

UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION

INDIGENOUS STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 2020



This work is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence**.

Further inquiries should be made to the Chief Executive:

GPO Box 1142 Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: +61 (0)2 6285 8100
Fax: +61 (0)2 6285 8101
Email: contact@universitiesaustralia.edu.au

UNIVERSITIESAUSTRALIA.EDU.AU

ABN 53 008 502 930

CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Executive Summary.....	6
Overview	6
Context	6
Findings	7
Student Participation and Success	12
Population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians	12
Indigenous student enrolments	12
Indigenous undergraduate applications	16
Indigenous award course completion and completion rates.....	19
Indigenous graduate outcomes.....	22
Section summary: Student Participation and Success	24
Promoting proficiency in Indigenous culture	25
Staff	25
Case studies	26
Students	29
Case studies	31
Section summary: promoting proficiency in Indigenous culture.....	33
Indigenous workforce	34
Indigenous academic and Professional (Non-Academic) Staff.....	34
Comparisons to non-Indigenous staff	37
Population parity – staff	40
Indigenous Leadership in Higher education	41
Case studies	44
Section summary: Indigenous workforce and leadership	48
Research and postgraduate study.....	49
Current research landscape and the pipeline of Indigenous academics and researchers	49
Indigenous Research Strategies and Higher Degree Research programs	52
Case study examples.....	52
Case study examples.....	54
Section summary: Research and postgraduate study	59

International mobility.....	60
Case studies	61
Section summary: International mobility	64
UA activities.....	65
UA Board and Plenary meetings.....	65
DVC Committees and Sub Committees.....	66
DVC Academic.....	66
DVC Corporate.....	67
DVC Research	68
DVC International.....	68
Joint UA and NATSIHEC communications videos.....	69
Public submissions.....	69
UA's public advocacy on Indigenous advancement	70
Higher Ed Conference	70
UA Marketing Communications and Development Conference	71
National HE Indigenous Employment Coordinators Forum	71
AHEIA Conference.....	71
Department of Education Indigenous policy forum	71
National Indigenous Students' Conference	71
Partnership with Career Trackers	72
Annual survey and reporting	72
Section summary: UA activities	73

FOREWORD

Further big strides have been made over the past year under the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy.

This has been achieved through close partnership between UA and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium.

In this second annual report, we see further strong gains in Indigenous student recruitment. Growth was up 3.1 per cent compared to 0.4 per cent for non-Indigenous students in 2018.

We also saw further advances in work across the Australian university sector to embed Indigenous knowledge into more courses and degree programs in the university curriculum.

This is crucial - because all Australians should know more about the rich and inspiring cultures of our country's first peoples, and this deep knowledge in our midst. This is part of our shared identity – and a source of pride for all Australians.

But there is more work to be done.

This report highlights our next areas for focus and effort.

We must make further progress on establishing Indigenous research strategies across the sector.

And we must renew our efforts to support Indigenous students not just to get into university – but to thrive and succeed all the way through to graduation and beyond.

This is no small ask. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students often juggle cultural and caring responsibilities with studying. Ever present is the weight of grief, loss, trauma and the health-eroding toll of racism. And many are the first-in-family to ever go to university – blazing that trail.

This makes the challenges – and the need for culturally-strong support at university – even more pressing. But we must rise to this challenge together. We must also continue to build further the strong visible Indigenous leadership cohort in universities – and widen the pipeline of Indigenous academics and researchers coming through the ranks.

We have made big gains over the past decade on this front - and there is more to come.

Our thanks to all those in our universities and communities who have made a personal and leadership contribution to deliver these gains. We would not have come this far without your strength, persistence, courage and vision.

We look forward to working collaboratively with you to make further strides in the year ahead.

Ms Catriona Jackson
Chief Executive, Universities
Australia



Professor Simon Maddocks
Universities Australia's Lead
Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous



Dr Leanne Holt
President, National Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
Higher Education Consortium



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017- 20 brings all 39 member universities together to advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and success in higher education.

It was developed in a partnership between Universities Australia and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC).

Under the strategy, Australia's universities committed to 11 actions to:

- improve enrolments and performance in Indigenous students, academics/researchers and staff;
- increase the engagement of non-Indigenous people with Indigenous knowledge, culture and educational approaches; and
- improve the university environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The UA strategy is a long-term commitment extending beyond 2020. UA will continue to work with the sector and its partners in 2020 to maintain momentum.

UA is the peak sector body representing Australia's comprehensive universities. As part of the strategy, UA undertook to support the efforts of its member universities to advance Indigenous higher education. This includes seeking annual feedback from universities on their progress towards commitments made under the strategy and publishing a report on that progress.

This is the second annual report on progress achieved under the UA strategy since its launch in March 2017. All member universities completed the survey. UA expresses its sincere thanks to those - including senior Indigenous staff and leadership figures - who spent significant time, care and effort to gather information and submit detailed survey responses highlighting the progress made.

CONTEXT

This report publishes updated data and examples of progress on commitments made by universities under the UA strategy. It informs broader policy considerations of Indigenous higher education. It is also a regular prompt for important discussions in institutions and as a sector, including with our partner stakeholders, to chart progress and further action.

