



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Melbourne
Law School

2024 Annual Report

Indigenous Law and Justice Hub

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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.

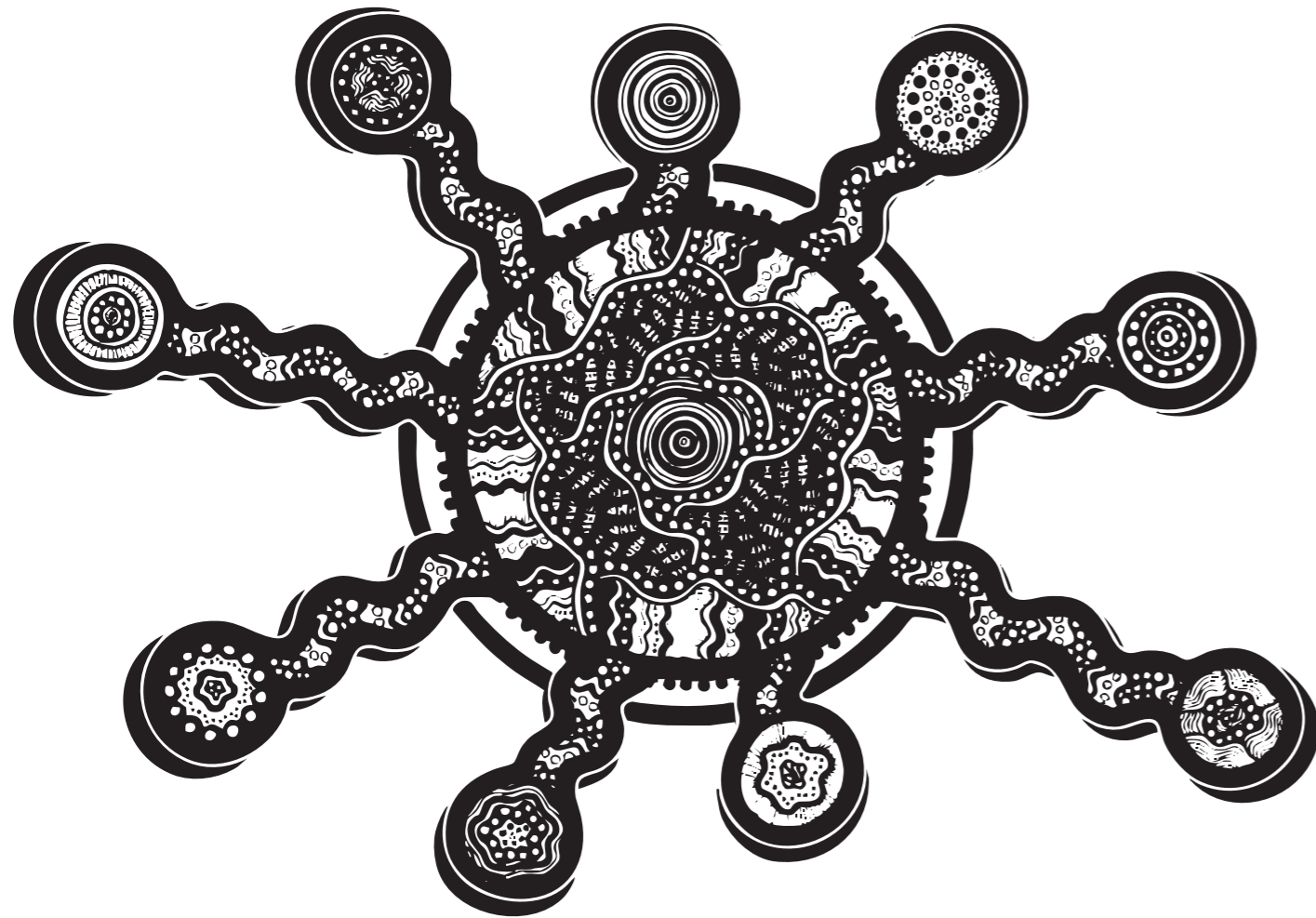
We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

In making this Acknowledgment 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 (Wirundjeri).

