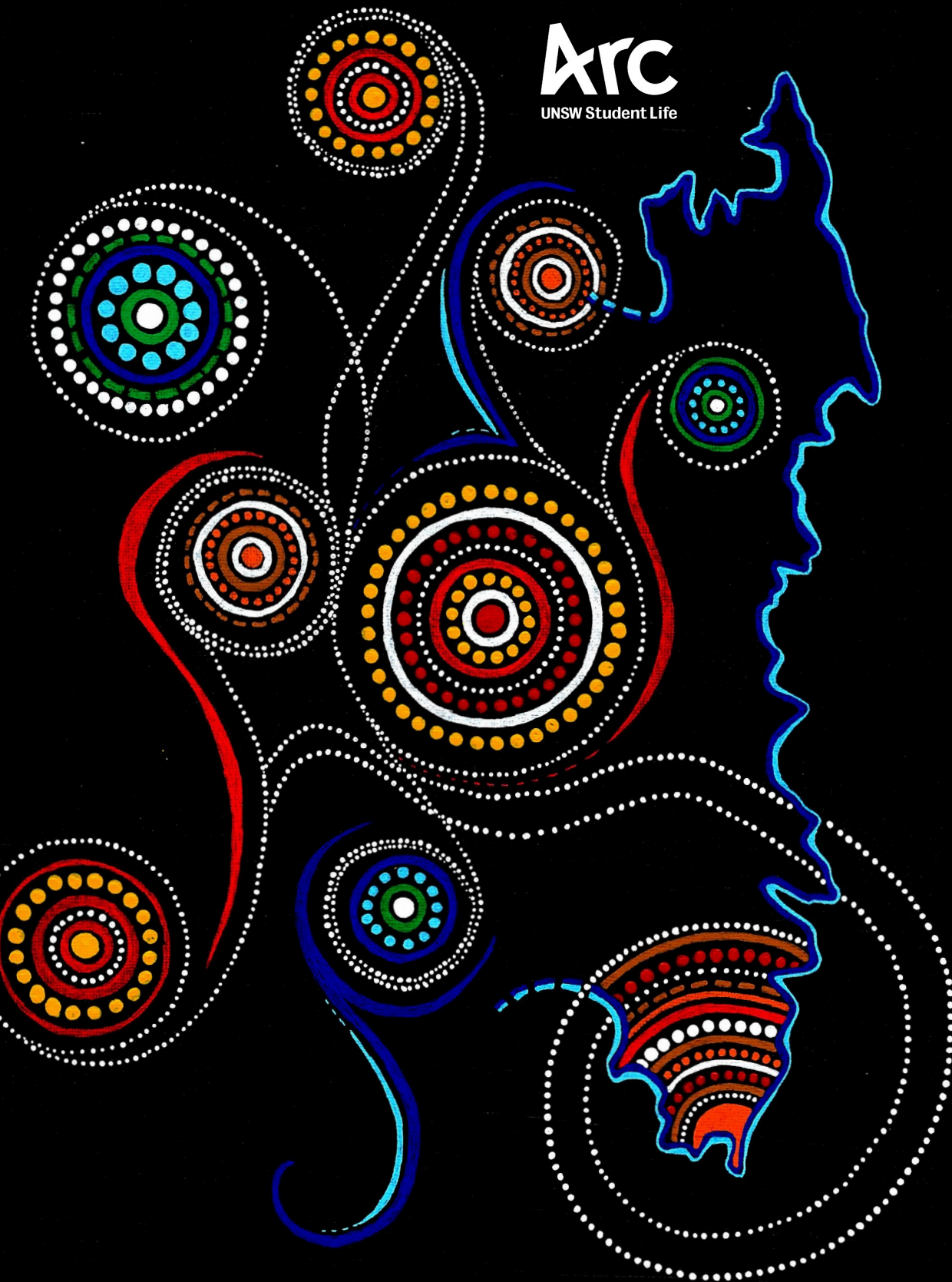


Arc
UNSW Student Life



INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

//2026-2028

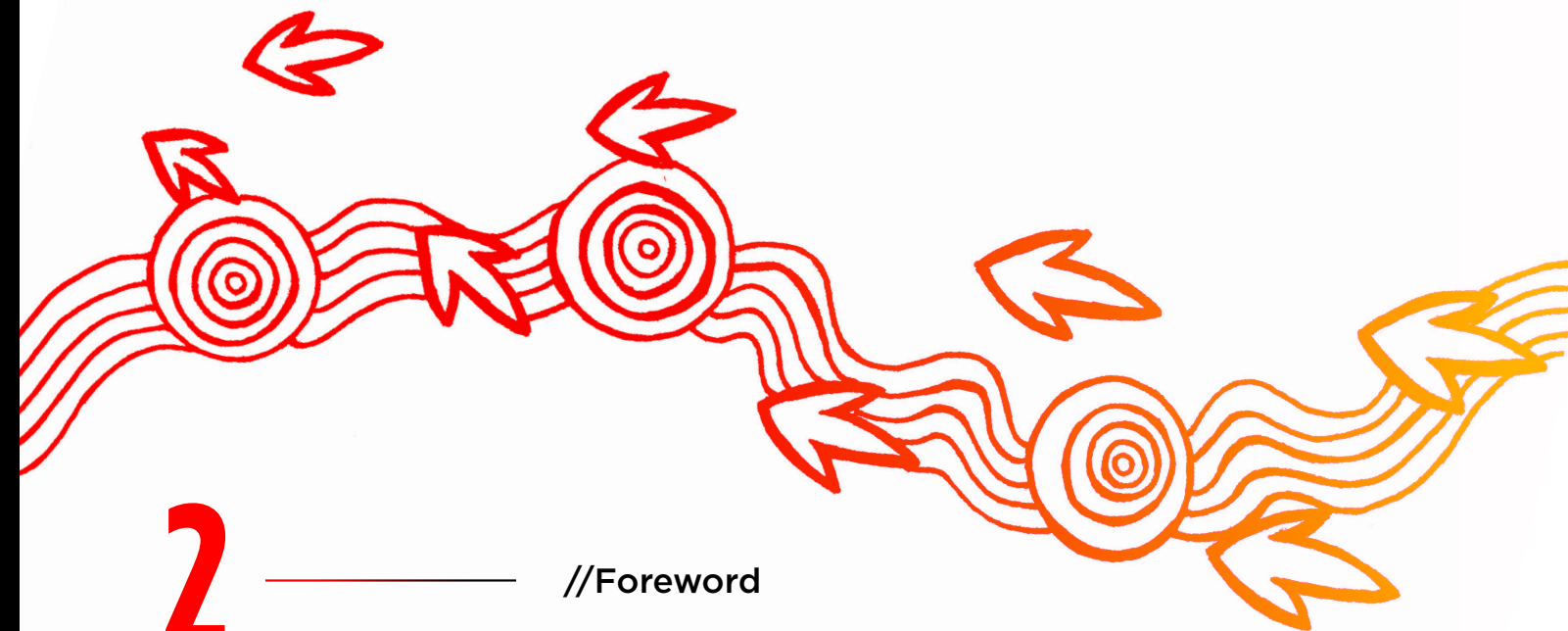
At Arc, we acknowledge the Bedegal People as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are based at UNSW Kensington, the Gadigal People (Paddington), and the Ngunnawal People (Canberra).

We recognise that our community extends beyond campus, and we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where our members live, learn, work and engage with Arc - across our spaces, services, events and digital platforms. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Arc and UNSW community, honouring their ongoing connection to Country, culture and community.

Through this Strategy, we commit to building and strengthening respectful relationships, deepening engagement, and working in genuine partnership with First Nations students, communities and stakeholders.



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We are proud to present the refreshed Arc Indigenous Strategy for 2026 and beyond. This updated Strategy represents both a reflection on how far we have come and an adaption to the evolving needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UNSW. It marks an important continuation of our commitment to an inclusive, respectful, and connected student experience, while staying true to the community-informed feedback and insights provided through consultation and development of our inaugural Strategy. Our goal remains clear: to foster a campus experience that is grounded in relationships and meaningful engagement.

Since the Strategy's launch in 2020, Arc has taken meaningful steps towards embedding Indigenous perspectives and building cultural awareness across our organisation. While the early implementation of the Strategy was shaped by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the years since have seen many of its foundations become embedded within our everyday work, programs, and partnerships. This progress reflects the dedication of Indigenous students, staff, community members, and collaborators who have guided and shaped this journey.

