

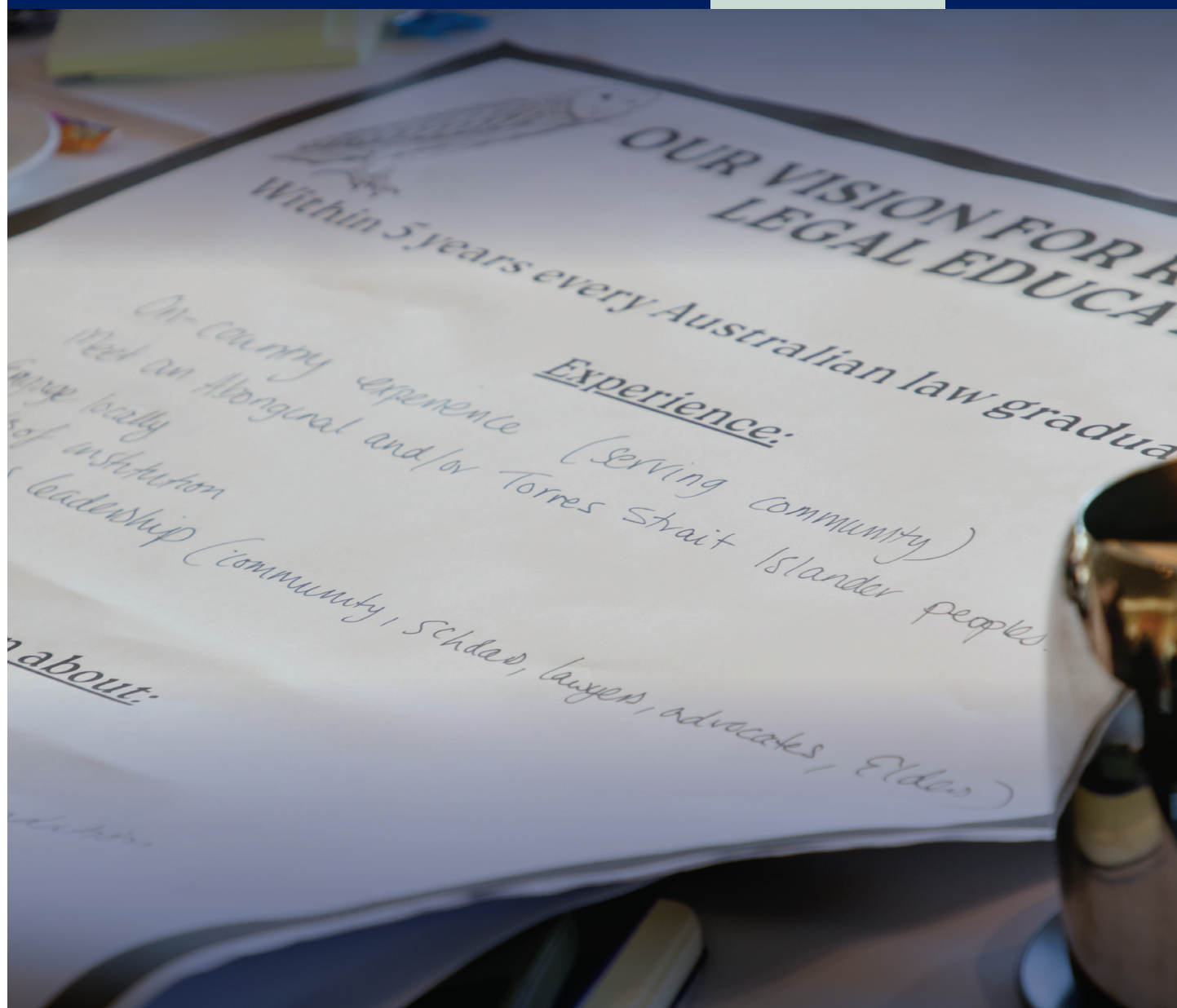
2025 Annual Report

Indigenous Law and Justice Hub

Melbourne
Law School



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses) and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

