



Australian  
National  
University

NARRAGUNAWALI  
NGALAWIRI  
DHUNMINYIN

*Coming Together, Sitting and Talking*

# FIRST NATIONS POLICY FUTURES NATIONAL CONFERENCE

*A gathering of community leaders, policy practitioners,  
and researchers to examine First Nations policy*

8-10 DECEMBER 2021  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY,  
CANBERRA

Ensuring the health and wellbeing of our delegates, speakers and staff including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities from across Australia is our top priority. The changing impacts of COVID-19 will be reassessed in September 2021. Depending on the ongoing impact of the pandemic and restrictions in 2021, elements of the conference may be run as an innovative virtual event.

# ANU

Centre for  
Aboriginal Economic  
Policy Research

ANU College of  
Arts & Social  
Sciences

# COVER ART



## The Artwork

The Southern Cross is known by many First Nations people as Mirrabooka, Ginan or Birubi—a body of stars that encompasses celestial stories deriving from creation-forming ancient knowledges that transcend time and space. These aided our Ancestors with navigation and as seasonal indicators, and symbolise an important relationship between people, land, sea and sky. A symbol that is as vitally significant today, that we still uniquely and collectively identify with in memory, story, art and song. This artwork is the embodiment of my style and my connection to *manay* (stars), interpreting the night sky using cool and dark tones. The inner space between the stars is to draw the viewer in and symbolise the powerful force within and between these bodies of stars. Our old people not only gazed upon the stars, but most importantly they looked at what lies within and surrounding those dark places in the above.

## The Artist

Krystal Hurst is a Worimi Artist and Creative Director of Gillawarra Arts, originating from Taree on NSW's mid north coast. Krystal is a jewellery designer, painter, printmaker and workshop facilitator whose arts practice is centred on 'a way of being' whilst reinvigorating and strengthening culture. Her inspiration derives from Country, memories, stories and community integrated in an innovative and contemporary way.

Krystal was awarded ACT NAIDOC Artist of the Year and in 2019 she became the second ever contemporary jewellery finalist in the prestigious Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards.

Krystal Hurst, Worimi Nation, 2020  
Artist and Creative Director Gillawarra Arts, [www.gillawarraarts.com](http://www.gillawarraarts.com)

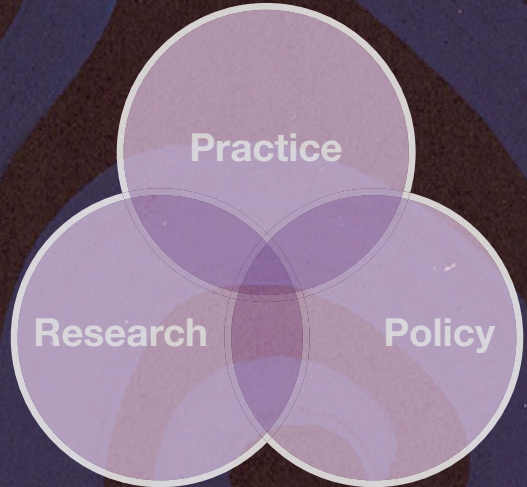
## NARRAGUNAWALI NGALAWIRI DHUNMINYIN

*Coming Together,  
Sitting and Talking*

with thanks to Uncle Wally Bell,  
Ngunnawal language,  
ACT region

# Where is Australia's vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs?

A national gathering of research, policy, & First Nations communities of practice to explore the themes of 'Country', 'livelihoods' and 'political settlement' in Australia



## Narragunawali ngalawiri dhunminyini



As Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), I am warmly inviting you to a National Conference, hosted by our centre, featuring Australian and international speakers, to consider how policy can be made better for, with and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout this gathering, we are determined to create safe spaces for lively and informed debate and discussion around the contested notions and understandings of 'Country', 'livelihoods' and 'political settlement'. The Conference will bring together diverse perspectives from the fields of research, policy and practice and engage participants through a variety of forums and participatory sessions. This special event will also showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural contributions to film, literature, art, dance and music.

This national event comes at a time of deep deliberation about the concept of 'voice' and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' place in Australia's national affairs. CAEPR has been at the forefront of policy research for three decades, and this conference and gathering is an opportunity to contribute to a new narrative and discourse, as we reflect on the past 30 years and collectively envision our future.

