

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brisbane | 7–8 May 2026

Stronger Smarter Summit to explore “relational sovereignty” in Australia’s next chapter

A national conversation about the future of leadership, education and opportunity will take place in Brisbane this May when the Stronger Smarter Institute convenes its Stronger Smarter Together Summit: Reimagining Australia’s Sovereignty.

The two-day gathering marks 21 years of the Stronger Smarter movement, which has worked with educators across Australia to build high-expectations relationships and strong cultural identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Summit arrives at a moment when questions of identity, belonging and national direction remain unsettled in Australia.

Stronger Smarter founder Dr Chris Sarra argues the next phase of the conversation must move beyond symbolic debates toward something more practical: how Australians relate to one another in the systems that shape everyday life — schools, institutions and leadership.

He describes this approach as relational sovereignty.

Across two days, the Summit will bring together educators, policymakers, community leaders and industry voices to explore how high-expectations relationships shape leadership and opportunity.

The program moves deliberately beyond education. The Young Indigenous Women’s STEM Academy panel will examine the role of First Nations women in shaping Australia’s scientific and technological future.

A separate panel will turn to sport, asking how the principles of relational sovereignty play out in competition — where identity, discipline and collective responsibility are tested in full public view.

Keynote addresses will be delivered by Dr Chris Sarra and Professor Peter Yu, two leading voices in the national conversation about Indigenous leadership and policy.

Comedian Kevin Kopinyeri will host the Summit’s gala dinner, with live music from Adam James and his band, known for performances celebrating contemporary Aboriginal excellence.

Gooreng Gooreng artist Dylan Sarra will create a live artwork across the two days, interpreting the evolving conversation about relational sovereignty as it unfolds.

The Summit will also recognise the educators who backed the Stronger Smarter philosophy long before its impact was widely acknowledged.

QUOTES

Dr Chris Sarra

“Relational sovereignty is about how we choose to stand with one another as Australians. For more than two decades we’ve seen what happens when relational sovereignty and high expectations meet in the classroom. The question now is what might change if those same principles shaped leadership across the country.”

Kim Dyball, Young Indigenous Women’s STEM Academy

“STEM is where the future is being built. When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are leading in these fields, it expands what’s possible not only for our young people but for Australia’s innovation capacity.”

EVENT DETAILS

Event: Stronger Smarter Together Summit: Reimagining Australia’s Sovereignty

Dates: 7–8 May 2026

Venue: voco Brisbane City Centre

About: A national gathering of educators, community leaders, policymakers and industry representatives exploring leadership, sovereignty and opportunity in Australia.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Media are welcome to attend. Interview opportunities with speakers and organisers are available.

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About the Stronger Smarter Institute

The Stronger Smarter Institute is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisation dedicated to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students across Australia. Founded by Dr Chris Sarra, the Institute works with schools, communities and governments to build high-expectations relationships and strong cultural identity as the foundation for learning and leadership.