need to see is “the most interesting thing”, something that really “grabs that attention”. For the student who is willing to study and put the time into it, it’s got to really “grab you”. And that “interesting thing” that welcomes the student, whether they be health students, or law students, might be for example an “excursion” to a community (like Cherbourg), where they can see for themselves the situation of that community.

Diversity

- Universities should be places of cultural safety for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whatever their background.

Teaching and Learning Programs and Support for Culture

- Specialised programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are important and needed. These should not be set apart from the university environment. Aboriginal students should have access to facilities, resources, and opportunities. This could for example include experiencing new musical instruments.
- It is also important to recognise that academic language may be incomprehensible to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, so it could be useful to have separate programs at the beginning.
- Our language and our dance come from the Land. So, we need learning that also takes place on Country, “out in the bush” where it’s like “that black fellas in the Dreaming area”. Going on trips onto Country is important. This might, for example, include going on a walking trail, where students could see what they can learn from that. Aboriginal students might have a different relationship with that Country though (i.e. from non-Aboriginal students), one that is more respecting.
- Learning by experience is also important.
- Universities need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music students in gaining access to and experience in professional and industry spaces.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music students can therefore benefit from going out into the community to gain access and experience in professional and industry spaces.
- A particular problem for Indigenous musicians is the lack of Aboriginal people in sound production, management, and as agents. Training programs need to therefore support these areas.
- Having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers/lecturers is very important and can have strong impacts. Aboriginal leadership/mentorship is very important. This needs to have patience, and to be able to explain in a way where “it’s happy” and “they create a laughter thing, laughing between each other”. Otherwise, Aboriginal people will always be thinking about “that old school classroom, where if they’re not listening, they get sent down the back, or if they play, make a noise, that they have to go outside and stand outside with the door”.
- Positive results have come about where Aboriginal tertiary students have an opportunity to hear and learn from experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians, who

can “tell that story like that black storyteller”. This can support student writing and produce strong, meaningful essays.

- As Aboriginal people, “we share our language, out on the Land” but “we can’t see it in the institutions yet”. When we sing a song, no matter where we’re from, we are “using that as an opportunity to tell our story”. Whether it’s in Adelaide, in Western Australia, Northern Territory – “There’s always some band, singing in language” and that language can be melodic, like Gurrumul’s language. This use of language has brought recognition to Indigenous musicians. Universities can support this.
- Some Aboriginal students might also prefer to learn music that they hear on Aboriginal radio.
- Learning “traditional” music is also important. However, this needs to include careful explanation so that students can really understand, particularly in relation to the connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and music (e.g. in didgeridoo playing) and their relationship with the natural world (e.g. bird names and calls).
- It is important that music students also learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and music.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and literature are important in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It can be unhelpful when students are directed towards black experiences in other countries as a first option. There are plenty of relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sources and literature.
- Such literature (which could be in a section of the library) is important and should include writing by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and musicians.

Student Support

- Students want to feel that they are in the right place, that there’s a good fit.
- Having access to facilities/resources such as recording studios and instruments is very important.
- Aboriginal lecturers/mentors are very important.
- No one can tell Aboriginal people how to write their own story. Lecturers need to support students to write on their own terms and not override student intent and meaning. This means letting the First Nations student write “where it will flow out of him, or her” – in their own voice.
- Writing retreats with other Aboriginal students can be really productive and being given a quiet time to write.
- Indigenous Student Support Units are also very important in providing connection with other Aboriginal people and in helping students to feel more comfortable.

Staffing and Employment

- Aboriginal staff bring valuable cultural knowledges and understanding, history and historical perspectives, and Aboriginal ways of knowing to the learning environment.
- Teaching is a spiritual thing too, and Aboriginal lecturers can speak from experience and bring that spiritual aspect.

- Experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians might be considered “lecturer historians”.
- There is value in guest lecturing, however, this should not be like “sprinkling salt on food”.
- It is important to provide the right supports for visiting lecturers too. This should include good communication, providing opportunities to mingle and meet other Aboriginal people in the university, and connect with other people and have experiences that are “exciting”, meaningful and worthwhile. It is important that visiting lecturers do not feel like outsiders or are left to “create (their) own footsteps around the place”.
- Universities also need to consider the impacts of historic power imbalances in supporting positive relationships with Aboriginal staff.

Spaces and Places

- Institutions are “a ground”, and the campus is a campus for that open minded student, where you’re ready to “absorb whatever you read from the library, whatever references you collect, your mind is open”. “Everybody’s in that frame of mind”.
- Having facilities and resources that support Aboriginal musicians and music students are very important, such as recording facilities and musical instruments.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be in places of cultural safety.
- Having cultural spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians is needed, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can learn and gather.
- Cohorts of Aboriginal students working together with an Aboriginal lecturer can provide spaces of cultural safety.

Compiled and organised thematically – JN 26/09/2024

Appendix V: Interview 3 – Main Points Thematic Summary

Jennifer Newsome PhD Research Project

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Interview 3 – Main Points Thematic Summary

De-identified

Rights and social justice

- Self-determination is valuable across this space.
- Resourcing is a huge, huge, thing. Resourcing is a major issue as how it is and should be allocated and distributed across programming may not be in line with where there is a need.

Principles and values

Considering the most important values or principles that should underpin the work of tertiary music education institutions?

- There is a “space” between what universities would like to do and are going to do, and consultation with community. Community consultation can provide a framework for best practice and culturally safe spaces for First Nations people in institutions that are not built with these values or principles.
- There are these wonderful ideals and this wonderful belief ... “this is what we’re going to do because we’ve read the statistics, and this is where there’s a deficit”. But then there’s a “disconnect” from what community wants.
- And they see it as, and I’m not a big fan of this – “Indigenous excellence” – that idea of what is empowering and career moving, and artistically where we want to go. It’s across the sector as well. This whole shock ... “why don’t we have more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these things?”. We need to better define what we mean by Indigenous Excellence as the connotations can be aligned to First Nations people excelling in non-indigenous spaces or western spaces and western practices. There is nothing wrong with this but excellence then sits within what the West views as success. A clearer definition and possible change of what ‘Indigenous Excellence’ means or showing more diverse forms and which align more with First Nations cultural values would be a great start.
- Why are we not looking at where there is an interest, and stop thinking in terms of economics? Let’s start thinking about where mob actually want to be.

- “That’s where there’s a disconnect with universities”. They’re wanting to support and wanting to be involved, but there’s a place where it’s not connecting to the “realistic aspirations of community”. I would also add that with limited options or general options in areas that First Nations creatives might be interested in they either will not apply or apply for a course that doesn't completely fit their interests. By providing a review or audit and finding out First Nations aspirations it could lead to program and courses that First Nations people are enthusiastic to participate in.

Recognition and respect

So, you’re saying there needs to be way more consultation?

- “Yes, yes”. Tiered consultation and course and program audits/reviews.