This refreshed strategy is a living response to the evolving needs of our student body. It aligns closely with UNSW's broader Indigenous Strategy and reinforces our commitment to national priorities, including the Closing the Gap targets. More than just a framework, however, it is a formal reaffirmation of our responsibility to listen, learn, and act in true partnership through a sustained commitment and deepened connections, over time.

Reflecting on my time on Arc Board, I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made together and the commitment shown to embedding this work across Arc. I look ahead with confidence to the continued evolution of this Strategy, knowing it will grow through partnership, accountability, and a genuine willingness to listen and learn. Personally, it has been a privilege to be part of this journey, and I am excited to see the impact of this Strategy beyond 2026.

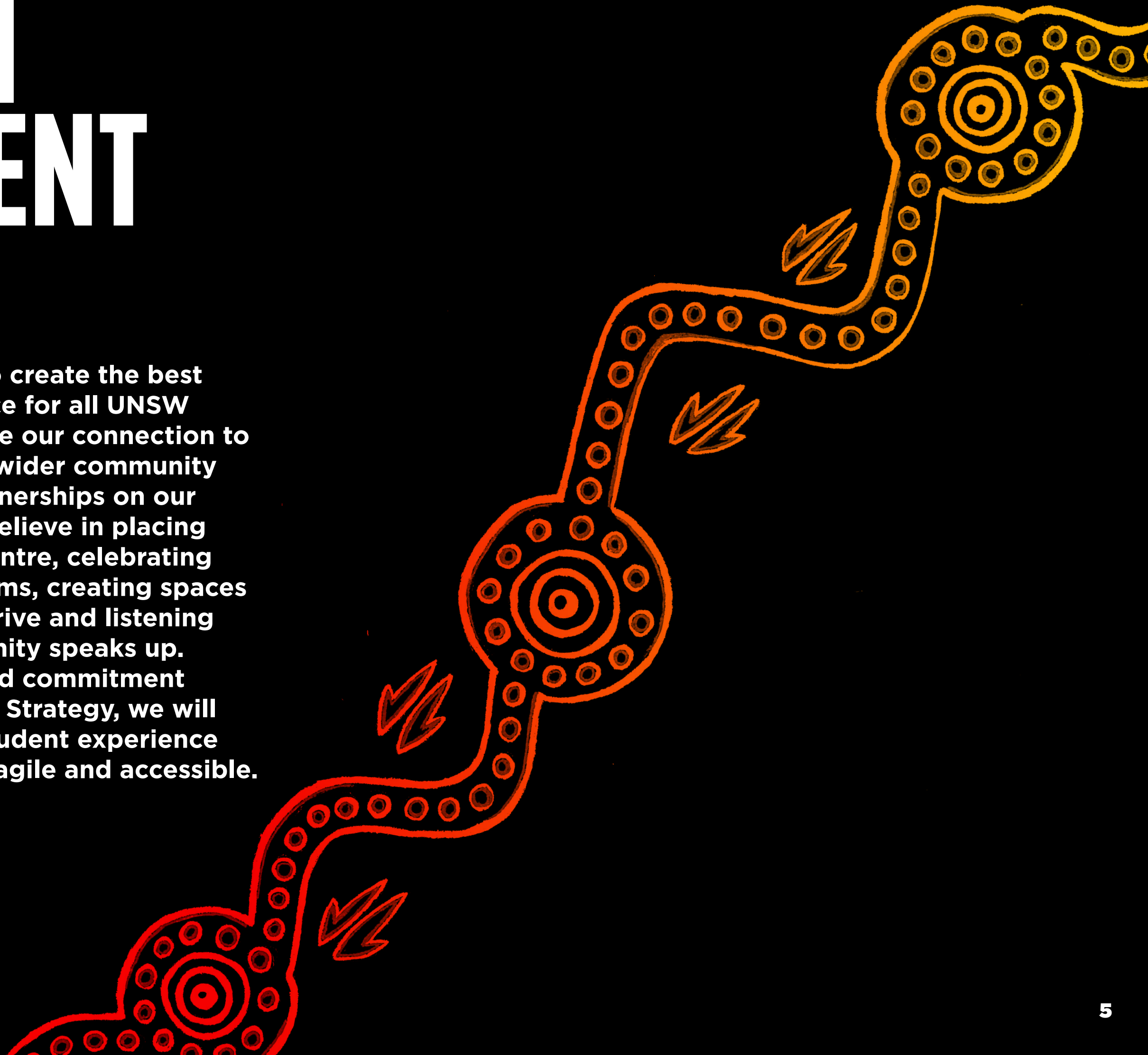
Aania Cheema,
Arc Chair of the Board 2025-2026



