

ACDS ELEVATING INDIGENOUS SCIENCE IN HIGHER ED – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

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SUBTHEME: Elevating First Nations Australians' Sciences

In 2019, the Australian Council of Deans of Science (ACDS) initiated the development of an Indigenous science website to support educators in understanding and integrating Indigenous science into their teaching. It included support for developing cultural competency, curriculum resources and information resources to help educators engage with First Nations ways of understanding the natural world. Following the 2021 Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education (ACSME), a community of practice (CoP) was established to assist higher education science educators in respectfully incorporating First Nations science into their curricula.

From late 2021 to 2024, the group met bi-monthly online. Sessions featured expert guest speakers and educators who shared their practice and/or guided educators on effectively including First Nations science into their tertiary STEM subjects. Highlights included webinars on embedding First Nations Australian histories and cultures into science, presented by Associate Professor Joe Sambono, and exploring Māori knowledge and science with Dr Sara Belcher. Other sessions focused on practical examples of embedding Aboriginal perspectives in teaching, led by Cally Jetta, and discussions on Indigenous data sovereignty and ethics with Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews.

The CoP also served as a platform for educators to share enablers and barriers and identify how the community could best support them. This year, our focus has been on the rollout of the ACDS supported resource *A Guide for Curriculum Development: First Nations Australians' Science*. As members of our community now start to implement this framework, we look to bring back a more traditional CoP format in 2026. Coming together at ACSME 2025 offers our community an opportunity to reflect on our progress and explore future directions and models for practice-sharing. In this presentation we will share the outcomes of the ACDS's work to date and invite participants to share their insights as we continue efforts to shape future science curricula in ways that elevates First Nations expertise.

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