**Professor Tony Dreise, Director  
ANU Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research**

The conference has three themes:

### **1. 'Country':**

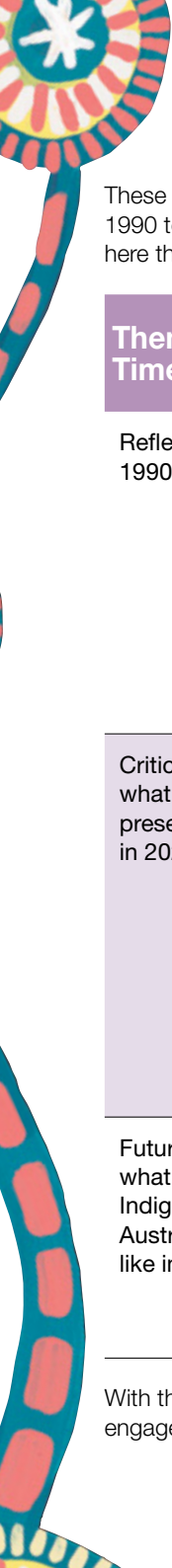
to explore how policy development can better reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, doing and opportunities of 'Country' as understood by First Nations peoples and others. For example, do First Nations peoples have the answers to better land, fire, and water management practices? Is Country the answer to wellbeing?

### **2. 'Livelihoods':**

to consider past, present and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander livelihoods from the perspectives of economy, employment, wellbeing, and place development. What does a life well-lived for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples mean? What are our current policy assumptions? Whose voices are heard and engaged with in shaping policies as they relate to livelihoods? Which voices are being unlistened to?

### **3. 'Political settlement':**

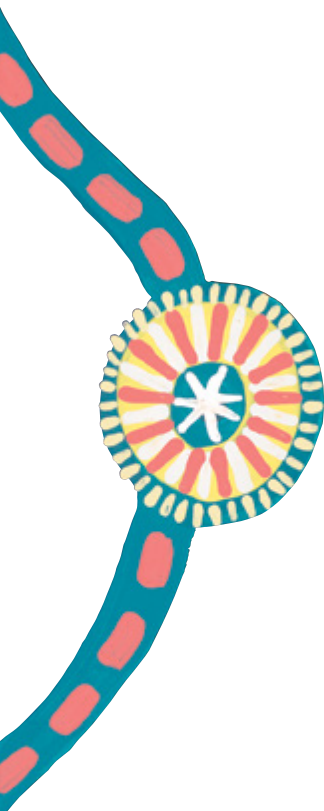
to examine how self-determination and sovereignty might gain greater traction in Australia. Are 'Voice' and 'Treaty' the only answers? What could they contribute? How do we reflect the diverse possibilities of First Peoples, time, and place?



These themes will be explored through three lenses in time, namely the recent past from 1990 to 2021; the present state in 2021; and possible future states in 2050, as illustrated here through some potential guiding questions:

Themes Timeframes	‘Country’	‘Livelihoods’	‘Political settlement’
<b>Reflection:</b> 1990 to 2021	What major policy developments have occurred in recent decades that have either enabled or inhibited positive cultural and economic practices on ‘Country’?	Which major policy events over the past 30 years have led to, or diminished and excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander socio-economic wellbeing?	Calls for ‘treaty’ and related political settlements are now many decades old. What roadblocks have developed and what inroads have been made over the past three decades?
<b>Critical analysis:</b> what is the present state in 2021?	How healthy is ‘Country’ right now? What do we mean by ‘Country’? How do we depict Country as interconnected across time and space?	After a decade of not ‘Closing the Gap’, what is next to enrich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander livelihoods and futures in remote, regional, and urban Australia? Can place based community driven solutions change policy?	Could political settlements be found in mechanisms beyond a ‘voice’ to government?
<b>Futuring:</b> what will/could Indigenous Australia look like in 2050?	Do peoples, knowledges and practices hold the key to future wellness of ‘Country’?	Can old economies renew, and new economies emerge, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in an era of climate change?	In 2050, what does settlement between First Nations and the state look like?

With this backdrop in mind, please join us in this unique opportunity to connect, share and engage in creative and courageous conversations, idea-sharing, and debate.



## Showcasing cultures

As part of the Conference, ANU will be hosting a small scale festival of culture and connection, story and art, including poetry slams. Drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions and knowledges through music, dance, stories, film, language, science and art (including the many cultural treasures that reside at ANU), the festival will allow participants to engage in deep reflection and conversations about our collective stories, relationships, connections, custodianship of cultural spaces and possibilities.