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

As we close the chapter on 2024, it's a moment to reflect on the incredible progress and unwavering commitment of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub at Melbourne Law School. This year has been marked by significant achievements, all made possible by the dedication, hard work, and passion of our remarkable team.

At the heart of our mission is a steadfast commitment to fostering cultural safety and challenging institutional racism within the legal system, the profession, and legal education. This year, we have taken meaningful steps in transforming our curriculum and student support systems to ensure Indigenous perspectives are not just included but embedded in the fabric of our academic programs. From our unique On Country learning experiences, to the expansion of pastoral care initiatives, we continue striving to make Melbourne Law School a place where Indigenous students feel supported, valued, and celebrated.

Our collaborations with Indigenous communities and legal professionals remain strong as we push forward on vital law reform initiatives. The growth of our outreach through the White Noise public lecture and podcast series has amplified Indigenous voices in the legal world, ensuring that our students and the broader legal community engage with diverse perspectives.

One of this year's proudest moments was witnessing our Indigenous law students excel in their studies and professional journeys. Their resilience, intelligence, and dedication to their communities are truly inspiring, reinforcing the importance of creating spaces that empower Indigenous students in the legal field.

Looking ahead, I am filled with pride and anticipation. The 'Hub' will continue challenging the status quo, creating opportunities for learning and growth, and advocating for meaningful change in the legal system. A key focus in the coming year will be expanding our research program, particularly exploring issues of sovereignty, justice, and cultural rights. By examining systemic barriers and advancing solutions grounded in Indigenous knowledge and law, we aim to drive lasting change for First Nations peoples.

As we continue our advocacy for the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, we acknowledge there is much work ahead. We are proud to build on the foundation we have laid—enhancing the curriculum, strengthening support networks for Indigenous students, and deepening collaborations with Indigenous legal professionals and communities.

While my own journey at the Hub is coming to a close this year – at least in its current iteration, as I transition to a new role leading the Mabo Centre, I look forward to supporting new Indigenous leadership at MLS and continuing to collaborate.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your support and guidance throughout my tenure as Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub. While my focus will shift, I remain committed to supporting the Hub and our broader shared efforts. I am confident that the groundwork we have laid together will continue to flourish, and I look forward to seeing the Hub grow in the years to come.

Warm regards,

Professor Eddie Cubillo
Director, Indigenous Law and Justice Hub
Melbourne Law School



“I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your support and guidance throughout my tenure as Director of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub.”

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 2024 are presented under the Hub's strategic pillars:

Purpose

Putting the legal profession in service of Indigenous peoples' justice aspirations.



Strategic Pillars

Convening conversations

Generating reciprocal relationships of trust governed in respect for Indigenous knowledges and expertise on justice.

Educating

Educating with a view to transforming the legal profession to support First Nations justice.

Sharing knowledge

Building and sharing critical knowledge that supports community justice needs.



Advisory Council

2024 Advisory Council members

In 2024 we had the benefit of the guidance of exceptional members:

Professor John Borrows (Chippewa), University of Victoria Faculty of Law, British Columbia

Karri Walker (Nyiyparli), Senior Lawyer - First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Keshi Moore (Banjima), LSS Indigenous Student Representative

Josie Mortimer (Ngemba), LSS Indigenous Student Co-opt

Tim Goodwin (Yuin), Barrister

Tony McAvoy (Wirdi), Barrister

Dr Sana Nakata (Torres Strait), Academic

Professor Pip Nicholson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community) and Deputy Provost

Elly Patira (Gunai and Ngapuhi), Public Servant

Strategic Planning

In 2024, the Hub was lucky to have Yamagigu Consulting undertake a strategic planning process with our Advisory Council membership, which will assist in shaping our strategy and governance over the next five years. Key insights from his process include:

Strengths

- Student support and development
- Decolonising the curriculum
- Raising awareness on various First Nations justice matters
- Access to networks
- Contributions to important cases
- Relationship building
- Inviting physical space

Areas for focus

- Refining strategic direction
- Enhancing resourcing
- Amplifying research and academic contributions
- Building relationships within Melbourne Law School

Risks

- Succession planning
- Cultural safety of Melbourne Law School
- Building community trust of MLS as a whole
- Financial independence

Our team



Professor Eddie Cubillo – Director

Eddie is a Larrakia, Wadjigan and Central Arrente man with strong family links in both the urban and rural areas throughout the Northern Territory. Eddie is recognised nationally and internationally for his experience and expertise in Indigenous governance and justice service delivery to First Nations Peoples, sitting on a number of boards and government bodies.