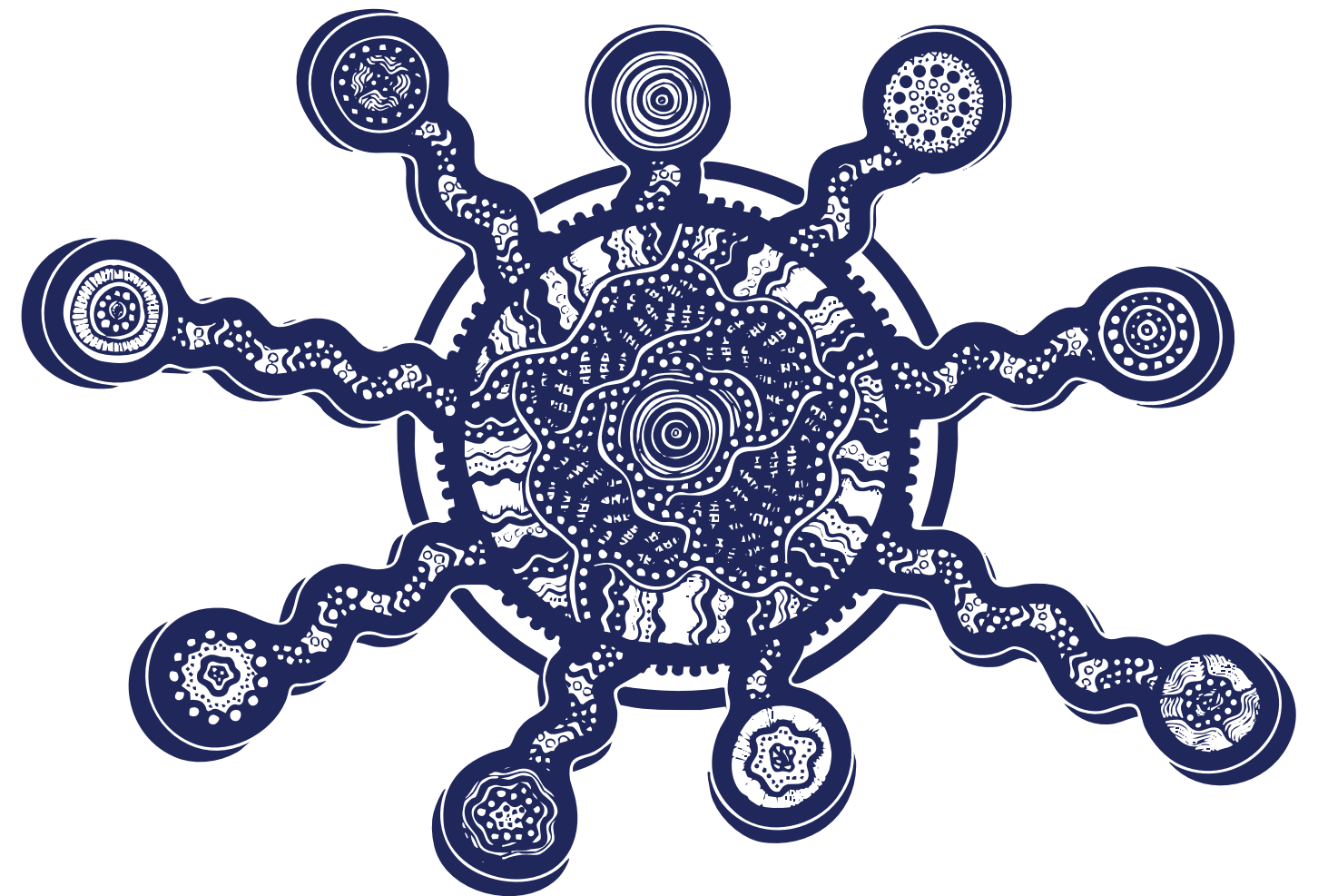
In making this Acknowledgement of Country we commit to respectful and responsible conduct towards all others according to the Traditional lores of this land, particularly at times of formal ceremony.



The Artist

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub identifier artwork is by Kiara (Marla) George (Wurundjeri).

The artwork throughout the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub office is by Carly Donovan. Carly is a Wiradjuri and Dunghutti woman from New South Wales, born in Wagga Wagga and raised in Melbourne on the lands of the Kulin Nations.



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Director’s Report

2025 was a period of change and transition for the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub with a change of Director, new staff appointed, and a few staff on leave pursuing exciting opportunities for international study or employment in Indigenous legal institutions. Given such transition, it was a challenging year for Hub staff, having to fulfill many responsibilities as the Hub continued to achieve significant milestones across many fields. The dedication of Hub staff is gratefully acknowledged.

The Hub maintained its prominent support for advancing Indigenous legal education; including hosting a major collaborative ‘Reckoning and Reimagining’ workshop bringing together Indigenous legal academics from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The workshop objectives aimed to deepen our shared understanding of the skills and knowledges required to develop cultural capability in legal services settings and appropriate pedagogies to shift our institutions towards these goals. The collaborative role of the Hub as a point of liaison for Indigenous legal academics has continued, with plans for future Reckoning and Reimagining workshops.

Hub staff were strongly engaged with the Victorian Treaty process as it rapidly emerged across the year. The Yoorrook Justice Commission Report occurred in early July, and the signing of the Treaty in November 2025 brought into being Australia’s first treaty with First Peoples. The Hub organised a group from Melbourne Law School to participate in the final stages of the Walk for Truth. The Hub was active in building community support for the Treaty, including helping to host a Treaty Information Panel in collaboration with the University’s Centre for Truth and Dialogue at the University, and ANTAR in October 2025.

In early 2025 Professor Eddie Cubillo, resigned as the Hub Director having been the Director since its inception in 2021. The significant contribution Eddie made to the Hub’s development, Indigenous legal education and research, and to building awareness of institutional racism and the need for robust cultural safety in the Law School is acknowledged. Professor Cubillo’s leadership has provided the foundation for many current activities undertaken by the Hub. Initiatives introduced by Eddie included the establishment of the White Noise podcast series, the development of leading-edge ‘travelling’ subjects taken ‘on country’ in the Northern Territory and in Aotearoa New Zealand, collaborative work with the Victorian Aboriginal community, and in association with the Victorian Treaty institutions. Professor Cubillo assumed a leadership role with the newly formed Mabo Centre within the University of Melbourne in March 2025.

My term as Acting Director in the Hub covered March to early October 2025 with a focus on keeping ‘the wheels turning’ pending appointment of a new Director. During this period, teaching was a particular focus, with the Darwin ‘travelling subject’ taking place in the mid-year break. Five other JD electives were delivered across the year, including a new Racial Justice subject and a revised Treaty subject (see below). Planning for a Victorian ‘on country’ subject commenced at this time.

