



Fact Sheet

2007

Indigenous student finances and welfare in 2006

The findings from the Australian University Student Finances Survey 2006 show that Indigenous students continue to face greater barriers to success in their university studies compared to the wider community.

Indigenous students are experiencing more financial difficulty than non-Indigenous students:

- Indigenous undergraduates in employment were found to work three hours per week more on average than their non-Indigenous counterparts; with Indigenous postgraduates working 3.6 hours a week more than other postgraduates
- A greater proportion of Indigenous students were found to have taken out a loan in order to study; with the average value of these loans being significantly higher
- Indigenous students were found to be more reliant on income support from scholarships, Centrelink payments, and services provided by student organisations; and less likely to rely on cash and non-cash assistance from other people (except childcare)
- Indigenous students were more likely to say that their financial situation was a worry to them (72.5 per cent) compared with non-Indigenous students (52.5 per cent)
- Alarmingly, 25.4 per cent of Indigenous students indicated that they regularly went without food or other necessities because they could not afford them, compared to 12.8 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Indigenous students have more outside commitments:

- 47.8 per cent of all Indigenous students surveyed were aged 30 years or old, compared with only 30.2 per cent of all non-Indigenous students
- 18.8 per cent of Indigenous students reported they were the sole carer of another person, compared with only 6.4 per cent of non-Indigenous students
- 30.2 per cent of Indigenous students had dependent children, compared with only 16.6 per cent of non-Indigenous students
- A higher proportion of Indigenous undergraduates reported regularly missing classes because of work commitments (29.1 per cent vs 25.7 per cent for non-Indigenous students). For Indigenous postgraduates this figure was 40.3 per cent.

Equity concerns still need to be addressed:

- Indigenous undergraduate students were more likely to be enrolled in enabling courses (3.8 per cent vs 0.5 per cent) and diploma-level courses (4.7 per cent vs 1.7 per cent), and less likely to be enrolled in postgraduate courses (~18.8 per cent vs ~38.9 per cent) when compared to non-Indigenous students
- On average Indigenous undergraduates spend \$160 more and postgraduates \$190 more on computers and related equipment than non-Indigenous students in a given year
- 15.0 per cent of Indigenous students reported having a disability or condition that affected their studies, compared to only 6.1 per cent of non-Indigenous students.