



Good morning colleagues,

This week STARS staff celebrate NAIDOC Week (7-14 July 2024) which stands for National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee Week. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders celebrate this significant event annually with the 2024 theme being 'Keep the Fire Burning Blak, Loud and Proud'.

NAIDOC Week focuses on the importance of recognising and protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, traditions, land and culture. The week provides an opportunity to recognise their contributions to society, community, and to promote reconciliation and understanding.

On the Herston Campus, the week began with a traditional flag-raising at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members shared details about the importance and interpretation of the colour layout and design of each flag.

On Wednesday, the STARS Botanist café held a NAIDOC week celebration which included an Acknowledgment of Country and storytelling by an Uncle who spoke about the local Turrbal people who occupied the area and preserved it for a very long period. Attendees were treated to a beautiful morning tea that featured native ingredients.

Other surrounding areas also celebrated by performing smoking ceremonies and welcoming the country, acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land where they performed their celebrations.

The growing awareness of NAIDOC week demonstrates how much people support this very important event. The event is told through stories regarding identity, culture, perspective and logic of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It showcases the richness of heritage and the relationships that continue today since millennia.

The week fosters great relationships among everyone who supports the cause - not only the event but also for the wider community's strength in walking together in spirit towards a brighter future for all Australians. Celebrating this significant event brings the people and community closer and helps them appreciate the practices of food, song, and the dances of this great culture.

Every year, celebrating NAIDOC Week educates people about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, which is then passed on to the next generation to continue the respect towards the NAIDOC celebration. People have shown their full support by attending events, wearing Indigenous shirts, or taking it upon themselves to showcase the week however they feel it's best.

STARS will hold their own NAIDOC celebration on 26 July. Please look out for more details in the staff bulletin.

Kind regards

Henry Nona and Dale Dally-Watkins