In October, the Hub welcomed its current Director, Professor Nicole Watson. Professor Watson is a renowned Indigenous scholar and her longstanding research into Indigenous legal education, as well as her publications, such as *Indigenous Legal Judgments: Bringing Indigenous Voices into Judicial Decision Making* have been groundbreaking. Nicole holds an Australian Research Council fellowship exploring, “*Raising the Bar: Learning from the Life Stories of Indigenous Lawyers*” that she will continue as part of her Hub leadership. Nicole has a great passion for Indigenous Peoples’ writing and she has livened up the Hub Reading Group by introducing us to crime thrillers and speculative fiction!

The Hub has been supported by an Advisory Council that has offered strong guidance and vision for the Hub over many years. We recognise that many members have served on the Council since its inception. The Hub is extremely lucky in being able to draw on their wise advice which is so generously given notwithstanding many other demands on their time.

Warm regards,

Professor Lee Godden
Acting Director, Indigenous Law and Justice Hub
Melbourne Law School



Who we are and what we do

Our Mission

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub (ILJH) brings together legal experts and community leaders to produce rigorous legal research that can be directly applied in Indigenous advocacy and self-governance. We are educators who play a central role in developing our law students’ understandings of Indigenous cultures, legal systems, and Indigenous experiences of settler law. The ILJH’s research focus is two areas of law and policy that are of pressing importance for Indigenous peoples: Criminal In/justice and Treaty. Our aim is to support and amplify Indigenous voices in these fields with high quality legal research and improved community access to research and advice.

Strategic Pillars

Key achievements for the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub in 2025 are presented under the Hub’s strategic pillars:



Advisory Council

2025 Advisory Council members

In 2025 we had the benefit of the guidance of exceptional members:

- Elly Patira (Gunai and Ngapuhi), Public servant
- Josie Mortimer (Ngemba), [2024 LSS Indigenous Student Co-opt]
- Karri Walker (Nyiyparli), Senior Lawyer - First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria
- Keshi Moore (Banjima), [2024 LSS Indigenous Student Rep]
- Sana Nakata (Torres Strait), Academic
- Tim Goodwin (Yuin), Barrister
- Clinton Benjamin (Bardi, Yawuru, and Kija), Head of Native Title - National Native Title Council
- Professor John Borrows (Chippewa), University of Victoria Faculty of Law, British Columbia
- Leroy Fernandes (Neambah and Wiradjuri), LSS Indigenous Student Co-opt
- Professor Pip Nicholson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community) and Deputy Provost
- Tony McAvoy (Wirdi), Barrister

The ILJH gives thanks to the contribution of time and expertise by Josie Mortimer, Leroy Fernandes, Sana Nakata and Pip Nicholson, who have concluded their roles as Advisory Council members in 2025.



Our team



Professor Lee Godden – Acting Director

Lee researches in environmental resources law, natural resources law, water law, and Indigenous people’s land and resources rights. Lee recently returned to Australia after serving as Dean of the Law School at Te Herenga Waka – University of Victoria Wellington.



Jaynaya Dwyer – Lecturer

Jaynaya is a non-Indigenous legal researcher of Anglo-Indian and Irish heritage, who grew up on Wurundjeri Country. She is lucky to be learning about First Nations justice and decolonisation of legal practice at the Hub, where she undertakes broad work on the review to Indigenise and decolonise the MLS Juris Doctor Curriculum, hosts the White Noise podcast and teaches a range of innovative elective subjects on First Nations Rights.



Tyson Holloway-Clarke – Lecturer

Tyson is a Njamal man, PhD candidate and lecturer at the Hub. Tyson brings long-term experience teaching across the University and serving at the highest levels of University governance.

He works researching in Indigenous jurisprudence and teaching electives in the JD program.



Elyse Keyser – Program Coordinator

Elyse coordinates across the Hub’s many initiatives and areas, including events, research, education, engagement, projects, strategy and governance. She is a non-Indigenous woman with anglo-european heritage who grew up on Turrbal-Yuggera land, and now lives and works on Wurundjeri Country.



Paul Hausia – Indigenous Engagement Coordinator

A proud Wurundjeri and Tongan man, Paul has made a significant impact in the community sector for several years across child protection, youth work and government services. Currently serving as the Hub’s Indigenous Engagement Coordinator, Paul brings his wealth of experience and expertise to foster meaningful connections and collaboration within the Indigenous community and to assist Indigenous students to feel empowered and supported in their studies at the Melbourne Law School.



James Griew – Research Assistant

James joined the University in 2024, as a Students@work intern, currently completing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Politics and International Studies. James supports a range of Hub projects and is passionate about the translation of Indigenous advocacy into public education initiatives for improved awareness for the improvement of Indigenous outcomes. James is a Minang Noongar man from Southwest WA, he has grown up on Gadigal Country in Sydney and Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne.



Claire Bredenoord – Research Assistant, Curriculum Review

Claire is a non-Indigenous Juris Doctor graduate who grew up on Ohlone land in the US, and has been lucky to live and work on Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Country for the last 10 years. She works as a research assistant for the Hub, contributing to the Indigenous Curriculum Review with the aim of amplifying Indigenous voices, content and presence in the JD core curriculum. Claire is excited to be learning from the Hub’s work and put her interest in educational praxis to use in the Curriculum Review. Claire’s professional background is primarily in education design and socially engaged community arts practice.



