



Report from Monash Indigenous Congress meeting 2/2026 held 23 June 2026

Monash Indigenous Congress (Congress) met on 23 June, 2026, chaired by Professor Jay Phillips (Congress co-chair). Key matters considered included feedback from Monash University Council on the recent Congress review, Indigenous student enrolment, retention and success trends, input into the development of Monash's next strategic plan, and the draft Faculty of Education Indigenous Framework 2026-2030. Congress also discussed mechanisms to strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities, enhance student representation, and support Indigenous governance and research priorities across the University.

New members and Congress structure

Congress welcomed newly appointed members following the committee review, update to the Terms of Reference, and expanded membership model. The appointment of a co-chair, Professor Jay Phillips, Deputy Dean (Indigenous Strategy), Faculty of Education, was noted.

New staff representatives appointed for a two-year term were:

- Dale Stevens, Gungahdj, Centre Executive Coordinator, Monash Indigenous Studies Centre
- Yvette Watson, Mbabaram, Indigenous Academic Engagement Officer, William Cooper Institute
- Washule Bucknall, Nyul Nyul and Jukun, Indigenous Initiatives Program Officer, Monash Library
- Dr Kevin Moore, Gurindji, Indigenous Collections Coordinator, Monash Library
- Jesse Fleay, Nukunku, Ngadjuri, Whadjuk and Ballardong Noongar Boodja, Assistant Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts
- Aaron Wyatt, Noongar, Assistant Lecturer, Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music, Faculty of Arts
- Dr Jacinta Walsh, Jaru, Kitja and Yawuru, Lecturer, Monash Indigenous Studies Centre, Faculty of Arts
- Jeanene Booth, Lecturer, School of Education and Culture, Faculty of Education

Student representatives appointed for a one-year term were:

- Rebekah McEwan, Kalkadoon, PhD student, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, School of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
- Amarlie Lamont, Worimi, Bachelor of Business, Monash Business School

Strategy, governance and community engagement

Congress received an update from the Chair on recent and upcoming activities, including the launch of the Kindred People festival program, a new initiative designed to bring together Indigenous academics, community members and thinkers through a symposium and cultural and arts program, and recent NAIDOC Week events, highlighting the 50 Years of NAIDOC installation along the Menzies Building northside pillars. Congress also noted plans for a dedicated consultation led by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) to inform development of Monash's next strategic plan.

Congress received an update on implementation of the Indigenous Procurement Policy suite, with



publication now expected in the third quarter of 2026. Discussion highlighted challenges associated with policy development, including the collection of accurate procurement data, development of meaningful performance measures, and establishment of tracking mechanisms.

Congress considered feedback received from Monash University Council following the tabling of the Monash Indigenous Congress 2026 review. Council emphasised the importance of ensuring student voices were effectively represented, establishing stronger two-way engagement between Council and Congress, and developing mechanisms to capture community voices, perspectives and priorities. Members discussed opportunities to strengthen Congress's role and impact, including improving transparency around its purpose, enhancing understanding of Council processes, and creating more coordinated approaches to community engagement. Congress supported further work in these areas through a dedicated workshop.

William Cooper Institute and student data report

Congress received the William Cooper Institute's quarterly report and an update on Indigenous student enrolment, retention and success data. Members noted significant growth in Indigenous student enrolments since 2020, particularly in undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs, while graduate research enrolments remained fairly static.

Congress noted continued improvements in Indigenous student success rates and retention outcomes over recent years, reflecting the impact of targeted academic and cultural support programs. However, members also acknowledged that gaps remained between Indigenous and other domestic students, particularly in retention, and highlighted the need for ongoing focus on student support, academic tutoring, engagement activities and transition programs.

Congress received updates on a range of student initiatives delivered through the William Cooper Institute, including recruitment and outreach activities, student leadership and cultural programs, Indigenous Nationals participation, financial hardship support measures, wellbeing initiatives and development of the Monash Indigenous Alumni Network.

Indigenous research ethics

Members received updates on Indigenous research ethics and integrity initiatives across the University. Congress noted the establishment of an Indigenous Research Ethics Subcommittee to provide cultural oversight of research proposals and ensure research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was beneficial, ethical and community-focused. Members were encouraged to express interest in joining the Subcommittee.

Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Workforces Centre report

Congress received a report from the Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Workforces Centre outlining progress in Indigenous health education, student engagement and research activities. Members noted the continued success of Indigenous health curriculum initiatives, growth in Indigenous student



participation across the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, and ongoing research and higher degree research activity within the Centre.

Faculty of Education Indigenous Framework 2026-2030

Congress considered the draft Faculty of Education Indigenous Framework 2026-2030. The Framework aimed to establish a structured approach to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination through faculty-wide accountability, system-wide change and alignment with the Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019 - 2030.

Discussion focused on adopting a phased implementation approach, embedding Indigenous priorities into governance and curriculum review processes, strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensuring both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff contribute to advancing Indigenous priorities across teaching, research, community engagement and student support. Members were invited to provide feedback on the draft Framework.

Operational matters

Congress confirmed the minutes of its previous meeting and noted the finalised 2026 Terms of Reference. Several agenda items, including faculty reports, student representative reports, Indigenous employment updates, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property guidance, and Indigenous priorities in artificial intelligence adoption, were deferred to future meetings to enable adequate discussion.

Members also discussed future meeting structures, including opportunities to make greater use of workshops, working groups and other mechanisms to support targeted action on strategic priorities.

The next meeting of Congress was scheduled for 5 August 2026

Action items

Congress agreed on a number of actions, including:

- seeking expressions of interest for the Indigenous Research Ethics Subcommittee;
- holding a dedicated workshop to develop a response to Council feedback on community voice and engagement; and
- collecting member feedback on the draft Faculty of Education Indigenous Framework 2026-2030.

Contact

For enquiries about this meeting report, please contact the Monash Indigenous Congress Executive Officer at odvc-indigenous@monash.edu.