Facilitating access

- If we’re really wanting to bring up the KPIs or the numbers of mob entering these spaces, you’ve got to think about the “entry points” as well. The process for First Nations people to access universities is slowly changing and there are more opportunities for access. However, focusing on increasing numbers exponentially is unrealistic and focuses on numbers and not outcomes. KPI’s do not reflect success.
- “It’s based on the relationship between university and secondary schools as well”.
- You can only go through this controlled rote curriculum.
- Which means that music gets completely ... music is not seen as being as economically valuable as the rest of them. Investment in music programs as a primary and secondary schooling with up to date resources and skills on how to make a career can provide a basis for young First Nations creatives and also provide realistic frameworks of how university study may support their aspirations. University then need to provide the skills that will allow them to recognise and fulfil their objectives and career aspirations.
- But because there isn’t that support, as it should be in the secondary system – how are they supposed to get into these programs? The universities have set programs and courses that can then be limiting and the expense attached is a deterrent to gain a degree in something that doesn’t really fit the First Nations person’s aspirations.

Rights and recognition

- There’s a lack of collaboration.
- Its “okay, you’re going to learn our ways, but we’re not gonna learn yours” (i.e.) the ones we’ve grown up with.
- So that musicality is not validated and that “Western construct”, which is everywhere, is the general – that’s the expectation, to succeed, and to be a part of and “assimilating” to.

First Nations musicality is often overlooked or undervalued because the dominant idea of music is based on Western traditions. This creates pressure to fit into those ways of doing things in order to succeed or be accepted in the industry, rather than making space for First Nations ways of learning, making, and sharing music.

- And I understand it's a resourcing thing ... "we just don't have enough people to support". When you've got all these incredibly talented and creative people – this big, strong mob – and you try to squeeze them into something that doesn't reflect who they are, something unnatural and unfamiliar, it creates real tension. Deep down, they're constantly being told, "this is the way you're supposed to be," because the industry follows one model. But that model doesn't fit everyone. If we keep forcing people into it, we'll lose the – many won't even want to step into places like universities. There's not options or choice. Universities may then become of no interest to First Nations creatives because of this rigidity.
- You might hear, "We want you to learn" – and that can include learning notation, how to write and compose music in a Western format, because that's the standard that's been set and expected. The problem is there's no alternative being offered. These learning models leave out cultural context and don't reflect First Nations knowledge systems, practices, or ways of making and sharing music
- This is why people say universities are archaic or not for them, because "it's our way or the highway."
- Wouldn't it be great if – okay, you're this person (and I'm talking not just for Indigenous people), you're this musician, you're this artist, you're this creative ... "do you want to learn this? Well, we also have this as an alternative which will have the exact same results". That doesn't exist, not that I know of. Alternative ways of learning should be a part of all programming and courses as we all don't learn the same way. However, as there is limited funding and resources available to initiate this type of support we have limited options.

Aspirations, goals and outcomes

Considering what an ideal or dream program would look like?

- A huge thing with studying at a university level is – "what is the objective?"
- We could get altruistic – it's for music's sake – but a lot of people are wanting to be musicians and make it a career.
- "So, looking at what the outcomes are as well, I think is really valuable".
- "Diversifying your staff is a huge one". It can't just be people with expertise in composition or a specific type of composition or orchestral. There's a huge classical influence, and jazz. Diversifying staffing within music institutions is critical. It is not

sufficient to rely solely on individuals with expertise in classical composition, orchestral traditions, or jazz – areas that continue to dominate many formal music education and professional settings. A more inclusive approach must also recognise and value contemporary music practices, including those rooted in community-based, culturally informed, and genre-diverse traditions. This broadens the scope of musical knowledge and makes space for First Nations and other underrepresented voices to thrive within systems that have historically excluded them.

- In my opinion, jazz and classical music in Australia are often rooted in privilege and come from a very different world than mob in community – who are picking up a guitar, singing, learning language, and expressing culture through music in their own ways. Both approaches to music are valuable and important, but only one tends to be elevated and legitimised within university and institutional settings. This imbalance overlooks the richness and significance of First Nations contemporary and cultural music practices.
- “There needs to be an alternative, and there needs to be a kind of celebration in highlighting why this type of learning is actually as valuable and will also get you to where you need to go as much as learning composition”.
- All these different ideas and ways of learning are valuable and must be respected – because if they’re not, people will feel that these spaces aren’t meant for them, and they’ll disengage.
- So – “diversifying your staff and having people from all different creative backgrounds who are able to provide a well-rounded vision of musicality”.

Priorities in teaching and learning

Considering the idea then of professional and industry integrated university programs, and learning in real-world environments, mentored by industry and professional people?

- “Yeah well, that’s how it should be, because it provides the student with a complete understanding of the industry”. And that helps them to make a more educated decision about their career.
- Partnerships, collaborations, and strong networks are absolutely key – they form the foundation of everything students will do as they move through their careers. Embedding these elements into university programs, especially through real-world, industry-integrated learning and mentorship from professionals, helps students develop not only their creative practice but also essential skills like negotiation, business acumen, and strategic thinking. It’s about taking a holistic approach to education – one that values relationship-building and cultural context just as much as technical expertise.

- If we're talking about how to increase the capacity of First Nations people in these spaces "let's talk to mob". What do you want to do? What kind of music do you like?
- And if there's a deficit or a gap in the type of music that mob want, than what is available, well then, we have an issue.

Considering the idea of employing First Nations practitioners who know the space well and can ask the right questions and provide the right sort of environment and guidance?

- "Oh yes". "I completely agree, I think you need people who've had that lived experience in those spaces. It also pays respect to those careers".
- I'm not entirely sure how contemporary music is positioned within the university sector. I understand there are programs in areas like sound engineering, production, and digital or electronic music, which are growing and influential fields. However, universities need to shift their spaces which have previously been places of privilege – places that feel exclusionary or disconnected from their lived experiences and cultural identities.

Spaces and places

Considering whether there should be spaces and places in universities specifically directed towards supporting First Nations musicians (e.g. recording studios, teaching and learning spaces)?

- There's the Yil Lull Studios at ANU with Will Kepa, which is amazing – and that's become a national program.
- Eora is such a great space. Back in the '90s it had non-indigenous people, but it was predominantly mob. "And it was community. And I think that's where we feel safe. That's what we want ... and I think it's really important that those spaces exist, and that ... we create a community in those spaces. And I don't think that's solely a First Nations only thing."

Rights and social justice

Considering resourcing First Nations environments?

- This is essential but should happen after there is a thorough review/audit and consultation process with First Nations people on what they want to see and where best to facilitate that. These should be First Nations led.
- If investment is to be made, it must be meaningful and strategic. I've observed numerous programs where funding appeared to be allocated primarily for optics – initiatives that felt performative, lacked substance, and ultimately failed to create real pathways for

progression. These efforts did not result in tangible outcomes, such as students advancing to the next stage of their development or career.

Examples of excellence

Considering examples of excellent First Nations programs?