Alex Bowen – Research Fellow

Alex is a PhD candidate in the school of languages and linguistics, University of Melbourne, and a Research Fellow with the Hub. He grew up as a white settler on Wurundjeri country, graduated from MLS, and practised law in Victoria and the Northern Territory, particularly working in circuit courts in East Arnhem Land with Yolju and Warnindilyakwa people. His research focuses on cross-cultural communication about law and justice in the context of colonial and monolingual assumptions. Alex has a range of experience of learning cross-culturally with Aboriginal experts in language and law in the Northern Territory and Western Australia about justice, communication, translation and interpreting.



Dr Sahiba Maqbool – Research Assistant

Sahiba supports the Hub with a range of research projects. Sahiba is a legal scholar specialising in international law, with particular focus on self-determination, decolonisation and Kashmir. Dr. Maqbool has taught law in Australia and India, including courses on international law, human rights law, contract law, and torts law.

Thank you

The ILJH additionally gives thanks to the sessional teaching staff that ran the Hub electives in 2025.

- Maggie Munn
- Monique Hurley
- Sarah Schwartz

Education



Key to our theory of change towards putting the profession in service of Indigenous peoples’ justice objectives is to transform the primary professional law degree program at Australia’s leading law school.

In our education work, the Hub emphasises unique and collaborative pedogeological approaches in the design and delivery of law subjects to enhance cultural competencies.

In doing so, the Hub seeks to develop future legal professional’s understandings of Indigenous cultures, laws, and experiences of settler legal systems, making a lasting impact on the way law is taught with respect to Indigenous peoples. A strength of our teaching is its collaborative nature, emphasising co-teaching models and guest classes from people with direct expertise on Indigenous advocacy matters to create a dialogue rich in multiple perspectives.

Achievements

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub was recognised for exceptional contributions to University education in 2025.



Australian Award for University Teaching

Universities Australia awarded a citation to the 2025 Access to Justice on Country teaching team, Professor Eddie Cubillo, Jaynaya Dwyer and Elyse Keyser for their “*leadership in the development of on-Country Indigenous justice pedagogies for Australian legal education*”.



NAIDOC Education Award

Former Hub Director Professor Eddie Cubillo has been recognised for exceptional contributions to empowering First Nations peoples through education at the 2025 National NAIDOC Education Award in Boorloo (Perth) on July 5.

The Education Award recognises exceptional individuals and groups in the education sector who have made a difference to the lives of students and communities. This award seeks to recognise individuals and groups who have made a demonstrable contribution to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



See Eddie Cubillo’s acceptance speech here.

Juris Doctor electives in 2025

Law and Indigenous Peoples

This introductory course on Indigenous rights in Australia is structured around the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This year the course was coordinated by Jaynaya Dwyer. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations played a key role in negotiating the Declaration, creating a rights instrument which foregrounds self-determination. This is a legacy Australian lawyers should understand. In this subject we seek to develop students’ skills in practical law reform advocacy engaging the declaration. We were honoured to be joined by an exceptional range of colleagues, who offered guest lectures on their areas of expertise:

- Maggie Munn (Gunggari) shared on colonisation, policing and incarceration of Indigenous peoples, as the Director of the First Nations Justice impact area at the Human Rights Law Centre.
- Dr Harry Hobbs spoke on freedom from discrimination, particularly focusing on the NT emergency Intervention, sharing his work as a constitutional law academic focusing on the race power.
- Kylie Ponchard (Palawa), Nugel Program team leader, and Damien Anthony, principle managing lawyer, of the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA), on the work of VACCA in relation to statutory child protection, including delegated powers under the Victorian Children Youth and Families Act 2005.
- Marcus Stewart (Nira Illim Bulluk of Taungurung Nation) spoke to representation of Indigenous peoples, as the inaugural Co-Chair of the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria and a member of the expert working group on the referendum on the Voice to Parliament.



Indigenous Legal Advocacy Clinic

In 2025, the Indigenous Law and Advocacy Clinic partnered with:

- the Foundation for Aboriginal & Islander Research Action (FAIRA)
- the First Nations Legal & Research Services (FNLRS)
- Redgum Legal & Consulting
- the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
- the Treaty Authority
- Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA)
- Taungurung Land & Waters Council
- The Truth-Telling and Dialogue Centre

The clinical work in 2025 was complemented by a seminar series delivered by the subject coordinator, award winning human rights lawyer, respected and valued ally to First Peoples, and Legal Director of the Human Rights Law Centre Sarah Schwartz.

Students worked on policy and advocacy projects for these organisations on topics including, elections and democracy in the Treaty era, youth justice diversionary programs, police accountability international comparison, land rights in Victoria in the Treaty era, reflections and learnings from Yoorrook, respecting Indigenous knowledge holders in university settings, and water rights for Victorian traditional owners. During lectures with Sarah Schwartz and invited guests, students explored topics including a variety of case studies in legal advocacy for First Peoples across Australia including historic and contemporary examples spanning multiple legal domains. This includes land rights advocacy, deaths in custody, coronial inquests, police powers and accountability, nation building, the Treaty Era, discrimination law, allyship, and campaign and media strategy. Mick Gooda (Former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner) and Jaynaya Dwyer supervised a student project on Indigenous rights to education in Australia: A self-determination framework.

Racial Justice

Offered for the first time in 2025 to introduce a course to the Hub’s offering focusing on critical race theory in an Australian context. The subject centred around critical engagement with leading Australian judgments, encouraging students to reimagine law in a way that addresses myths of state law’s racial neutrality. This subject was delivered by Monique Hurley and Maggie Munn, who brought exceptional insight to the role as leaders in the First Nations impact team at the Human Rights Law Centre. Initial concept design for this subject was done by Jaynaya Dwyer.