FOREWORD

MISSION STATEMENT

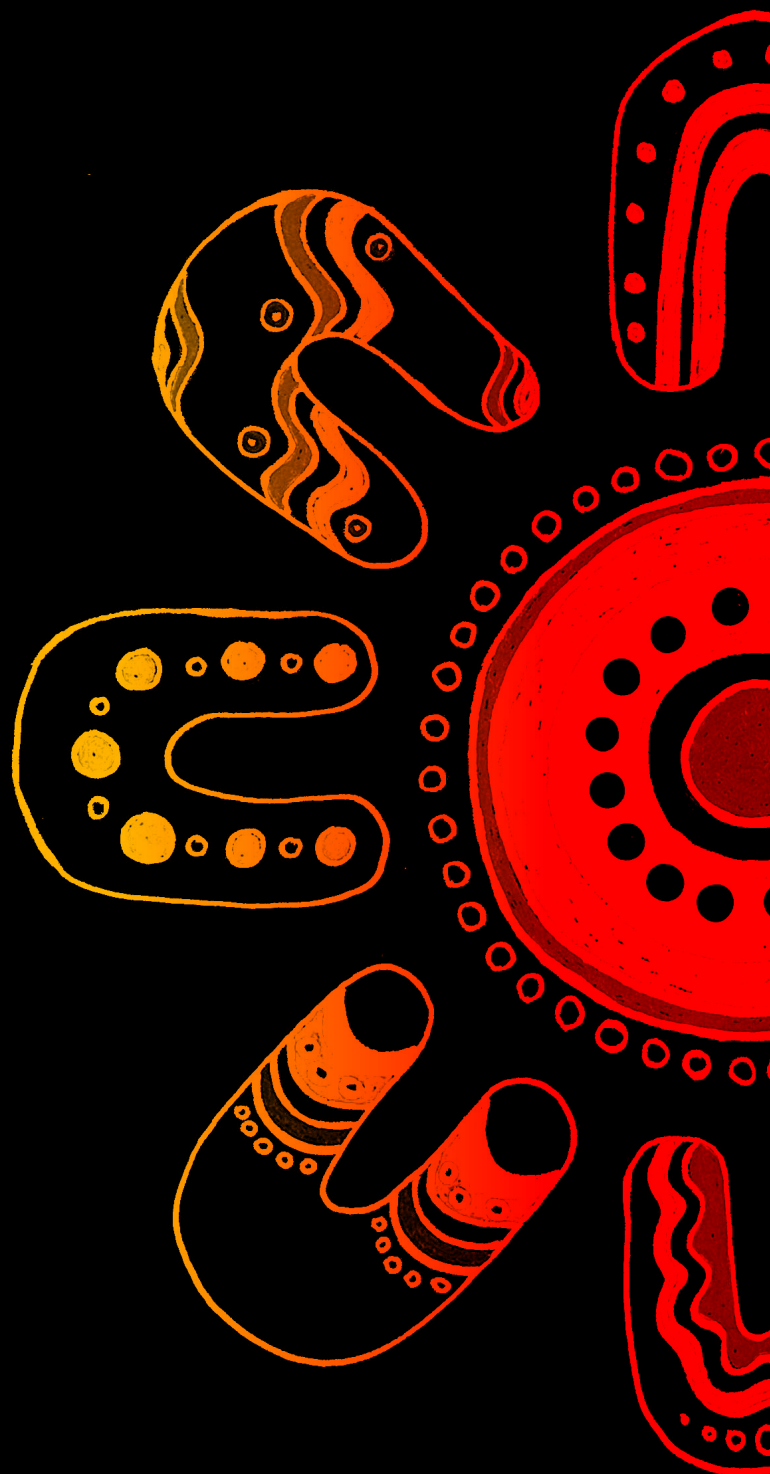
Arc's mission is to create the best student experience for all UNSW students. We value our connection to the students and wider community and base our partnerships on our core values. We believe in placing students at the centre, celebrating diversity in all forms, creating spaces for students to thrive and listening when our community speaks up. Through continued commitment to our Indigenous Strategy, we will ensure that the student experience we create is ever agile and accessible.