- Eora Centre had great programs. It celebrated the alternatives, the creatives that wanted to just play and hone their skills with like-minded people who lived and breathed music. And it was facilitated by people who were musicians, teachers that were all working musicians. They all had their education, background, and knowledge. Everything we did was connected to real world scenarios, solutions, and history. It was never forced. It was laid back – and it took time – and I think that was the value of it. And it was very diverse – different age groups. It was not just mob – but collaboratively we got opportunities. The facilitators in that kind of relationship were very collaborative as well – it wasn't the teacher above the student. It just gave us space and an opportunity to figure out who we were as well, as artists and musicians, and what we actually enjoyed learning. And we had lots of teachers as well – we were really fortunate to have that, as such a small little space.

Considering the idea that the Eora Centre programs and experience was built around the students, rather than being imposed, and that the students had agency?

- Absolutely – that was one of the strongest aspects of the Eora Centre's approach. The programs were genuinely student-centred, which made a significant difference. Classes were small, and there was a strong emphasis on one-on-one learning, which was incredibly valuable. This individualised support is especially important for students who may still be finding their place in the space – who might feel uncertain or overwhelmed. Creating an environment where students have agency and feel seen can make all the difference in their confidence and engagement.
- “Having that one-on-one support, or even two-on-two, means that they're less embarrassed, and more likely to ask questions than in a larger space”.
- But creating a space that everybody can feel comfortable in – I think that takes time.
- It was personalised ... and there was always an opportunity to talk to staff as well.
- I should also acknowledge that this was at a time when the internet was very new, live performance was the only thing available, there was no streaming, no YouTube. It's a different world now, but those things that underpin music relationships, they still exist.
- Artists and creatives will also need to interact with these different spaces, based on technical and IT literacies as well.

Priorities in teaching and learning

Considering the idea of a curriculum which includes learning to perform and engagement with First Nations music and culture?

- “Yeah, absolutely”. Just giving context – “when I was in school and we had history, the history of First Nations people was ... from the colonial (perspective)”.
- “Music wise, traditional music is important ... but we’ve got 50–60 years of First Nations artists, that’ve been playing, didn’t go to uni ... were playing at different parts of history, and were being informed by historical events. That is valuable! From No Fixed Address in the 70s ...”.
- “If we’re going to talk about First Nations music or musicians ... I think it should be about a timeline of changes ... and then how it has been informed by society, environment, community, history, events, because that’s how we see that music, and I think that’s valuable for every musician”.
- (For example) The Beatles changed because of the events that were happening around them, and they in turn affected those events.

Considering whether it would be useful to have learning of “traditional” music in a First Nations program?

- “Absolutely”. It has real value and “it’s so important”.
- (For example) The Sapphires were “informed by their love of something else, also a reflection of being black at that time. That is a First Nation’s story. That’s First Nations music. Because it’s got that history and context of that time ... and I think that’s really valuable”.

Considering support for First Nations musicians who want to create songs in language, or conduct research on their own personal cultural history, and the history of their communities and music?

- “Oh absolutely!”. They (universities) have a responsibility to support mob in any kind or aspect of their music that they want to be and do.
- Self-determination is incredibly important in these spaces. The idea that we enter these institutions only to learn other people’s ways can feel deeply disheartening. It reinforces the sense that our own knowledge, experiences, and ways of being are undervalued or irrelevant. For me, it feels like there’s no room to contribute, to fully be myself, or to have my cultural knowledge recognised as equally valid. It becomes yet another instance of having to adapt to systems that, for so long, haven’t made space for us.

Recognition and respect

Considering the need for fundamental change to bring these things about?

- “Yes, I feel honestly, there is. It’s easy to act in complacency, because one, you don’t have to fund it, you can just keep going. But for real change and real innovation, you need to listen. You need to act, and then you actually need to implement and develop that in consultation, in collaboration”.
- “And there needs to be a real input from those who have knowledge – and I’m talking about creatives. There is a difference between a musician whose whole life is performing and one who is performing and is an academic. They’re both valid, they’re both beautiful, but they both may have different world experiences”.
- “I just feel like the education needs to happen to those that work within the university sector. The onus has been on mob.”
- “I feel that there is an arrogance in the way that those structures are in place in universities ... and that they’re quite rigid. I haven’t been in the music thing, this is just my assumption at this time, but it would be valuable ... looking at it holistically”.
- And to also ask why? “Why do you want mob there? I think that’s the huge one.”
- “Let’s seriously ask ourselves, why do you want mob to go to do music at university? What is the value for them? What are you giving them that’s going to be value?
- I believe the responsibility lies with universities to critically examine their motivations for wanting greater First Nations participation. If the goal is simply to increase enrolment numbers or meet KPIs, rather than to genuinely enrich the experiences and futures of First Nations students, then that’s deeply problematic. It shifts the focus away from meaningful inclusion and self-determined outcomes, and instead reduces participation to a metric.
- If it’s about “I want to make sure that mob have access to whatever they want to do”, this is a part of it, and we want to make a welcoming system, that’s actually celebrating.

Rights and social justice

Considering the need for a paradigm shift?

- I was going to say that. It’s like – “let’s break the system down and restructure and start again, and I mean, create a whole new framework”. “I don’t think it’s a realistic thing, because as I was saying, these places, historically, are kind of slightly archaic in their framework and their structures”.
- “To have these spaces, everything needs to change. But it’s really, really hard, I understand that. So, small changes, these little changes, of curriculum, and all of those

things” – the restructuring of “the value of what’s available, in the context of today, and where are we going with this?”.

- (For example) One uni cut their education programs because they weren’t getting enough students. So instead of really understanding why they weren’t getting more students into teaching, they cut the program.
- And I worry about that with music programs – not being added value. I think people forget to look at it from an economic standpoint. “We are a major contributor to the economic landscape”.
- “But I guess I also feel it has a lot to do with who’s in charge of everything”.

Health and well-being

Considering music education and the role of music and culture in First Nations health and wellbeing?

- “It’s like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs ... and everything you need to be a fully functioning, healthy person”.
- “And we need to look at that again because arts and music ... I don’t know what I would do without music. It saves people”.
- “But when the powers that be in these institutions don’t really have an understanding of the value, I think that’s probably where you kind of need to start”.

Spaces and places

- Culturally safe spaces are going to be really valuable as well.

On the need to define what is meant by cultural safety, and what that looks like?

- “I think that’s a huge part of it.”