Treaty: Indigenous-Settler Agreements

This year our treaty subject was taught as a third year JD elective by Professor Lee Godden, Shaun McVeigh and Marcus Stewart in the second semester. We were thrilled to engage with the Statewide Treaty Act while it passed through Victorian Parliament during the semester period.

On Country Subjects

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub (‘Hub’) is seeking to grow student’s authentic understanding of Indigenous experiences of law by delivering legal education through On Country learning experiences.

Indigenous Law in Aotearoa and Australia and Access to Justice on Country are two traveling elective subjects that the Hub has piloted in the Melbourne Law School Juris Doctor. Designed by Professor Eddie Cubillo and Jaynaya Dwyer from the Hub, these innovative courses are delivered in collaboration with a range of leading First Nations and justice sector organisations.

During travel, students meet with and ask questions of key figures involved in the delivery of justice services. Visits involve first-hand exposure to Indigenous justice matters and the influence of Indigenous law in settler legal systems. The result is meaningful connections with a cohort of justice-oriented graduates. Students complete the subjects with a stronger understanding of Indigenous knowledges and First Nations justice, and a greater confidence and capability in working alongside Indigenous peoples and organisations to support their justice agendas.

Access to Justice on Country

The Hub’s On-Country subject Access to Justice on Country focuses on critically interrogating the manner in which Australian lawyers are taught to consider ‘access to justice.’ Each year we travel to Darwin for a two-week period and visiting with people and organisations doing legal work on Larrakia Country to deepen our understanding of what diverse and complex conceptions of justice, and how lawyers might contribute. This course is Traditional-Owner led, and included 31 speakers from 24 organisations, including multiple Larrakia Traditional Owner organisations, legal services, interpreters services, judges and Commissioners.

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub was pleased to include 2 visitors from the Attorney General’s Department this year, continuing a relationship established through the teaching team’s work with the department.

Hub team members Jaynaya Dwyer, Eddie Cubillo and Elyse Keyser received a citation for the 2025 Australian University Teaching Awards for this subject.



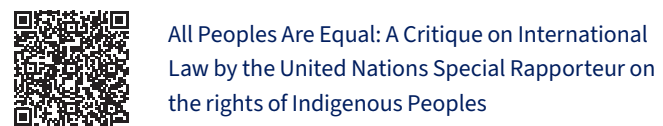
Convening Conversations

Events

All Peoples Are Equal: A Critique on International Law by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

This public lecture was part of a high-level speaking tour in Australia featuring Dr. Albert K Barume, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Les Malezer (Gubbi Gubbi, Butchulla, Gamiliroi), Hub Fellow and chairperson of FAIRA, who also played an integral part in the historic adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

They were also joined by fellow speakers Aunty Jill Gallagher (Gunditjmara), CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and Associate Professor Hannah McGlade (Minang) of Curtin University, who was a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



Lunchtime Treaty Seminar with Dr Harry Hobbs

Dr Harry Hobbs is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law and Justice at the University of New South Wales. On Thursday 15 May the Hub hosted Dr Hobbs to deliver a lunchtime seminar titled *Treaties and Law-Making Power: Delegated or Inherent?*



White Noise with Carwyn Jones

In May 2025 renowned Māori legal scholar, Carwyn Jones (Ngāti Kahungunu) a Treaty of Waitangi expert undertook a week of engagements with First Peoples and treaty organisations in Melbourne. The Hub was lucky to have Dr Jones join former Director of the Hub, Professor Eddie Cubillo for an in-person episode of the White Noise event and podcast series on Friday 30 May at the Melbourne Law School. The stimulating and inspiring discussion centred around Treaty, and a comparison of constitutionalism in New Zealand and Victoria.



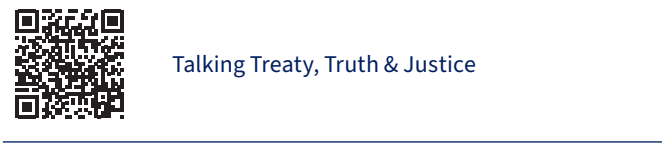
Talking Treaty, Truth & Justice

This event was held at the Law School in October 2025 and was co-hosted with ANTaR, City of Melbourne and The University of Melbourne.

The highly esteemed panel:

- Rueben Berg – Co-Chair, First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria.
- Travis Lovett – Executive Director, Centre for Truth Telling & Dialogue; former Deputy Chair & Commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.
- Dr Crystal McKinnon – Amangu Yamatji academic, historian and Indigenous studies scholar, Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne.
- Moderator: Professor Nicole Watson - Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub.

The event was bookmarked by two critical moments in Victoria’s Treaty journey — the Bill having just passed the lower house and awaiting its eventual passing through the upper house and into law. The presence of these leading voices in Indigenous leadership, scholarship and advocacy at this time brought depth, clarity and an understanding of achievement to the discussion, grounding the conversation in both lived experience and the historic significance of this next phase.



Reckoning and Reimagining

A key project for 2025, a workshop in August 2025 funded by the Indigenous Knowledges Institute. 75 Leaders in Indigenous legal education in Australia, including the community of Indigenous legal academics and key collaborators, came together for a two-day workshop to engage in meaningful dialogue and explore strategies to improve the development and delivery of Indigenous curriculum.

