

# AIPEP Scoping Study

## Decolonising Tertiary Psychology Education



Using Aboriginal Participatory Action Research (APAR) approach, AIPEP conducted a national survey of Australian psychology higher education provider's (HEP) experiences in decolonising psychology education and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students. Eighteen representatives from psychology HEPs participated in the survey and responses were thematically analysed via qualitative content analysis. Findings are presented in papers one and two. Paper three builds on the survey findings through an exploration of decolonising efforts from five psychology HEPs. The scoping study results provide a useful point of reference for psychology HEPs in their decolonising journeys.

1

### Decolonising tertiary psychology education in Australia: Processes, challenges and opportunities of curricula change

Through exploring psychology HEPs processes of cultural responsiveness and embedding of Indigenous knowledges into the psychology curriculum, these interconnecting themes were highlighted:

- Implementing effective policies
- Employing Indigenous staff
- Collaborating with Indigenous peoples
- Committing to cultural responsiveness journeys
- Decolonising curricula content
- Supportive governance and leadership processes
- Building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples
- Effectively resourcing decolonising processes
- Progressing staff cultural responsiveness learning journeys
- Valuing Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing, being, and doing



2

### Decolonising tertiary psychology student support in Australia: Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students

Exploring psychology HEPs strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students revealed four interconnecting themes:

- 1) Policies and structural support
- 2) Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and departments
- 3) Research and placement support
- 4) Processes supporting cultural safety

Findings illustrate the need for multipronged and layered initiatives to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology students and to enhance their recruitment, retention, and graduation.



3

### Decolonising tertiary psychology programs in Australia: Privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices

Five psychology HEPs were interviewed to explore their decolonising efforts in detail. Participants then joined a group yarning session where illustrative journeys were developed to highlight the diverse processes, strategies, and steps taken in decolonising psychology programs by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous psychology educators. These stories provide examples of "how to" privilege Indigenous knowledges and decolonising practices.

Common elements include:

- 1) Importance of relationality
- 2) Individual leadership and decolonisation (being brave and vulnerable)
- 3) Decentring and recentring whiteness (decolonisation and resistance to decolonisation)