Draft summary and thematic organisation – JN 11/01/2025

Reviewed with amendments – Interviewee 6/05/2025

Approved by interviewee 15/08/2015

Appendix W:
Workshop 1 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group
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Workshop 1-Summary of Main Points of Discussion

- The project is definitely needed as there are still some problems in the university context that need addressing.
- The impacts of discrimination and racism can prevent people from “having a proper go”.
- A situation was noted for example where a non-Indigenous assessor had commented on the lack of “Aboriginal” or “cultural elements” in a PhD proposal by a First Nations student.
- Awareness of university staff (i.e. non-Indigenous staff) about Aboriginal People is a significant issue. Many staff probably don’t come into contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and therefore wouldn’t know the kinds of things that happen, and some of the cultural protocols around grieving and Sorry Business, and things like that. It is evident that a lot of people don’t understand, including around intergenerational trauma and a lack of awareness about the Stolen Generations, and a lot of the things that took place in the past. People don’t understand the impact these things have had, even on the current generation and the also the ones coming through.
- This is something that has been observed first-hand. There is this idea of cultural awareness training as a “one stop” type of thing, that happens once and there is some sort of learning and that’s as far as it goes. But it needs to be an ongoing situation, more like a partnership, especially given that protocols change, and the fact that as people from different First Nations areas around Australia will be involved with different institutions, there will be different needs. First Nations Peoples are diverse and this doesn’t get addressed a lot when it’s just a “one stop” thing, as in, “well, we’ve done a cultural awareness training, that’s it” – and people don’t know what to do – the “how to” aspect afterwards is not addressed – people only know the ideas. A more continuous process is needed so that people can work out what to do with that information.
- There was agreement that the issue of non-Indigenous staff cultural competency should be added to the Thematic Framework.
- There’s also a really big assumption out there that Aboriginal People are very culturally aware and have “got it all together”. But there are a lot of Aboriginal People, and a lot of kids, who are finding out their heritage and who know they’re Aboriginal but don’t know anything about it. But they love music. And it’s a part of their journey of learning about music. Once they get strong in music maybe they’ll start looking into their own culture. They need to build up somewhere. Music can be a way in.
- Thinking about the aspirations and goals of First Nations People in the music space and what music institutions can do to support these – there is this idea in music institutions that you’re going to perform music and be a model of what a performer is,

without actually taking into consideration that there's a lot of introspective stuff that comes with music for a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – it's a part of who we are – it's not just about having a performance – there's an introspective aspect to it.

- This was seen as a very important point, which will be added to the Thematic Framework.
- Also, what you write about can change over time – writing music can be about things like the stories of your great grandparents for example – once you figure that out – you've got to stop writing all these love songs and chasing being a super star – and you can start writing about the meaningful things and the things that impact your everyday life – and which can come out of being stereotyped and being discriminated against just because of who you are – this is very important – because it is about the journey – about how we also develop – and our cultural knowledge as well.
- The point was made that this is so important. When you create a piece of music sometimes you don't even know why you created it, you don't know the whole meaning of it – until you keep performing it – and you keep telling other people about the story about it – and it's about the tenth time you sing it, and tell someone about the song – and then it becomes so much more meaningful for you – that's powerful – and it's about helping to create your own perspective of your story. It's the same with art works – you create them – and then you tell the story to people – and then you realise – I created this story – then you start thinking “am I telling this story – or are my ancestors working through me to tell this story?”. Because you don't even know you're saying something until you've done it, you've created a piece of music and the song, and you think “where did that come from?” – and you unearth things.
- And thinking about implications for music education – there is a cultural arts course for example where you have to develop your understanding of your own Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage as a unit that you have to pass. If that's something that's a necessity when doing cultural arts, it makes you think about why this is not a part of education when you're doing music if you're a First Nations person, when it's integral to do that in cultural arts – because music is a cultural art in that respect too.

Appendix X:

Workshop 2 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group

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Workshop 2-Summary of Main Points of Discussion

Agenda Item 6 – Addressing the Research Question

- You have to be able to see what you can be.
- ANU has a Summer School (organised through Tjabal) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10–12, where they can come and try ANU and live on campus. This doesn't currently include the School of Music. It was noted however that even when people have come for a visit, there hasn't been an opportunity to talk about who we are and what we do, which is a bit of a missed opportunity. If students can't see there's a space and a place for Aboriginal people and Aboriginal researchers here, to work on community priorities, then there's no meaning, potentially no relevance for them. So that's a missed opportunity. If there is a way for more people to be exposed to what's possible at all of the Schools, including the School of Music, this would be good. With more information, more ideas and possibilities, comes more choice.
- There has been something similar at Sydney University, which involved the Conservatorium going out to community (Dubbo) over about four days. They held some music workshops, which was fantastic. It was so good, there were singers and musicians, and they talked with a lot of people about music. It was amazing. About ten people then went to Sydney Uni the next year. This was such a good program. People have got to be able to see what you can be.
- These days people are not necessarily thinking about classical or jazz music, they're looking at what's really popular, and what's on Spotify. And there are not a lot of people actually creating music these days, which is sad. They also had opera workshops at the Conservatorium, with Deborah Cheetham, which can open people's eyes as to how they can sing. People need to be able to have those experiences.
- This ties back into how important it is for experiences to happen, to show people that they can do things, and to see that someone believes in them.
- JN So, engagement between universities and community, and what can go on in that space. Universities going out and people coming in. Different ways of opening the door.
- It's about experiences
- Both ways.
- JN So, real world experiences.
- You've got to be able to "touch it". You've got to go in there and create something together, create a little concert or something like that. So, you can have belief in yourself. It's one thing to see it happen but actually having a go and creating something simple.
- JN So, real experiences, doing tangible things?
- Definitely – hands on.
- The "Space to Create" ANU recording program is really fantastic. Meeting other artists from all over Australia. That's incredible, and things like that.

- If there was the option to go out to other places like that, or to do trips where you could get a glimpse of what it's like in the music industry – so you can see what your options are.
- Introducing young people who are really good at music and/or who love music to the opportunities and options that are available at universities by going for a visit can help them see themselves studying music, whereas previously they didn't. Once people get exposed to these spaces, and believe that they can, then they need to be brought to campuses – because this really works.
- JN So this is about access, and how people can get in the door. And, about prerequisites.
- From personal experience, considering the issue of pre-requisites, it is important that institutions recognise the interest and love that people may have in music and respond to this and provide opportunities. And then people can be softly guided into music and start to learn it. Music can then become a part of someone's life this way.
- Otherwise, there can be a big barrier. We need to find those people out there who are like that, who have always loved music, and let them know that they can do it.
- JN So, starting from where people are? And what they really love and are interested in? A different kind of paradigm? And considering also the relationship between music, culture and well-being.
- There's currently a big cohort study underway in which 12,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertake a Survey each year, which asks questions about what people do culturally that keeps their spirit strong, and that keeps them safe and well. This just upends the "deficit" discourse. It's about identifying what it is that makes us who we are, not the deficit statistics that look at what we "should be" in comparison to other people.
- Music plays a big part in connection to Country, how often we yarn with Elders, all the little things that we might take for granted. We get to tell our mob that they're the things that make the biggest difference to our well-being. Music was always in there. How people feel when they're singing mission songs for example or knowing how much language they've absorbed and taken on. And language is culture obviously, through the passing on of song, through generations, and making sure that stays alive.
- With respect to the earlier comments about missed opportunities, when we are creating more space for engagement and access, we have to also answer the "So what?" So, say you do get in the door. "So what?" Maybe you're inspired and motivated to come now, you can see what's possible. And it's not about putting weight or pressure on people to take on or tackle community priorities, but to say that, if you're passionate about that, you can build a career you love. Your work can also be what you love. And that upends everything we have been conditioned to be as Aboriginal people, always doing the shitty jobs, always just trying to keep a roof over our heads, and all that kind of stuff. So, it's very important to answer the "So what?" for people. What will that mean for you? What will that mean for your family? What are those possibilities that are within your range now – that you can choose? How do you dream, how do you identify your passion and go forth with it, earn a living with it, but also keep your spirit strong, and make a difference for peoples' spirits around you?"
- JN So this relates to curriculum too, what happens in music institutions, and how they can respond to this? What that should look like.