Together we set out to deepen our shared understanding of the skills and knowledges required to develop cultural capability in legal services settings and appropriate pedagogies to shift our institutions towards these goals. From the discussions, workshops and contributions of the two days, a Workshop Report and Communique were developed, calling for the transformation of the Indigenous legal education landscape, which can be viewed also on the new Reckoning and Reimagining webpage.

The feedback on the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. The Hub is retaining this as a key ongoing project and is scoping turning this into a Biannual event, as well as championing the key outputs and calls to action from the event that were recorded in the Workshop Report and Communique.



Reckoning and Reimagining
See the workshop report and communique here.



The Workshop also ran two concurrent public events under the event program:

Dreaming on an Indigenous Legal Education

Dreaming on Indigenous Legal Education was a public lecture and the first event in the Reckoning and Reimagining workshop program. On Thursday 21 August we gathered with leading experts to imagine legal education grounded in Indigenous authority and transformative approaches beyond colonial constraints.

Panel members included Dr Carwyn Jones, Jidah Clarke – chair of the Treaty Authority, and Professor Eddie Cubillo.



Dreaming on an Indigenous Legal Education

Book Launch – Legal Education Through an Indigenous Lens

As part of its event program, the Hub were delighted to officially launch the book Legal Education Through an Indigenous Lens: Decolonising the Law School By: Nicole Watson (Editor), Heather Douglas (Editor).



Mumuk Cubillo

The Hub was sad to announce the departure of Professor Eddie Cubillo from his role as the Inaugural Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub to take up a position building a centre at another part of the University. The Hub hosted a farewell for Eddie and 100 of our closest colleagues and friends on Friday 28 February to thank him for his enormous contribution to the Hub team and our community.

Prof. Cubillo has grown the Hub from its inception into a trusted voice in advocacy, teaching with great generosity. During his tenure he has won awards for his innovative On-Country legal education, White Noise program and exceptional research contribution through this thesis on community-control and the functions of the Aboriginal Legal Services. He has done this while also speaking publicly about his experiences of discrimination, doing the important work of holding legal education institutions accountable to their justice claims. As a Larrakia, Wadjigan and Central Arrente man Dr Cubillo is the first Indigenous person to be appointed a Professor at the Melbourne Law School.

From Professor Cubillo:

“It has been an immense privilege to work alongside the incredible staff, advisory, students, and community at the Indigenous Law & Justice Hub. Together, we have built a space for advocacy, learning, and truth-telling that continues to challenge and shape the future of Indigenous justice.

I am deeply grateful for the relationships forged, the knowledge shared, and the unwavering commitment to First Nations justice that so many of you embody. While my focus will shift to my new role next month, I remain committed to staying connected and supportive of the important work that continues through the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub and our broader shared efforts. I look forward to seeing the Hub continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.

Thank you for your support, collaboration, and the many memories we have created together. Stay strong, stay connected, and keep pushing for justice.”

Justice Lincoln Crowley – Seabrook Chambers Public Lecture

The Honourable Justice Lincoln Crowley was hosted by the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub on his visit to the Melbourne Law School for the 2026 Seabrook Chambers Public Lecture on March 27th. Justice Crowley, Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland, is a Warramunga man and the first Indigenous person to be appointed to a superior court in Australia. Justice Crowley broke down the challenges facing judiciary independence and the administration of justice in Australia, and what can be done to counter these threats.



Justice Lincoln Crowley – Seabrook Chambers Public Lecture

Visitors

The Hub Continued its Hub Fellows Program in 2025 with the onboarding of Les Malezer, who was able to access his Hub Fellows Program stipend to facilitate a public lecture, titled, ‘All Peoples Are Equal: A Critique on International Law by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’. The Hub was honoured to work with the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (‘FAIRA’) to Host **Dr Albert K Barume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** at the Melbourne Law School on Wednesday 19 March for a series of community engagements and a public lecture.



Engagement

The New Reading Group

Throughout 2025, the Hub once again brought together a dedicated community of researchers and practitioners to deepen their understanding of key literature on Indigenous-Settler treaties. As the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria and the State worked through a period of intense negotiations under the Victorian [Treaty Negotiations Framework](#), the group thought deeply together about what treaties offer and what it means to honour a treaty, drawing on a range of literature from Australia and abroad.

Ngā Rangahautira

In August the hub hosted a study trip for 12 students from Ngā Rangahautira, the Māori law student society of University of Victoria Wellington. This visit arose out of the relationship through visits to Wellington through the Hub’s subject Indigenous Law in Aotearoa and Australia.

To reciprocate the hospitality shown to the Hub in Aotearoa, we coordinated a program including lectures and learning from Hub staff, and visits with colleagues at key organisations including the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, The Treaty Assembly, The Treaty Authority and the Human Rights Law Centre. We also worked closely with the newly established Oceania Institute, Murrup Barrack and Tarwirri on the visits and a number of Indigenous students at MLS got involved in the visits as well. This is part of growing our links with Māori law and justice organisations in Aotearoa. The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub’s developing relationship with the University of Victoria Wellington has allowed for cultural exchange between the law student cohorts, establishing connections in the process.



MLS Student Engagement

In 2025 the Hub continued its involvement with Indigenous Law School students, hosting student lunches and supporting students through their time at the Law School. The Indigenous Student community page remained an important resource, where Hub staff regularly relay information to current students, including any opportunities, such as First Nations internships, casual work or graduate programs in the legal professions. One initiative in 2025 was having the law school install monitors and work stations in the Indigenous Student space on level 1 of the law school.