The first annual survey and report was broad and open-ended – and it collected baseline data. The questions in this year's survey focused on five key priority areas identified through the first survey and in discussions with UA's NATSIHEC partners. These areas are:

- Indigenous leadership (including governance structures of senior leaders, reporting lines/proximity to key decision making and professional development opportunities);
- non-Indigenous leadership (including types of training programs for non-Indigenous staff);
- engagement with Indigenous curriculum;
- Indigenous research strategies; and
- international mobility.

This report draws both on 2018 sector-wide statistics – published in late 2019 – and qualitative information from universities in survey responses.

This report does not rank achievements, nor function as an institutional report card. Rather, it highlights good practice examples from survey responses – with the aim of helping universities to learn from each other's innovations, strategies and approaches. These brief summaries describe current or good practice – as distinct from best practice. *Italicised content* in this report is a direct quote from university survey responses.

UA will continue to analyse additional case studies submitted in this year's reporting process to help share good practice examples across the sector in other channels beyond this report.

In 2020, UA will undertake a consultative process to review actions in the strategy and confirm if they remain fit for purpose or need adjustment. The data and findings in this report will assist that process.

FINDINGS

All 39 surveys were reviewed and analysed by the UA Directorate.

As agreed through consultation with our partners at NATSIHEC, the second annual survey and report was a more targeted process to delve more deeply into five priority areas. Consequently, this report focusses on these areas rather than every itemised action in the strategy.

Results from last year's report for the actions beyond these five priority areas were broadly positive.

This year's findings demonstrate continued positive progress in several areas, particularly in undergraduate participation growth, delivery of Indigenous cultural training programs to university staff, and efforts to ensure Indigenous content is embedded into courses.

However, there is still much to do in several areas. We look forward to continuing engagement with the entire sector to deliver further progress in the year ahead.

University actions under the *UA Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020*

Action	Progress
Maintain growth in Indigenous enrolments at 50 to 100 per cent above non-Indigenous growth	<p>In the first and second years of the UA Strategy, Indigenous student enrolments exceeded one of the key UA targets. This sector-wide target was to grow Indigenous enrolments at 50 per cent above the growth rate for non-Indigenous enrolments, and preferably at twice the rate.</p> <p>Annual growth in Indigenous student enrolments has tripled the rate of growth for non-Indigenous student enrolments in recent years.</p> <p>In 2018, Indigenous undergraduate enrolments grew by 3.1 per cent compared to just 0.4 per cent growth for non-Indigenous undergraduate enrolments.</p>
Aim to achieve equal completion rates by field of study by 2028.	<p>Bachelor and postgraduate award course completions continue to increase year-on-year. In 2018, Bachelor completions climbed to a record total of 1,811 awards in 2018 compared to 860 awards in 2008 - a 110.6 per cent increase.</p> <p>However, Bachelor degree completion rates for Indigenous students remain poor compared to non-Indigenous students. While Indigenous students can take longer to graduate, nine-year completion rates for Indigenous students remains around 47 per cent, significantly below the rate of 74 per cent for non-Indigenous students.</p> <p>Note: Indigenous graduates generally experience very strong employment outcomes. In 2019, 78.2 per cent of Indigenous undergraduates were in full-time employment four months after completion, outperforming non-Indigenous undergraduates (72.1 per cent). Indigenous undergraduates also continued to earn more than non-Indigenous undergraduates immediately upon graduation – with median full-time salaries of \$65,200 compared to \$62,600 for non-Indigenous graduates.</p>
Aim for retention and success rates equal to those of domestic non-Indigenous students in the same fields of study by 2025.	<p>Retention and success rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Bachelor degree students have remained relatively stable throughout the past decade.</p> <p>In 2017, the retention rate for Indigenous students was 72 per cent – compared to 85 per cent for non-Indigenous students. In 2018, the success rate for Indigenous students was 71 per cent – compared to 85 per cent for non-Indigenous students.</p>
Have current executive staff and all new senior staff complete cross-cultural training programs from 2018	<p>34 universities said they currently offer cross-cultural programs or professional development opportunities for executive and senior staff (this includes those universities which offer the same or similar programs to all staff). The remaining five universities</p>