- The “So what?” is so important. For those people who don’t have a lot to even get to somewhere like a university in the first place, there really needs to be a very clear pathway of where you could go if you were going to do music in tertiary education.
- There’s an issue where if you tell people you’re going to do a music degree they will often say, “OK, well whatever, you’re not going to get a job, that sort of thing”. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that’s an important thing, but there also needs to be a cultural pathway too. What can you do in tertiary education that won’t just help you get a job but will also help you to find your way to where you’re going to go culturally too.
- JN So that’s a curriculum issue too – what institutions can do to support that.
- It’s still seen as a “nice to have” or a bonus. It’s not the foundation, yet. We see this where a School is asked to do a “guest lecture”. Well, that’s not enough. We want to be involved in how future doctors are assessed in what they know about working with our mob. You can’t get that from a “guest lecture”. You don’t get a sense of what you’re doing to prevent them causing any more harm to our peoples through a lack of understanding and knowledge. But that’s what we’re long overdue for now. And we’re still in this “guest lecture” phase. It’s got to be the foundation. It’s got to be part of the core for us.
- JN So this is to do with curriculum, staffing, foundations of programs of study, teaching and learning, and the sorts of programs that should be offered for First Nations people in our music institutions?
- Again, this is about meeting people where they’re at, and then presenting them with some of the case studies or some of the people who’ve gone before, and where people are at now. And also how there are always people open to have a yarn or to take on a mentoring role.
- Instead of making assumptions about what people will benefit from, it’s about the possibility. More possibility, more choice. “Here’s everything that we can facilitate for you. There’s no mandatory obligation on your part to take it all on. It’s just here, and we’ll wrap around you, on that journey”.
- With respect to the diversity issue, when we mention “cultural awareness”, any School, as a workplace, or someone teaching students, has to understand that their ignorance can be harmful, and that they can set back people’s healing journeys, and can harm people through not having an understanding of their role in trauma recovery and healing going forward. And that is meeting people where they’re at, which is a huge part of that. But it’s also about creating safety as people create and as people come together, our people that is, mob, making those decisions for themselves.
- Evidence shows that this can be done. The Healing Foundation for example has worked alongside boards of organisations and had to show them that they had a role every day. No matter who they were or what job they had, they had a role in making people feel safe and in not perpetuating any further harm and not making it someone else’s responsibility. We really can’t afford to just do the same thing over and over.
- If you’re going to be employed or make a career at ANU, then as Australia’s national university, you have a role in healing. And that includes restoring how we practise music, restoring how we create, in those ways, and supporting whatever we want to create, in those ways.

- This is visible already in pockets at the university. For example, Will Kepa and that mob are doing a great job. It's something that you can feel, when you're in their presence, when that creation and that safety for creation is made here. You feel something, you feel it. It's spiritual and its deep. That's for *our* understanding.
- But what has been most effective, working alongside leadership and boards, is just simply telling people what they can do each day to prevent further harm and contribute to somebody's healing. And actually, the first enables the second.
- JN So that is another research base which could feed into this and help guide what should be happening.
- From the perspective of a teacher and working with teachers who don't have "cultural competency" there's something to be said about how lessons are taught that could be more inclusive of different levels, and more inclusive of different backgrounds too.
- As First Nations people, we need that healing. Unfortunately, it's a part of who we are now. And so, not having things taught in a manner that considers the fact that we will all have a different healing journey and therefore have different ways of understanding what things are and how we can use them, needs to be noted as well.
- An example is the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning. There's a lot that could be implemented from that style of learning into the music curriculum. That really supports healing when it's to do with things like connecting to Country, in ways where there's Land Links and connecting to community, which could be useful too. This has been used by people (teachers) who don't necessarily have the "cultural competency", and who've seen it and use it in their classes, and see how this helps them to understand how to use the resources they have to teach better and in ways that more people can understand. Everyone can benefit from that type of learning.
- JN So that's another important resource. And this is that whole diversity issue as well. Again, starting from where people are, and then being responsive to that and considering other ways of knowing and other ways of teaching and learning.
- A lot of times in terms of experiences of studying and in teaching contexts, you do a lot of that well-being stuff and bits and pieces of the 8 Ways of Learning sort of thing, but not necessarily strategically. You don't actually say "I'm going to go and do these things, and make sure I include a couple of these 8 Ways of Learning points and how I explain pathways to learning music, but in a well-being way". We don't do that. It's usually like "Well wow we've learned music, and it does support this". It's like a secondary thought – but to actually build it with that sort of thinking in it.
- Since I have been teaching music, I tell people there's so much more that happens in this music. For example, someone starts learning to play and next minute everyone starts talking to them about it, and all this information that's been hidden and these stories start coming out. This broadens things out, and that increases people's connectivity and well-being because they're starting to develop that connection to culture and to storytelling. But it's usually as an afterthought. It would be really good to have some sort of way to look at that and be mindful to put that in. That would really connect with a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Storytelling has always been part of things, and this includes personal stories about music and musicians and so on – where everyone knows that story. And stories carry power. So, storytelling with music needs to be a really big part of it too, not just the music.

- There are all sorts of ways for people to play music, not just in the way it is “normally” taught. There are other different ways to do music too, and these need to be honoured and given their place. There’s not one way to create music. There’s one way, that’s a common way, but different ways need to be honoured too when people come in. Playing in a different way doesn’t make people worse, it’s just different. And that connects with well-being too, because it gives people strength, and pride, and the sense that this is what people have been doing and this is cool, because “it was good for us so ...”. Universities need to build on that, acknowledge it, embrace it, and let people perform like that.
- JN So, respect and honouring where people are coming from. This has implications for staffing too. People who understand this are very useful in this kind of space.
- Maybe universities could sponsor us out in the community to do some of the initial teaching work. Community musicians have some of the necessary skills for teaching foundational understanding of music theory for example etc. This can happen out in community to build foundations before people even start thinking about going to university, so that people have some basic knowledge. But it’s not “Grade 1 or Grade 2 Musicianship” etc., because that is so “Western”. In this other way you can be having fun while also teaching people.
- JN So this is about curriculum again, and access, and a more wholistic understanding about how things need to be, or need to change.
- Maybe it might be about empowering community musicians who have all this necessary knowledge, to be employed out in the community – to build such an approach.

Agenda Item 8 – For Noting *Draft Recommendations*

Jen asked for feedback on the *Draft Recommendations* from Meeting 1, which addressed the matter of non-Indigenous staff cultural competency training.