The Hub also ran an International Student Welcome as part of Orientation week in February. Incoming international students to the Juris Doctor and Masters program had an opportunity to explore the importance and relevance of Indigenous Australian culture, lore and law on the parklands in front of the Melbourne Law School building. They experienced a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country by members of the Wurundjeri Council.

Taylor Broadbent Internship

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub was lucky to have Cherokee Nation citizen Taylor Broadbent interning with us in Semester 1. Taylor is a Fulbright Scholar, studying a Master of Public Policy at the University of Melbourne in 2025. Before this, she worked for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs under the Biden administration. Taylor remained closely engaged with the ILJH for the remainder of 2025. She is now working as a Tribal policy analyst for the Oklahoma Policy Institute.

Sharing Knowledge

Building and sharing critical knowledge that supports community justice needs. This year the Hub has taken part in a number of research and knowledge sharing projects across a broad range of areas, continuing to build our research capability.

Train-the-Trainer

The Hub is reforming the Juris Doctor curriculum to embed Indigenous knowledge, but many academics still need training to deliver the updated content. The Train the Trainers project is addressing this by identifying what supports or hinders effective teaching. In 2025, the project surveyed and interviewed MLS staff about their confidence and capability in teaching Indigenous related legal content, and the findings are now being reviewed with a report to follow.

Treaty Webpage

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub launched a comprehensive Treaty webpage in December 2025. The site brings together laws, agreements, regulations and resources that support First Nations-led treaty advocacy and education. It offers an accessible overview of treaty processes across Australia, including event recordings, news, reading lists and materials covering both national and international treaty-making. The webpage highlights that treaty is grounded in justice, relationships and self-determination, and provides information on jurisdictional approaches, global comparisons, relevant legal frameworks, and additional teaching and community resources.

Publications

Select Committee on Measuring Outcomes for First Nations Communities

In February 2025, the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub provided a submission to the Select Committee on Measuring Outcomes for First Nations Communities Inquiry into the Current Regression on Closing the Gap Targets.

A Rejection 30 Years in the Making

Published by ILJH inaugural Director Eddie Cubillo, this article provides an analysis the failure of the Voice referendum within the context of systemic systems of settler-colonialism within social discourse, legal institutions and political arenas that undermine Indigenous representation and reconciliation movements over the past 30 years.

White Noise Episode 11: Treaty Myths with Luke Fitzmaurice-Brown

For this episode of the continuing White Noise series, Jaynaya Dwyer connected with Dr Luke Fitzmaurice-Brown, Senior Lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka Law School, on the lands of Te Atiawa in Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington). Learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the manner in which Tikanga Māori, Māori law and custom is considered by the common law in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Frontier Extractivism: Climate Change and Indigenous Dispossession

Written by acting director Lee Godden, this article adopts the concept of frontier encounters to explore the continuities between extractivism as a phenomenon characterising the immediate colonial phase in Australia following assertion of British sovereignty, and a contemporary energy resource extraction frontier in the Northern Territory.

Native Title: Steps Toward a Decolonised Law Curriculum

Also written by acting director Lee Godden, this chapter in ‘Legal Education through an Indigenous Lens’, edited by Hub member Heather Douglas and Director as of 2026 Nicole Watson with editorial assistance from Hub staff member Claire Bredenoord, critically analyses the conceptual complexity and inherent hybridity of native title, drawing on Professor Godden’s experiences of teaching native title since Mabo v Queensland [No 2].



See the Treaty Page here.



Select Committee submission here



A Rejection 30 Years in the Making



White Noise Episode 11



Frontier Extractivism: See the article here



Native Title: See the book chapter here

Hub staff

Farewells

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub farewelled Director Eddie Cubillo and Indigenous Engagement Coordinator Paul Hausia in 2025. Both staff members are beloved members of the Hub team, and we wish the very best for them.

Brief absences

Nearing the end of 2025 Hub staff have briefly we departed from the MLS to link into international academic networks and sector-building work in the domain of Indigenous law.

Jaynaya Dwyer has taken leave from the ILJH to undertake an LLM at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. The University of Victoria delivers some of the most developed Indigenous legal research and education internationally, with Dr. Val Napoleon, eminent legal scholar of the Sauteau First Nation, founder of the Indigenous Legal Research Unit and responsible for the University’s joint JD and Indigenous Law degree. Jaynaya will return in October 2026.

Tyson Holloway-Clarke in October has been seconded to the Treaty Authority to work on the effective rollout of the inaugural First Peoples’ Assembly election following the passage of Statewide Treaty through Victorian Parliament. Statewide Treaty’s establishment of a singular representative institution for Victorian First Peoples, Gellung Warl, makes the election in early 2026 an important point in Victorian Treaty and Tyson will be of great help.

Greetings to new staff

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub is looking forward to greeting new staff members coming to the MLS in 2026.

Dr Sakshi Aravind has been appointed a Lecturer with the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub, starting in mid 2026. Dr Sakshi is currently an academic at the University of Newcastle. She completed her PhD at Cambridge University. Her research focuses on Indigenous peoples, and the environment, and the challenges of climate change.

Caitlin Hull has joined the ILJH through the University’s Melbourne Indigenous Professional Employment Program (MIPEP). Caitlin will work across the Hub’s suite of activities, focusing primarily on the development of the Indigenous Law Journal.