Professor Lee Godden – Associate 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 Yolngu 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.

Thanks to our faculty members in 2024:

Professor Ann Genovese, Professor Heather Douglas, Kate Jama, Sarah Schwartz, Dr Olivia Barr, Dr Erin O'Donnell, Cassandra Seery and Dr Jordana Silverstein.

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 pedagogical 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.

The Hub also continues to support the Melbourne Law School's current and future Indigenous students, as well as alum, to achieve their full potential in their studies and careers.

In 2024 our education focus included:

- Developing our Juris Doctor elective offering on Indigenous rights
- Growing relationships through our On Country teaching
- Enhancing Indigenous curriculum in the compulsory Juris Doctor program
- Formalising Indigenous student support programs at MLS

Key achievements as a team in 2024 include:



All JD students introduced to Indigenous rights in first two weeks in law school through orientation and reflective assessment on Treaty panel



Prof. Cubillo asked to write graduate yearbook forward, and three students mention Hub subjects as their yearbook JD highlight



Delivering five elective subjects including two innovative On Country travelling subjects in the JD program



MLS executive endorsement of an Indigenous course learning outcome for the JD



A new Racial Justice subject approved for the Juris Doctor for 2025



Establishing new Indigenous Engagement Coordinator position

Juris Doctor electives in 2024

Law and Indigenous Peoples

An introductory course on Indigenous rights in Australia, structured around the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, delivered by Jaynaya Dwyer and Professor Eddie Cubillo.

In 2024 we were honoured to be joined by an exceptional range of colleagues, who offered guest lectures on their areas of expertise:

- Dr Lyndon Ormond – Parker (Alyawarra) on intellectual and cultural property and cultural heritage reforms.
- Dr Todd Fernando (Wiradjuri) on intersectionality and their work as the former Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities.
- Barbara Shaw (Kaytetye, Arrente, Warramunga and Warlpiri) on discriminatory measures and challenging the Northern Territory Intervention.
- Justice Joe Williams (Ngati Pūkenga, Waitaha and Tapuika) from the Supreme Court of New Zealand on legal pluralism and Indigenous legal advocacy in courts.
- Dr Andrew Erueti (Nga Ruahinerangi, Ngati Ruanui, Ati Hau Nui A Paparangi) from University of Auckand on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Treaty: Indigenous-Settler Agreements

This year our treaty subject was taught as a legal research stream by Jaynaya Dwyer and Professor Shaun McVeigh. We were delighted at this point in treaty negotiations to have a group of 15 dedicated students writing their capstone thesis on possibilities and potentials for Treaty.

Students heard from colleagues at the coalface of the Treaty process:

- Professor Maggie Walter (Palawa), Yoorrook Justice Commissioner
- Jidah Clark (Djab Wurrung), Chair of the Treaty Authority
- Elly Patira (Gunai and Ngapuhi), former Deputy Secretary Indigenous-State Relations Branch of Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Ben Schokman - Head of Policy and Negotiations at First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Indigenous Legal Advocacy Clinic

In 2024, the Indigenous Law and Advocacy Clinic partnered with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (VACCHO), Change the Record (CtR) and The Foundation for Aboriginal & Islander Research Action (FAIRA). Students worked on policy and advocacy projects for these organisations on topics including healthcare in prisons and dental care for Aboriginal people, domestic and international standards for the treatment and handling of children with disabilities in the criminal legal system and supporting a submission for a Parliamentary Inquiry into a Federal Charter of Human Rights. During lectures with Sarah Schwarz and invited guests, students explored topics such as the history of Indigenous social movements, critical Indigenous theory, critiques of social-justice lawyering, messaging and advocacy, strategic litigation, law reform, campaign work, and creative expression.