- The aim would never be to require that non-Indigenous people are “culturally competent” because “that can never be”.
- But what is possible is practising “anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and being healing informed, and being culturally responsive”, and taking on “culturally responsive practice”. If that magic wand could be waved, it would be that people need to know that their biases and discriminatory conditioning harms.
- We’re done with being resilient and strong. We want to be in spaces where our “safety” is upheld, where our cultures are celebrated, and privileged.
- And going back to that previous point, there’s not a better way of doing music, it’s just different. Our First Worlds should be restored, because we know that that makes us our resourceful selves for taking on any other world. That’s what it is hoped non-Indigenous people can grasp. But they will never be “competent”, because they’ve never been raised like us. They haven’t gone through what we’ve gone through and continue to go through.
- What is known can happen, and it can happen overnight, is that they pull themselves up and go “Alright I’m not going to be like I was conditioned to be anymore, I’m going to address my biases, and I’m going to make sure I’m not doing any further harm”.
- This is still kind of an ahead-of-the-curve type of concept really, and it shouldn’t be, but it just is. People see it as still confronting and affronting, but it’s the very least we

could ask for at this point, because enough was enough a long, long time ago, and it's always about our resilience, and no, we're not going to withstand. We're not going to be preoccupied with withstanding, because we know that we don't have the freedom then to go on and learn these other worlds. Our bodies, our resources are preoccupied with surviving in a space that's inflicting on us.

- For me this is about “anti-discrimination, anti-racism, and truth-telling”. And what people do about that, the “so what?” of that. What people can do about it. And it's taking on “healing-informed practice” and “culturally-responsive practice” every day in their jobs.
- JN suggested that perhaps this could be outlined in a Preamble to the *Recommendations* – as basic principles that should underpin all the things that happen.
- A way of not making it new or recreating the wheel is to explain that First Nations Peoples have cultural rights outlined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. So, any institution should uphold and honour those, especially Australia's national institutions. We have a right to be free to practice culture and have no one limit that.
- JN suggested that the *Recommendations* could perhaps include a statement at the beginning about the *International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and in particular some of the articles of *UNDRIP* that spell out the cultural rights of First Nations Peoples, including to self-determination. The recommendations would all then sit within the context of that. For example, the ones on staff cultural competency would not then be standalone but would be sitting in the context of this bigger picture.
- This approach was seen as a good one. It would create the context for why all of this can happen. It's not just happening because it's a nice thing to do, it's because everyone's got the right to practice their cultural rights and the university's empowering it and creating the space for this to happen.
- JN suggested that she could pick out the *UNDRIP* articles that spell out these rights, and highlight the responsibility of the institution to respond to these rights?
- There's a “win win” situation here, because universities would be positioning themselves as “empowering” this. Not in the sense of being forced to do this, but because they want to position themselves as “empowering”. And not as in helping everybody but walking *with* Aboriginal people to help create the opportunity to practice cultural rights.
- JN And to respond to those rights in an informed way.
- This “safety” is already being provided by members of the Focus Group, where your kids are free to do what they want to do in the music space because you're providing that cultural grounding for them, and that safety.
- There's a role to play for everyone. The load has to be shared now, to make sure it's going to be a good time for them going forward.
- JN This is signalling a bit of paradigm shift for institutions, isn't it?
- This is much needed and long overdue.
- JN By spelling it out and saying “What does this mean for music institutions?”
- A view was expressed in strong agreement about this. “That's exactly right! How are we as Australia going to make sure that we're not going against our rights to practise

our own culture, if we're not even going to empower each other to be able to practise our culture, in the way that we can". We should definitely add this.

- JN So, support for that from within institutions.
- What's the use of being able to practise our culture if we don't even know our culture anymore. It's been taken away from us. We might as well have it given back to us in some way.
- JN Or at least have the space to be able to explore that within institutional spaces, rather than it being seen as something that doesn't belong in institutions. So that's the responsibility side of responding to rights.
- JN thanked everyone and asked if everyone would be happy for her to come up with an encapsulation of this aspect of the discussion at the beginning of the *Recommendations*? One section on rights and the other on the expression of rights and what that means – anti-racism, anti-discrimination and so on. And asked whether this felt like the right way to handle this, at least for now?
- A view was expressed that this felt really good.
- JN So this would set the base line upon which all the *Recommendations* would then rest.
- This would be the foundation that everything could then grow from.
- JN confirmed that she would keep adding to the Thematic Framework and draw up a Preamble to the *Recommendations*. This will be a draft which can then be amended as time goes on until it's exactly how everyone would like it to look.
- Everyone agreed with this approach.

Appendix Y:
Workshop 3 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group
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Workshop 3-Summary of Main Points of Discussion

Agenda Item 4 – Recommendations *Draft Preamble*

- JN asked whether there was any feedback on the Draft Preamble.
- The Preamble looks fine. The question of the referencing notes in the document was raised.
- JN explained that these relate to the referencing of individual input drawn from the Focus Group discussions.
- It was considered best to acknowledge the Focus Group as a whole. This would keep it simple, and also denote a representative collective stance which would strengthen the statement.
- JN This would also maintain confidentiality. Jen will discuss this with the other members of the Focus Group too.
- A final statement could be included correlating the recommendations with what the university itself wants. This would connect commitments by the university with mutual benefits to both the university and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Use of wording such as “Universities *can* ...” rather than “Universities *need to* ...” would position the recommendations as helping the institution to achieve its targets.
- JN will amend the Preamble accordingly.
- Another suggestion was to include a statement referring to the overarching findings of the research.
- JN will add this to the introduction to the recommendations. This will be framed in terms of “the research found this ... etc.”
- JN will now be working on the Recommendations and asked if there are any views about the structure and tone?
- A “honey and carrots” approach is preferred, positioning the recommendations as “helping” the university to achieve its targets.
- JN will take this on board. Any other suggestions can also be sent through, and the *Draft Recommendations* will then be circulated for feedback.

Agenda Item 5 – Survey Questionnaire Results

- JN asked for any feedback on the Survey results documents.
- Everything seems to be included, nothing jumps out, and it is reflective of the data as a whole.
- JN explained that the Thematic Summary document is based on the responses to the open-ended questions and gave a brief overview of the analysis process.
- JN explained also that the statistics documents include summaries which may be helpful in wading through the detail.
- A view was expressed that it would be great if the data could be utilised for further research.