Short note – Director Nicole Watson

My name is Nicole Watson, and I am a Munanjali and Birri Gubba person. I come from a big Murri family and I grew up in south-east Queensland. I have been a legal academic for roughly 20 years. During that time, I have worked at the University of Technology Sydney, the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales. However, my most exciting role to date is the Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub.

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub is important for the community at Melbourne Law School. It is also significant to Indigenous law students and academics across Australia because it is a space in which we can unify, educate and agitate for recognition of our legal traditions and our historical experience of state law.

The importance of the Hub was highlighted by the Reckoning and Reimagining Workshop in August 2025. For over two days 75 Indigenous legal academics and our allies came together to share war stories and dream of a legal education that is inclusive of all of Australia’s legal traditions. Being an Indigenous legal academic in Australia can be an isolating experience. Many of us have been the only Indigenous person in our respective faculties at different times in our careers. One is vulnerable to loneliness and an onerous colonial load. However, those experiences were pushed aside during the Workshop, as old friendships were renewed and new friendships were formed.

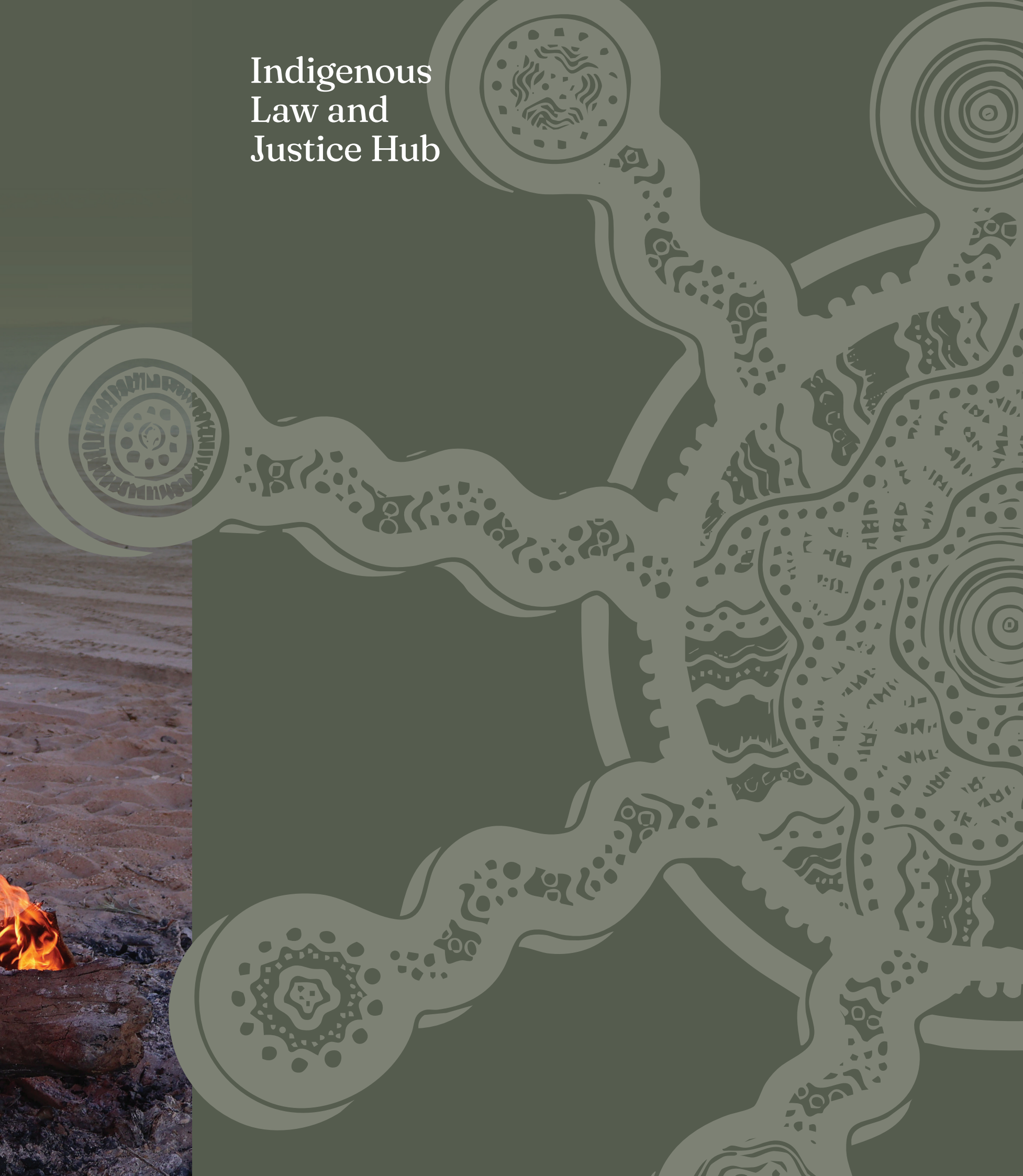
The Workshop inspired me to apply for the role of Director, and I commenced my employment at Melbourne Law School in October. I am grateful to my colleagues at the Hub who have been very welcoming. I also express my gratitude to Professor Lee Godden who acted in the Director’s role throughout 2025.

I look forward to getting to know our First Nations students, and working together to ensure that they have enriching experiences at Melbourne Law School. Over the coming months we will be holding our inaugural gathering of First Nations alumni and students. We will also be launching the *Law Journal of First Peoples: Rights, Resistance and Revitalisation*, an online and open-access journal. I look forward to seeing the Hub continue to grow and deliver important outcomes in 2026.



Nicole Watson
Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub

Indigenous
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