Racial Justice

In 2024 the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub developed a proposal for a subject offering on racial justice, which passed through the electives committee to be offered in 2025.

Intended for final year or equivalent JD students, a Racial Justice subject fills a critical curriculum gap to foster student capability to critically discuss historical development of the concepts of race, whiteness and Indigeneity in relation to institutions of Australian law and exercise of public powers today.



The Hon. Justice Joe Williams sharing with JD students in the Law and Indigenous Peoples' class on building strategies to work with the structures of law, which is 'powerwritten down in words.'



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. These innovative subjects have been designed by Professor Eddie Cubillo and Jaynaya Dwyer from the Hub. The 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.

“Going to Larrakia Country for the Access to Justice on Country subject was an invaluable experience in my law studies and development as a future legal professional. The subject was truly intensive, in that I learnt more about the role of law and legal practitioners in affecting the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than I could have ever learnt in years of learning only on campus.”

Claire, JD student

Access to Justice on Country

This course is taught by Dr. Cubillo and Ms. Dwyer as an intensive subject on Larrakia Country in Darwin for two weeks in July, with 16 students in 2024. The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub was pleased to include a visitor from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department on the trip to share in the learning. The 2024 cohort met with 42 speakers from 22 organisations.

Some highlights included:

- Meeting with the CEOs of two major **Larrakia Traditional Owner organisations**; Larrakia Development Corporation and Larrakia Nation, to understand their self-determination functions, especially through community justice, social services, and economic development work
- The privilege of meeting with Larrakia Elders, Cherry and Penny Cubillo, at the site of the Kahlin Compound (a stolen generations institution) to **learn about the impact of the policies of forced removal firsthand from Cubillo family experiences**
- Participating in a workshop on working with Aboriginal people as a lawyer with Local Court **Judge David Woodroffe**, former Principal Legal Officer at NAAJA and the first Aboriginal judge in the Northern Territory
- Meeting with **Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Jeswyn Yogaratanam** and **Children's Commissioner Shahleena Musk** (Larrakia) to hear about their current agendas.

Indigenous Law in Aotearoa and Australia

This comparative subject visits Aotearoa New Zealand to learn about the influence of Tikanga Māori (Indigenous law) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty) in shaping public relations in Aotearoa, and what lessons we can draw for home.

In 2024 14 students undertook the subject, with colleagues also joining us from the Victorian Treaty Authority.

Highlights included:

- Meeting Justice Sir Joe Williams at the **Supreme Court of New Zealand**, to learn his expertise on Te Tiriti, Tino rangatiratanga, and his role as a Māori trailblazer in the judicial sphere.
- Visiting the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Marae with Precious Clark, learning the connection to Country the Tangata Whenua (local people) maintain and how that connection underpins cultural connection.
- Visiting the **Waitangi Tribunal** to learn from presiding officers and members about the unique role of the institution in supporting accountability for treaty breaches.
- Our trip was made possible by our friends at a range of Indigenous, government, legal and NGO organisations, as well as colleagues at the University of Auckland, the Auckland University of Technology, University of Victoria Wellington and Te Wananga o Raukawa (the Māori University of Raukawa).



Access to Justice on Country 2024 – Learning on Larrakia Country



2024 cohort attending the NAIDOC march in Darwin, Larrakia Country

Building Indigenous Student Community at MLS

In 2024, the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub strengthened its commitment to fostering a supportive and connected Indigenous student community at Melbourne Law School. A key part of this work has been led by Paul Hausia, who joined the Hub as Indigenous Engagement Coordinator.

Paul brings a wealth of experience from his background in child protection and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, where he worked closely with vulnerable communities, advocating for better support structures and justice outcomes. His transition into higher education has allowed him to apply this expertise in supporting Indigenous law students, creating culturally safe spaces, and facilitating meaningful engagement with Indigenous legal issues at both national and international levels.