- JN confirmed that this would be a great outcome and was one of the reasons for doing the research. The more that informed opinion is used the better. The analyses and recommendations could then potentially also go into the public domain.
- JN suggested looking at the Thematic Analysis together, noting that the responses had been comprehensive and detailed, with the document essentially reading like a “to do” guidebook.
- It looks amazing.
- JN explained a little about the themes and their structure and wording, each point being something that someone or multiple people said that fits under that particular umbrella.
- Jen asked if the themes made sense.
- Yes, it all makes sense, especially when you look at the headings. Everything fits in.
- The point was made that if universities are going to do it, it will be important to make sure that these things are included, otherwise it will be a “cornflakes packet one”.
- JN explained that the introduction to each section makes a claim which validates the responses and then articulates what universities can do to support, which is consistent with the earlier advice on wording.
- Yes, and it’s not just about music, it’s about a holistic perspective that can really benefit Indigenous rights and social justice.
- JN explained that the Survey analysis documents will be going to the Indigenous Reference Group before going to the School-which will provide another layer of opportunity for consideration by informed First Nations people.
- JN invited further feedback and asked if the process made sense. Also, if any of the background raw data is of interest, to please let her know, and she will send through.
- The process sounds good. It was noted that it is important not to have too many people inputting into the structure/content etc. towards the end of the process. The structure looks sensible as is, and the whole thing doesn’t have to be perfect, it just needs to be done. Once it’s done someone else will then come along and leverage off it. This will have created a place that people can stand on. It will take a generation, but you have to build these first bits.
- JN Other research might then jump off it.
- Especially with regard to the cultural safety side of things in the results.
- One thing that did jump out was the number of people who didn’t finish their course of study. It was a part of their journey – to get to where they are now.
- JN This is an important issue. Universities often think in terms of “failure” – the student, the program or the university – but music education doesn’t have to be a linear process.
- Unlike the majority of tertiary music students, a lot of Aboriginal people have not had long-term engagement in formal music education/training since they were young. This, it was noted, was recognised in the structure of the CASM programs, which had a community musician access point which consolidated formal academic learning, and which included multiple entry and exit options.
- JN This matter is included in the Thematic Analysis which includes suggestions for genuine pathways, accessible learning environments, and flexible and multiple options.

- JN expressed her strong appreciation and thanks.

Appendix Z:

Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (1)

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group

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Workshop 4-Summary of Main Points of Discussion (1)

Agenda Item 5 – For Discussion – DRAFT FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- JN asked what the general opinion of the recommendations was?
- The comment was made that what is being recommended in the themes could be applied in a number of different contexts, not just universities. It was important that this project has landed at the university, in terms of the recommendations, because it will support everybody else asking for the same thing, but who don't have time to do a PhD.
- "I was pleased that there was the emphasis on rights, and on self-determination, because you could tell any institution or workplace to adopt these recommendations, and suddenly all their interactions with certain spaces are safer, and are about our wellbeing, and about the restoration of our wellbeing."
- "And just a reminder about the rights. I think our own people forget sometimes that there are all these leaders that have gone before us, who are not with us now, that have fought to have these rights recognised. And even though Australia has officially adopted UNDRIP, the work's been done, and we should still point to it, reference it, highlight it. And it should serve as a good start for us in terms of how we live our daily lives. Because ... our leaders of the previous generations have gone 'well, actually it's now written, declared, that it's needed'".
- "They (Indigenous rights) are critical for the future of our cultures, and so, if people are struggling with wayfinding, if people are struggling with feeling that they have no purpose in life, or they're not supported, or just feeling a bit like they have no compass, or have no joy, there's the Declarations that say, this is what it looks like, if we're (unclear audio) extending our potential as cultural people".
- JN expressed how glad she was to hear about the rights aspect, because that was the start and the finish of the research, and it was the Focus Group that had brought up the ideas around educational and cultural rights. The research began from the premise that Indigenous self-determination was the way forward for tertiary music institutions, that this will chart the way. So this is threaded through the recommendations, and Indigenous rights are at the core, which is why they are numbers one and two.
- A comment was made that the big theme is about "enjoying our rights", and the recommendations explain the "how", telling the School of Music "what their role is, in us enjoying our rights".
- JN ... and what should that look like? What are the implications? So, hopefully, this is spelling it out.
- Absolutely.
- JN explained the structure of the document, including the purpose of the sections leading up to each recommendation, which are designed to provide context and are quite short so that they are readable. There are quite a few recommendations,

addressing the themes that came out of the thematic analysis, and spelling out specific areas for action. JN asked if this seemed alright?

- Yes, it does and theming it is really helpful for anyone reading it.
- A question was raised concerning the handing over of the Recommendations to the School of Music (i.e. via the Indigenous Reference Group). It was noted that there is an emphasis in the Recommendations on First Nations needing to be leading, however, having a Reference Group which holds no power, where they don't have to close loops with them if they don't have to, and where they don't have to answer to them, is an issue. In terms of the "how", calling it a Reference Group means that nothing would necessarily need to be done differently.
- JN agreed with this, and explained that that was why Chris was the Chair and Will was on it too, and also others with a keen eye on the School of Music. But the point being, why is this not a decision-making body of the School?
- That's right.
- JN explained that the main reason for this was that it had not been within her power to manifest this a part of her PhD.
- The question was asked whether it was Jen's Reference Group?
- JN explained that no, it had a dual purpose. It had been purposefully set up as a part of the project so that there would be an Indigenous Reference Group to provide oversight of the project and to ensure that there was a group of people who understood the research who were associated with the School of Music over a period of time. And then when the research is finished the Indigenous Reference Group will continue as an Indigenous Reference Group for the School. This had been written into the ToR and SOP.
- JN explained that she was concerned about the implementation process and that this phase had been included in the original proposal, but the Ethics Committee had deemed it to be beyond the scope of the PhD, so she had had to draw a line in the sand.
- As you have undertaken the project, as you've analysed all the data, with themes that strongly talk about self-determination, the rights to cultural enjoyment and leadership, it's just posing the question, so why is there a Reference Group?
- JN That's right.
- "Should it be more than a Reference Group?" Some people don't even consciously choose for there to be a Reference Group, they just go, that's what people do. And some people consciously do it – well, we can't give them power, one, because it sets up expectations, and two, because we can't deliver on their ideas. But "if you're truly wanting to be led, then there's a mechanism that provides for self-determination at the School, then it's the governance group".
- JN I agree with that.
- And Chris (unclear audio) and he heads it up, because he wants to be governed, he wants cultural oversight over activities, programs, and that's the governance group, and they're (unclear audio), and it's a good thing. It means that the School of Music is then leading the way.
- JN That's a great idea. Universities have their governance structures, committees for various functions, but currently there's not a standard space for that to happen, it's a "yet to do" type of situation.

- JN entirely agreed with the comments about the matter and considered it would take important conversations between Chris and management – hopefully looking at these recommendations – and with the members of the Reference Group. JN affirmed that this needs to happen, with the hope that the Recommendations will help, but that it would be reliant on people pushing for “formal decision making” – it can’t be just “maybe we might listen to these people if we feel like it”.
- A suggestion was made with respect to Recommendation 19, which recommends that the ANU School of Music support and build on existing First Nations programs and provide national leadership in charting the way forward. The observation was made that what exists now is the Indigenous Reference Group.
- JN explained that the First Nations programs mentioned in the text leading to Recommendation 19 came out of the results of the research. However, Recommendation 20 (Implementation Strategy) refers to the Reference Group.
- JN asked if the suggestion was that there might need to be something added about the role of the Reference Group, that goes beyond “in collaboration with”? This could be raised with the Reference Group at their upcoming meeting when the Recommendations are presented, and/or a comment could be included in the summary of the discussion of the Focus Group workshop, which would then be added to the Recommendations as an outcome of the research.
- This sounds good. It’s probably close enough to say “in collaboration with”, but then the next sentence says the implementation process will need to be based in “an Indigenous-led and ‘whole-of-School’ one”. So, ‘Indigenous led’, is that the Indigenous Reference Group?
- JN explained that no, Indigenous led meant it was up to them, that is Chris and Will and anybody else. It was really saying (to the School) “don’t you just run off with this and start doing your own thing”. If it’s not strong enough, then there’s an opportunity now through this process to say something. JN asked if the feeling was that something needed to be added that was more pointed, about the role of the Indigenous Reference Group?
- You could say something that elevates it to a governance group.
- JN OK, then that would become part of the data, in which case, it would be a matter of considering where to put it, probably most likely in the Implementation Strategy section, because it would be saying that there needs to be a change.