At Arc, we envision a genuine, long-term partnership with our Indigenous student body, the UNSW Indigenous community, alumni, and the local Indigenous community. We recognise that mutual trust and respect require time, transparency, and dedication, and that our Strategy must remain adaptable to the needs of our community as we grow together.

We are committed to continually strengthening relationships and deepening engagement between Arc and the First Nations community at UNSW, fostering a future built on respect, understanding, and meaningful collaboration.

VISION STATEMENT



WHY ARE WE REFRESHING THE STRATEGY?

Our inaugural Indigenous Strategy marked a significant step toward establishing a culturally competent and inclusive future. This revised Strategy for 2026 continues that commitment while reflecting the progress we've made and the evolving needs of our community.

The initial 18 months following the Strategy's 2020 launch were impacted by the pandemic, leading to necessary adjustments in our deliverables. Since then, Arc and the broader UNSW community have evolved and adapted, with many of the original initiatives of the Strategy now embedded in our day-to-day operations and annual programming. Our engagement and collaboration with Indigenous students, leaders, artists, and consultants have deepened, becoming a core part of Arc's culture, and has helped shaped this Strategy through ongoing consultation and review (see Appendix A). At the same time, UNSW has set a goal to embed Indigenous knowledges across its educational programs by 2028, further shaping the environment in which our Strategy operates.

Recognising this progress and the ongoing work of the Indigenous Strategy working group, it's essential to realign our goals and set refreshed targets. This updated Strategy will guide us as we continue building toward a future where these efforts seamlessly integrate with Arc's broader strategic objectives. While we aren't there yet, this refresh ensures we stay accountable and on track in delivering meaningful outcomes for our student community.

Importantly, this Strategy refresh is also informed by the national Closing the Gap targets, ensuring our priorities and actions contribute to broader efforts to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By aligning with these targets, we strengthen our commitment to measurable progress and accountability.

UNSW INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

In 2018 the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous, Professor Megan Davis introduced UNSW's first Indigenous Strategy. The Strategy provides direction for UNSW stakeholders by identifying several themes as a framework to build from; allowing faculties, schools and organisations like Arc to tailor their own program or strategy. The themes of the strategy encourage a development of ideas and an open dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous UNSW community members.

Arc acknowledges the university's commitment to moving away from finite, short term attitudes. We understand that trust and transparency are key components in moving forward together. We acknowledge the positive impact that purposeful relationships and a sustainable connection to culture and community will have for our members.

We also acknowledge the three pillars which the UNSW Indigenous Strategy is centred around and hope that our connection to the following themes can be clearly identified: **Culture and Country**, which includes establishing a welcoming campus, both physically and culturally, **Give Back**, instilling an attitude within students to want to give back to the community and **Grow our Own** a holistic commitment to a supportive environment for students and staff.



The Arc Indigenous Strategy continues to focus on two themes: Developing Meaningful Relationships and Strengthening Our Engagement. We have retained the overarching themes that have guided our work since 2020 and were designed to evolve and push us beyond the initial Strategy. These themes are central to our vision and reflect our commitment to meaningful engagement, cultural respect, and long-term impact.

In refreshing our goals and deliverables, we have aligned our approach with the national Closing the Gap targets. This ensures our work not only addresses the needs of our community but also supports national efforts to close gaps in opportunity, participation, and wellbeing for First Nations students and staff.

Our goals are designed to guide us forward, ensuring that our initiatives remain dynamic and responsive. The deliverables outline clear, actionable steps that will keep us accountable as we continue to work towards a future that honours and uplifts the voices and contributions of the Indigenous community at UNSW. Where possible, our deliverables are tied to relevant Closing the Gap indicators (see Appendix B).

Our deliverables represent our actionable commitments, providing clarity on our direction and approach. To maintain a strong focus on these deliverables, the Arc Board will oversee implementation through annual KPIs and bi-annual progress reports. This ensures we stay accountable and aligned with our strategic objectives and the evolving national landscape.