## An invitation to you as possible presenters

Researchers, policy practitioners, and First Nations communities of practice all have an opportunity to contribute to this national gathering.

We will also be directly approaching some of you as keynote speakers and to contribute to themed discussion forums and yarning circles.

The Conference will be designed in a way that provides for safe 'Debate Chambers'.

Some would like to think that the 'evidence base' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs is settled, and yet there is no doubt about an ongoing contestation in First Nations policy.

Opportunities to submit a paper, provide a workshop, be part of a Themed Discussion Workshop, a themed Question and Answer Panel discussion, a Structured Debate Chamber, a Yarning Circle or our proposed Policy Poetry Slam will be made available in mid-2021.

**Please consider and address the following questions in all submissions/ contributions and papers:**

- 1. How can you contribute to changing the dialogue and discourse through a communities of practice, policy or research lens?**
- 2. What is your next step as we look toward the next 30 years in First Nations policy, research and collaborative engagement with First Nations communities of practice?**

We are inviting your ideas about how we can make this gathering interactive and dynamic as opposed to people sitting and listening while others are talking 'at' people. Yes, there will be standard keynote addresses from thought leaders and presentations to enable participants to share insights into policy, research, and practice; but we also want to shake things up by providing safe spaces for exchange, discourse and innovative thinking.

**Please be aware that some topics, forums and conversations may be sensitive and protocols to ensure cultural safety and safe and respectful interactions will be outlined and acknowledged prior to those sessions.**

### **An invitation to attend**

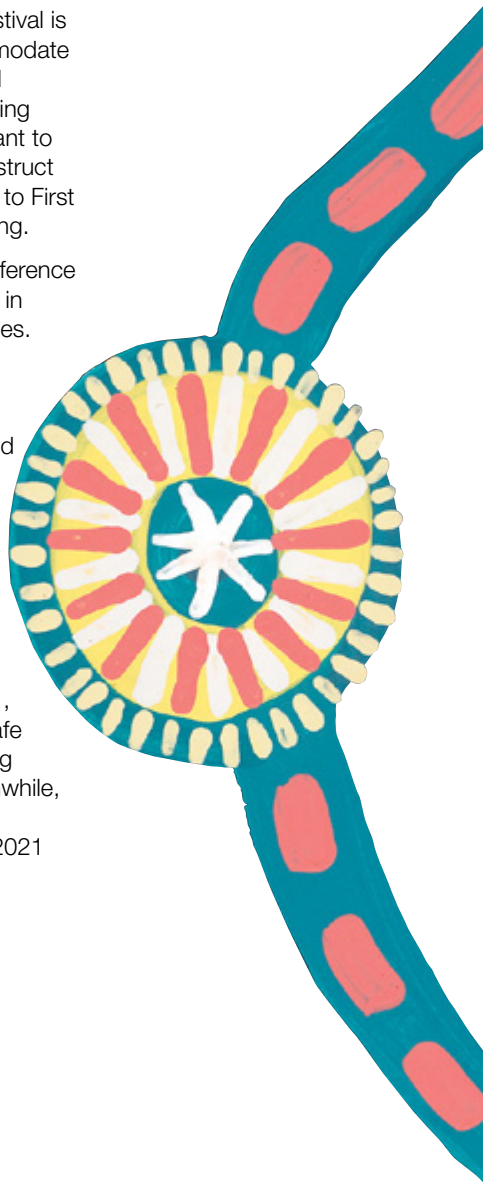
Please come and join us for three days of discussion, lateral thinking, and understandings informed by thinkers and doers from national and international policy makers, researchers and communities of practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

The framework for the Conference and Festival is intended to accommodate diverse thinking and engagement, including those who might want to question and reconstruct current approaches to First Nations policy making.

Throughout the conference we will be engaging in participatory practices. There will be boxes located throughout the conference locations as idea and feedback hubs.

### **Conference registrations**

Registrations for the Conference will open in the second-half of 2021, based on COVID-safe and social distancing requirements. Meanwhile, please lock in 8 to 10 December 2021 in your diary.



# CONTACT US

## **Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research**

The ANU College of Arts  
& Social Sciences

24 Kingsley Place  
Canberra ACT 2600  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

T 61-2-6125 0587

F 61-2-6125 9730

E [CAEPR2021@anu.edu.au](mailto:CAEPR2021@anu.edu.au)

W [caepr.cass.anu.edu.au](http://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au)

CRICOS Provider #00120C