There was a discussion about where to add this point and the appropriate wording.

- This would be coming off the previous recommendation which talks about building on the good work of the School. So now, building on the Indigenous Reference Group – “in implementing, we need to elevate them a bit so they can lead the whole School in the implementation, without question”.
- JN commented that it needed to be quite clear what was intended.
- It was noted that the view was in there already, with the statement that the process will need to be an Indigenous led and whole-of-School one.
- “We talked about giving them ‘the how’, so don’t go and recreate wheels, just elevate the Reference Group”.
- “The status quo, in terms of governance or co-design, that could continue, but it’s not enough alongside everything else you’re talking about in terms of self-determination”.

- JN Yes, it begs the question.
- This brings it all in line.
- JN To pull it all together it could say “In charting the way forward ...”, because it is not yet common, because there aren’t these bodies, the argument would be then that the School of Music would be showing how it should be.

It was agreed that the following sentence be added to the Implementation strategy section: “It is recommended that the School of Music develop a Recommendations Implementation Plan, including in collaboration with the SoM Indigenous Reference Group. *In charting the way forward this should build on the current strengths of the existing ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, which should be elevated to a governance body in the School.*” This proposed addition will then be discussed with the other members of the Focus Group at their upcoming meeting, prior to inclusion in the final document.

- JN asked whether they were happy with the Recommendations in general?
- This was confirmed.
- JN And the Preamble, which in a sense is where the Focus Group speaks?
- “I think it’s great – I think it’s pretty powerful”.

There was a brief discussion about the quote in the Preamble. The referencing of the quote was confirmed.

- The suggestion was made to change the word “people” to “peoples” in the quote.
- JN will make this change.

Appendix AA:

Workshop 4 – Summary of Main Points of Discussion (2)

Indigenous Co-design Focus Group

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Workshop 4-Summary of Main Points of Discussion (2)

Agenda Item 5 – For Discussion – DRAFT FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- The comment was made that there was a lot in it – some points particularly noted were those about “being out in the community”.
- There was agreement with it (the recommendations) because it would be something you could actually utilise. “I’m really looking forward to other universities who do not have anything concrete to stand on, to actually utilise this to inform where they’re going to move to as well, because in our little research the other week, we looked around the country at who’s doing stuff at the moment – there’s not much”.
[transferred from Agenda item 9]
- JN explained that the Recommendations are the main outcome of the research and are based on a synthesis of the results of the Survey, the Interviews, and the Focus Group discussions (about the research question). At the end there are some additional recommendations that are not from the research participants. These are from the background research and point to some key points on equity outcomes data reporting and monitoring (which comes up in the literature) and on the need for program and policy evaluation (to establish what is effective or not). This suggests the need for robust monitoring and evaluation, using qualitative evaluation processes, which means actually talking to people. You can have a program where people don’t complete for example, but they might say it was fabulous.
- That’s right.
- JN That means that if you just count the number of people who graduated, you’re not finding out whether it’s good or not good.
- JN referred also to the recommendation on the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, which is a big deal. There will be another review soon which will be Indigenous specific. The Report emphasises commitment to the principle of self-determination and to the view that Indigenous people and knowledges should be “at the heart” of Australian higher education – a concept about repositioning. There are also some references at the end to provide resources for the School.
- JN relayed the fact that [de-identified] and [de-identified] had already confirmed the Preamble and drew attention to the quote (which is drawn from the Focus Group discussions and the email text that [de-identified] had sent through). Referencing of the quote was confirmed.
- JN relayed [de-identified’s] proposed amendment to change “people” to “peoples”, which JN will then change to “Peoples”. The changes were confirmed.
- JN asked if there were any particular or general comments about the Recommendations – noting that there were a large number of them purposefully, and that they were divided into specific categories/themes that had come out of the research and spell out what to do. She asked if this made sense. This was confirmed.

- JN explained that the text leading into each Recommendation explains the context of the Recommendation, locking it together with references and putting the voices of the participants into the context of the bigger picture, reinforcing and justifying what has been said. JN asked if this made sense. This was confirmed.
- JN relayed [de-identified's] observation that there was an emphasis on Indigenous rights, including educational and cultural rights and Indigenous self-determination, which was the big theme threaded through everything. JN had affirmed that this was right and was the premise of the thesis (i.e. that Indigenous self-determination would provide the way forward).
- JN asked if there was any feedback.
- Nothing jumps out at me.
- JN Do you feel happy with the wording?
- This was confirmed.
- JN relayed the proposed amendment. [De-identified] had drawn attention to the fact that Indigenous self-determination was emphasised all the way through the Recommendations and then referred to the wording of the opening sentences in the text leading to Recommendation 20 (Implementation strategy). These state the need for collaboration with the SoM Indigenous Reference Group and the implementation process as needing to be Indigenous led. There had been a discussion about the wording, what was meant by it, and the need for clarity. It was noted that Reference Groups could be created by default (as in everyone has to have one), or by design (as in we're having a Reference Group, but that's all its going to be). There was a question then about the power of the Reference Group? JN had affirmed this.
- JN The concern was that if a Reference Group does not have formal power, its views can be dismissed because it is not a decision-making body. It was noted that universities have their formal decision-making committee structures, but that there isn't a structure that locks together, for example, the education committee, the research committee, and the Indigenous committee into a decision-making framework. If the recommendations are saying that self-determination needs to be everywhere, then there's an issue with having a Reference Group that has no formal decision-making power. The proposal was to add a sentence which comes off the back of the statement in the previous Recommendation (Recommendation 19) which states: "This suggests that the School is currently very well positioned to build on these existing initiatives and provide national leadership in charting the way forward". In other words, even if there were not a committee, there should be one, and the School of Music would be charting the way forward in creating one. JN read out the proposed addition (to follow on from the first sentence under the heading Implementation strategy): *In charting the way forward this should build on the current strengths of the existing ANU School of Music Indigenous Reference Group, which should be elevated to a governance body in the School.*
- "That's great I think, that's very clear and very obvious, that's excellent".
- JN As in, this is the national university, which should be leading the way.
- "Well it needs to be said, they need to hear it, to be honest".
- JN This is saying that the current Indigenous Reference Group is strong, and there is therefore no need to find another Indigenous led way, as in, you already have one. It shows faith in that. The School has a responsibility to lead the way, so the School

should build on this and elevate it to a governance body. JN asked if everyone was happy with this.

- This was confirmed.
- JN That's the only change, but it's a very pivotal one.
- JN will amend the Recommendations accordingly and send these through for confirmation as the final version, unless in the meantime there were any further suggested amendments.