BUILD CONNECTIONS WITH THE INDIGENOUS STUDENT BODY AND ALUMNI, ENCOURAGING AN EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES.

- Termly meetings between the Indigenous Students Association and an Arc Staff Member in conjunction with the Student Development Committee.
- Leveraging opportunities to work with the UNSW Indigenous community including Clubs and Nura Gili to enhance the awareness of initiatives and launch collaborations
- Annual educational workshops for Arc Staff to maintain and build on cultural awareness and competency year on year.
- Embed First Nations presence within existing Arc functions, while continuing to develop resources and opportunities that support Indigenous-centred events.

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES COLLABORATING ON PROJECTS AND MAKING DECISIONS ROOTED IN RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND LEGACY.

- Partnership between Arc's Gamamari publication and local indigenous organisation(s).
- Annual engagement with local Indigenous community groups or organisations, this may include opportunities for education, volunteering, event collaboration, workshops etc).

GENERATE AND MAINTAIN A FEELING OF TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN Arc AND THE INDIGENOUS STUDENT BODY.

- Inclusion of Indigenous focused questions within the Arc annual survey for analysis year on year to inform initiatives and areas of focus.
- Maintain ongoing conversations and consultation with Arc-affiliated Indigenous student groups.

THEMES, GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

INSTIL A SENSE OF RECOGNITION AND RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES ACROSS ALL ARC ACTIVITIES AND TOUCHPOINTS.

- Incorporate at least one program, activation or event that recognises and celebrates Indigenous cultures, including languages, within Orientation Week each year.
- Embed visible acknowledgement of Indigenous cultures within Arc-led events and communications where appropriate (e.g. Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, cultural programming).
- Work with Indigenous student groups and UNSW partners to identify opportunities to meaningfully reflect Indigenous cultures, including languages, in major Arc events.

MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN INDIGENOUS ARC MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT TO SUPPORT A CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP AND WORK TOWARDS A PURPOSEFUL, LONG-TERM LEGACY.

- Maintain Indigenous Arc membership broadly in line with the percentage of Indigenous students enrolled at UNSW
- Provide annual support and facilitation for the UNSW Indigenous team competing in the Intervarsity Indigenous Games.

ADVOCATE FOR A VISIBLE AND MEANINGFUL PHYSICAL INDIGENOUS PRESENCE ON CAMPUS FOR CELEBRATION, ART AND USE OF LANGUAGE, ALONGSIDE COMMUNITY, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI.

- Identify and progress opportunities for advocacy on key issues, supporting Indigenous students to amplify their voices through consultation, representation and leadership opportunities.
- Partner with Indigenous student groups and clubs to deliver the annual on-campus NAIDOC celebrations, ensuring strong promotion to Arc Members and UNSW stakeholders to enhance the events' presence and reach.
- Support or advocate for initiatives that increase physical Indigenous presence on campus, in collaboration with students, UNSW and community stakeholders. Indigenous centred events.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

We extend our deepest gratitude to Ben Jones (Murrawarri man and former Chair of the Arc Board) for his vision and dedication to the development of the inaugural Strategy, and to the Indigenous students, alumni, Nura Gili, community partners, staff and Elders whose knowledge, guidance, and generosity have been central to the development and ongoing evolution of this Strategy.

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Date	Key Activity
Mar 2019	Proposal to Arc Board
Jun 2019	Indigenous Strategy Working Group established
Jun – Nov 2019	Student, alumni and community consultations
Sept 2019 – Mar 2020	Strategy drafting and review
May 2020	Focus group review
June 2020	Strategy operationalised
2025	Strategy review and consultation phase commenced
2026	Updated Strategy operationalised

ONGOING GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

Frequency	Activity
Ongoing	Indigenous Strategy Working Group convenes regularly
Annual	Strategy priorities established
Biannually	Reporting to Arc Board

APPENDIX B: CLOSING THE GAP ALIGNMENT

This Strategy is aligned with relevant Closing the Gap targets, as outlined below.

Focus Area	Closing the Gap Target
Educational attainment and pathways	Target 5 & 6
Youth engagement in education, employment and training	Target 7
Economic participation and development	Target 8
Social and emotional wellbeing	Target 14
Access to information and services	Target 17
Strengthening partnerships and community-led delivery	Priority Reforms