Paul has played an instrumental role in strengthening student engagement and wellbeing at MLS by:

- Providing tailored support to Indigenous students, seeking to ensure they feel connected and empowered in their studies.
- Serving on the Indigenous Alternate Pathway Committee, helping to improve access and entry pathways for Indigenous students into the Juris Doctor program.
- Engaging with prospective Indigenous students, answering questions about MLS programs, entry requirements, and available opportunities.
- Hosting fortnightly coffee catchups and student lunches, creating a relaxed and supportive space for Indigenous students to connect.

Leading the development of the Indigenous Alumni Wall, which will celebrate the achievements of Indigenous MLS graduates, inspiring future students while showcasing the contributions of Indigenous legal professionals.

Highlights this year include student lunches with prominent Indigenous lawyers including Professor Val Napoleon, Sir Justice Joe Williams, Karri Walker and Nicole Watson.

Attending the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Conference in Hawai'i was another major highlight of 2024. The conference brought together Indigenous educators, leaders, and scholars from across the world to discuss Indigenous self-determination, education, and justice. Paul also engaged with the University of Hawai'i's Student Services team, strengthening institutional relationships and fostering potential future collaborations.

“It is a pleasure to be able to work to bring the kinds of values – based learning to MLS I would have loved as a student”

Jaynaya, Lecturer at the Hub

Indigenous Curriculum Review

The review of the JD compulsory curriculum is ongoing through the MLS Indigenous Curriculum Working Group, on which members of the Hub sit. This process is substantially enhancing the quality of core curriculum at MLS.

Supporting the Working Group, Hub Research Assistant Claire Bredenoord has been producing excellent research and advice for MLS core curriculum teachers on available resources related to Indigenous experiences of law.

In 2024 the Hub was able to obtain MLS executive endorsement of a Juris Doctor Course Intended Learning Outcome and a Graduate Attribute on Indigenous cultural capability.

An Indigenous CILO and Graduate Attribute are significant statement of organisational values and a step in transforming legal education in MLS, providing a framework for our Indigenous curriculum and assessment.

A highlight of the refreshed curriculum this year was starting the JD program with a Treaty case study in the Legal Method and Reasoning class. The Hub was joined by Rueben Berg, Co-chair of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and Alumni/Advisory member, Karri Walker to speak about the path to Treaty in Victoria with the newest students at MLS. Hub Director Eddie Cubillo hosted the panel and shared frankly about institutional racism and motivation to work in Universities for change. Students completed one of their first assessments at law school on these themes.

Through the curriculum review we were also delighted to host Justice Joe Williams presenting a faculty teaching seminar with a paper titled *‘Decolonising the law: can we start with the law schools?’*



Eddie Cubillo and Rueben Berg, Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly Of Victoria address the First-year cohort in 2024

Convening Conversation

Generating reciprocal relationships of trust grounded in truth telling and respect for Indigenous knowledges, laws and expertise. The Hub is a space which invites deep conversation and lasting relationships.

Public events

In 2024 the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub continued to bring black excellence to MLS and showcase Indigenous excellence in Law and Justice through the White Noise series and collaborating on other major events.

White Noise with Professor Val Napoleon

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub hosted Law Foundation Chair of Indigenous Justice and Governance at University of Victoria (Canada), Professor Val Napoleon.

Dr Todd Fernando Lecture with the MLS Queer Portfolio

The Melbourne University Law Students' Society's Queer Portfolio and the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub presented the Annual Queer Lecture, delivered by former Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ communities Todd Fernando. Todd Fernando (he/him) is a descendant of the Kalarie peoples of the Wiradjuri nation, and identifies as queer. Todd delivered an inspiring lecture titled 'Culture, Colonies, and Camp: Queer Indigenous Rights across the Pacific,' exploring the powerful intersections of Indigeneity, colonialism, and queerness.

White Noise with Tim Goodwin

The Indigenous Law and Justice Hub hosted leading barrister and Yuin Man, Timothy Goodwin. Mr Goodwin and Dr Eddie Cubillo discussed truth telling and reallocation of public power.

Decarceration Symposium by the Public Interest Law Network

The Public Interest Law Network and Indigenous Law and Justice Hub were proud to present Unlocking Justice – A Decarceration Symposium. We were pleased to welcome Debbie Kilroy OAM as the keynote speaker for the event. Through this model the Hub facilitates grants for student events, where we are able to then provide guidance and support student projects.

Caldwell Lecture by Sir Justice Joe Williams

The Hub was joined by Sir Justice Joe Williams of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, as the Trinity College Caldwell Fellow. The Hub was pleased to promote his speaking at the 2024 Caldwell Lecture hosted by Trinity College. The lecture was titled *Mā te ture anō te ture e āki* (*The Law must look itself in the mirror*) and discussed how law, including our conception of law and its purpose, is changing in ways that are providing a firmer foothold for First Nations in the life of post-colonial States. The judge situates these developments within the wider context of the contemporary search for a durable post-colonial identity. Considering the parallel journeys of New Zealand and Australia as case studies.

Indigenous Survivance Workshop

The Hub was involved in hosting a three-day Indigenous survivance and environmental crisis workshop with Traditional Owners from Australia, Tribal Nations from the United States, Sámi from Sapmi (Sweden, Norway, Finland), and Māori from Aotearoa, as well as non-Indigenous allies. Congratulations to Hub member Erin O'Donnell on this work as part of their ARC Discovery Grant.



Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder Uncle David Wandin at the Indigenous Survivance Workshop



Visitors to the Hub

The Hub seeks to be a welcoming place where people can come to share ideas, and to facilitate connections amongst Indigenous people and those interested in Indigenous justice, locally and globally.

Erin Roxburgh (Ngati Porou) - University of Victoria Wellington

Erin completed a second residency at the Hub this year, teaching into the pre-departure classes for Indigenous Law in Aotearoa and Australia and collaborated on research. Erin is a Lecturer in Management at Te Herenga Waka, University of Victoria Wellington, whose research focuses on Indigenous governance and embedding te ao Māori (the Māori world) in the workplace.

Justice Joe Williams (Ngati Pūkenga, Waitaha and Tapuika) - Supreme Court of New Zealand

During their visit to Australia the Hub was able to coordinate a range of knowledge sharing visits, including the Judge presenting at the State-Wide Gathering of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, meeting with Koori Services Unit of Court Services Victoria and presenting at the Federal Court.

Christine Palmer (Arrernte-Kaytete)

The Hub was fortunate to have the wonderful Christine Palmer come and visit with us. Christine is working with Hub staff Alex Bowen, PhD student in Linguistics, researching lawyers communication with Aboriginal clients in the Northern Territory. Christine and Alex presented to law academics about judicial communication and understanding the criminal legal system and also to law students about lawyer-client communication, skills and understanding for working with Aboriginal people in Central Australia.

Christine Palmer is a Kaytetye and Arrernte woman and a counsellor with over 30 years of experience in government and non-government social services across Alice Springs and Central Australia. Christine's work includes supporting large families with complex dynamics, serving as a Bringing Them Home counsellor for the Stolen Generation, and advocating for those affected by the NT judicial system.

Jeff Hewitt (Cree)

The Hub was delighted to see Jeff Hewitt visit from Osgoode Hall to teach Comparative Indigenous Rights in the Melbourne Law Masters Program.



Hub members at faculty presentation with Christine Palmer



The New Reading Group

In 2024, we established a reading group and held 10 sessions, prioritising Indigenous scholarship and works that ‘bring a tingle down the spine.’ The New Reading Group is convened by Jaynaya Dwyer, Dylan Asafo and Kate Jama.

The New Reading Group is a reading and community-building project with a through-line of ethics of solidarity - practicing accountability, responsibility and speaking up.



Invasion day - marching together

We were delighted at the community of students and staff which got together from MLS to march on January 26th at the Naarm Invasion Day rally.



Unimelb open day

Along with Naarm Law Students we welcomed prospective students to MLS with a banner asking what actions they would take to support First Nations Justice beyond the referendum. School students always have the best answers for us!

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.

Teacher training project

Eddie Cubillo and Jaynaya Dwyer are working with an Advisory Committee of leading indigenous scholars, John Borrows, Nicole Watson, Marcelle Burns, Luke Fitzmaurice and Cassandra Seery to develop understandings of the experience of non-Indigenous teachers facilitating delivery of Indigenous curriculum in Australian law schools, with MLS as a case study.

The project supports curriculum renewal by understanding barriers and enablers to effectively teaching the new curriculum in classrooms so that academics can be appropriately supported and prepared to teach an Indigenous curriculum.

Other highlights

Delighted to be featured in *One Mind, One Heart* documentary regarding the Yirrikala Bark Petitions.

Professor Cubillo continued to sit on the National Justice Policy Partnership for the Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department.

Hub member Cassandra Seery joined as an Independent Member of the Victorian Government Stolen Generations Reparations Panel.

As part of a research project on developing a model for supporting non-Indigenous teachers’ confidence in teaching Indigenous law curriculum, we have completed interviews with law school staff discussing experiences teaching Indigenous law ideas, as well as Indigenous scholars with expertise in Indigenous curriculum development from Australia, Aotearoa, and Canada.

White Noise Podcast

This year, we continued to release long-form interviews with experts in Indigenous justice, which can be teaching resources and aim to reach a wider audience than traditional academic publications.

Sir Justice Joe Williams – achieving a cognitive shift

During Sir Justice Joe Williams’ visit to the University of Melbourne for the 2024 Caldwell Lecture, the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub was privileged to share a conversation on law, legal education and Indigenous law. Justice Joe’s iwi are Ngati Pūkenga, Waitaha and Tapuika, from the east coast of the north island of Aotearoa.

John Borrows and Michael Johnston – Building treaty relationships

Jaynaya Dwyer spoke with Professor John Borrows and Michael Johnston, Anishinaabe lawyers and scholars visiting from Canada, discussing relations between Indigenous peoples and other parties through treaty relations, including thinking about Indigenous law and University institutions.

Dr Luke Fitzmaurice-Brown – Treaty myths

During the Hub’s Indigenous Law in Aotearoa and Australia elective trip, Jaynaya Dwyer was able to discuss Te Tiriti o Waitangi with Dr Luke Fitzmaurice-Brown. Dr Fitzmaurice-Brown is a Senior Lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka Law School.

Professor Eve Tuck – Education, future orientation and theories of change

Professor Eve Tuck joined the Hub to record a live seminar with Eddie Cubillo. Eve’s work focuses on collaborative Indigenous research, Indigenous feminisms, and land education and the conversation explored working towards Indigenous aspirations from within the academy.

Research Sabbatical Trip

For this trip Prof Cubillo was undertaking research on Indigenous legal academics' experiences of the academy, traveling to Aotearoa and Canada to meet and interview key people.

During this trip Eddie joined the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada ('AFOA') to take part in the collaborative education program developed by AFOA, Harvard Business School and the Native American Finance Officers Association ('NAFOA') *'Leading People and Investing to Build Sustainable Communities'*. This four-day program provides participants with the opportunity to view community investments in a broader context.

“It was a privilege to be surrounded by First Nation People from Canada, USA, Aotearoa, Australia to listen to their Nations experiences. Everyone had empathy and understanding of the ongoing struggles to be recognised as sovereign. The experience has rejuvenated me to stay strong for the cause!”

Professor Eddie Cubillo



Professor Cubillo giving evidence at the Yoorrook Justice Commission

Legal Education Publications

Submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission

In February 2024, Jaynaya Dwyer, Cassandra Seery, Dr Eddie Cubillo, and Elyse Keyser delivered a [submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission on “Legal Education Reforms for First Nations Justice.”](#) The submission outlines a pathway forward to work towards a tertiary legal education environment in Australia that is equipped to support true justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Legal Education Through an Indigenous Lens

Edited by Nicole Watson, Birri Gubba legal scholar and novelist based at the University of Technology Sydney, and Heather Douglas AM, Professor of the Melbourne Law School and Hub member, *Legal Education Through an Indigenous Lens* was first published in December of 2024. The book contains chapters from Hub and friends - including Professor Eddie Cubillo, Jaynaya Dwyer with Yoorrook Justice Commission evidence, Associate Professor Amanda Porter and Professor Eddie Cubillo on Clinical Legal Education and Professor Lee Godden on teaching Native Title. Research Assistant Claire Bredenoord of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub also lent her exceptional research and editorial assistance.

The book is available [via open access](#).

New spaces

We are delighted to have new artwork commissioned by Carly Donovan, Wiradjuri and Dhungatti woman to enliven the Hub space. The artwork seeks to bring a space of calm and reflection into the MLS building, drawing on the colours from the gardens outside.

An Indigenous legal history building tour

The Hub has collaborated with star students Palawa woman Maggie Blanden, and Banjima woman Keshi Moore, to produce the *Encounters of Laws: The Classroom Mural Project* audio tour of the MLS building.

Each episode tells a story to accompany a mural in the Melbourne Law School building picturing a key moment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander encounters with the settler legal system, showcasing First Nations advocacy and legal authority. You can listen while walking the halls of MLS, or from home.

[Listen to hosts Maggie and Keshi, both recent graduates of the Melbourne Law School, share a bit about the NAIDOC week episode](#)

Encounters of Laws: The Classroom Mural Project is an interdisciplinary research collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners of jurisprudence, history, and public art practice. It is the work of current and former scholars at Melbourne Law School, initiated by Wiradjuri legal scholar, Professor Mark McMillan.

The day-to-day custodianship of Professor McMillan's vision - its curation, installation, and text - has been a collaboration between Melbourne Law School colleagues Amy Johannes, a visual arts practitioner, and Ann Genovese, a historian of Australian jurisprudence.

The project saw carefully chosen images of historic meetings of First Nations and Australian laws installed on the walls of several classrooms in the Law Building. Accompanying these images is explanatory text. All text has been authorised by those who appear in the images, or their descendants.



Treaty

We are working in an exciting time for First Nations justice as negotiations of Australia's first Indigenous-settler Treaty are underway through the *Treaty for Victoria* architecture.

The Hub was delighted to attend the launch of Treaty Negotiations between the State and the Assembly and the launch of the authority, seeing the infrastructure of Treaty for Victoria grow. We hope to produce Treaty-ready graduates.

Professor Cubillo continued to support the Treaty process through his role on the Treaty Authority selection committee.

This year we organised for the Honourable Sir Justice Joe Williams, Māori Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, to present to the First People's Assembly, the Treaty Authority and the First People's State Relations negotiations teams on the Aotearoa New Zealand courts and Indigenous law. We hope to continue to support the Victorian Treaty process by facilitating knowledge sharing across jurisdictions with treaty experts internationally.

We were also able to support professional development in the Treaty sector, through Authority members knowledge exchange in Aotearoa, and by releasing a number of White Noise conversations to promote comparative thinking about treaty possibilities.

I looked around the room when the Chair of the Treaty Authority, Jidah Clarke spoke. I saw everyone had a sense of pride and a tear in their eye. I could see that we were all thinking of those in our families who were no longer with us, who had endured very tough times and fought for our rights. To be present at such a historical moment in this country's short colonial history will remain with me forever! Always was, always will be!"

Professor Eddie Cubillo



Jaynaya Dwyer with Karri Walker and Andrew Williams from the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria at the launch of Victorian Treaty Negotiations

A final note

Thanks to Hub donors in 2024:

Lander & Rogers, Gourlay Charitable Trust; David Bailey and Elizabeth Gerber, Marina Halkias, Fran and Nicole Azzopardi and the Estate of Marjorie Elizabeth Wilks.

If you would like to support the hub, please contact Heather Bruer, Development Manager, Melbourne Law School heather.bruer@unimelb.edu.au

Thank you also to all the students who expressed their advocacy for justice on University campuses and beyond in 2024. You teach us so much and it is a pleasure to learn alongside you.

Welcome to the 'Hub bubs' born this year, whose presence in our office is a reminder of who we fight for a better world for.



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