	indicated programs or opportunities were currently under review or development and would likely be implemented in 2020.
Action	Progress
Have processes that ensure all students will encounter and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content as integral parts of their course of study, by 2020	<p>31 universities indicated they have some form of <i>cultural graduate attribute</i> for students being able to engage positively and professionally with different cultures and worldviews, or to act ethically and with social responsibility – with Indigenous learning embedded as part of this cultural graduate attribute as appropriate. Of these universities, 14 indicated they have an <i>Indigenous specific graduate attribute</i> (or equivalent).</p> <p>Survey responses indicated a positive trend of greater investment in initiatives, ideas and resources to embed Indigenous content and perspectives into course design/re-accreditation processes.</p>
Include Indigenous higher education, research and employment as priority areas in core policy documents, including institutional strategic and business plans	<p>There has been 88.6 per cent increase in the total number of Indigenous staff at Australian universities in 13 years – rising from 771 staff in 2005 to 1,454 staff in 2018. From 2017 to 2018, Indigenous staff numbers grew 9.2 per cent sector-wide. Around one-third of these roles are academic staff and two-thirds are professional staff.</p> <p>In 2018, 1.2 per cent of Australian university staff- both academic and professional - were from an Indigenous background – up from 1.09 per cent in 2017. This remains below the working-age population parity of 3.1 per cent.</p> <p>22 universities now have a PVC/DVC Indigenous senior executive leadership role. This number has remained relatively constant across the sector for the past two years. The remaining universities have Indigenous leadership spread through a mix of Deans, Directors, Elders in Residence and consultative group mechanisms devised with their local communities.</p>
Have Indigenous research strategies in place by 2018	<p>21 universities provided evidence they have an Indigenous research strategy in place.</p> <p>21 universities also indicated they currently have Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs for Indigenous students, with several others currently in the process of introducing them. Most universities reported such programs had helped to drive overall growth and completion of Indigenous HDR students.</p>

Universities Australia actions under the *UA Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020*

Action	Progress
Regularly include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander observers at Plenary meetings of Vice-Chancellors	In 2019, UA made some further evolutions to the existing arrangements for Indigenous observers at UA Plenaries to ensure attendees and VCs maximise the experience and engagement for all participants. Further, the number of observers was increased from two to three – with the third observer being the NATSIHEC President from time-to-time.
Hold roundtables between the Universities Australia Board of Directors and the Indigenous Academy and leadership to discuss progress against this strategy and relevant sectoral policy matters	UA has to date facilitated three annual joint Board meetings between the UA Board and NATSIHEC Executive to discuss progress of the UA Strategy and other important Indigenous higher education policy issues. UA has also invited NATSIHEC representatives to discuss priorities with all VCs as part of its plenary meetings.
Maintain formal ongoing dialogue with NATSIHEC and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university leaders	The UA Directorate also maintains regular and positive engagement with NATSIHEC representatives, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Education on a range of key Indigenous higher education matters. For example, UA has a standing item at all three annual NATSIHEC meetings to discuss priorities.
Develop, through the four Deputy Vice-Chancellor Committees, agreed sector-wide initiatives which will be implemented in common across all member universities	In 2019, the DVC Academic committee completed its first portfolio initiative with the publication of the <i>DVC A Good Practice Principles for Course Accreditation and review of Indigenous Curriculum</i> . Outcomes for the three other DVC committees has been limited to date.
Include Indigenous higher education issues in all relevant submissions UA makes, and advocacy work	In 2019, UA made numerous submissions to reviews and consultation processes. UA called for Indigenous considerations or initiatives as part of these system-wide reviews. This included the design of a performance-based funding model, the review of regional, rural & remote education, the review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification system, the Australian Council of Learned Academies project and working group on research training implementation and several health-related reviews.
Increase the profile of Indigenous higher education in public events such as the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference	In 2019, UA engaged with a diverse range of stakeholders by publicising and presenting the UA strategy at six key events. There was also high-profile Indigenous content in the annual UA Marketing Communications & Development conference program, including two plenary sessions on Indigenous recruitment, success, skill and strategy.

Action	Progress
Continue to advocate for increased Government investment in specific Indigenous higher education initiatives and for related outreach and participation programmes	UA continues to advocate for greater Government investment in specific Indigenous higher education initiatives – and will look for opportunities for joint advocacy with NATSIHEC in the future. In 2019, UA and NATSIHEC developed a short series of videos as a bespoke Indigenous student recruitment campaign. The series shares personal stories that highlight the transformative power of higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates. The videos will be launched in early 2020 and targeted to audiences to help in the sector's efforts to continue to grow applications from Indigenous students.
By 2018, develop a platform or mechanism to identify and share good practices	The proposal for a multi-faceted good practice sharing mechanism put forward in the first annual report continues to progress. Part of this includes enhancements that have been made to UA's website to house key information, reports, guidelines and links to good practice. In 2020, UA will be developing a new website to store good practice information in a more accessible and user-friendly fashion.
Obtain annual feedback from universities on their progress towards meeting the commitments they have made in this strategy, and publicly releasing annual reports.	2019 saw the establishment of streamlined processes for members to submit annual survey material to UA – and to gather materials that are useful without being overly burdensome. All members submitted annual surveys to UA, which were analysed to produce this report.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

Actions:

- Maintain growth in Indigenous enrolments at 50-100 per cent above non-Indigenous growth.
- Aim for retention and success rates equal to those of domestic non-Indigenous students in the same fields of study by 2025.
- Aim to achieve equal completion rates by field of study by 2028.

POPULATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUSTRALIANS

Population parity assists to contextualise historical and current student participation, completion and staffing trends. It provides a basis for framing the key growth target in the UA strategy.

According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, as at 30 June 2016:

*An estimated **3.1 per cent** of Australia's working age population—aged 15 to 64 years old—identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The Indigenous working age population has increased by 20.5 per cent, from 406,600 in 2011 to 490,000 in 2016.*

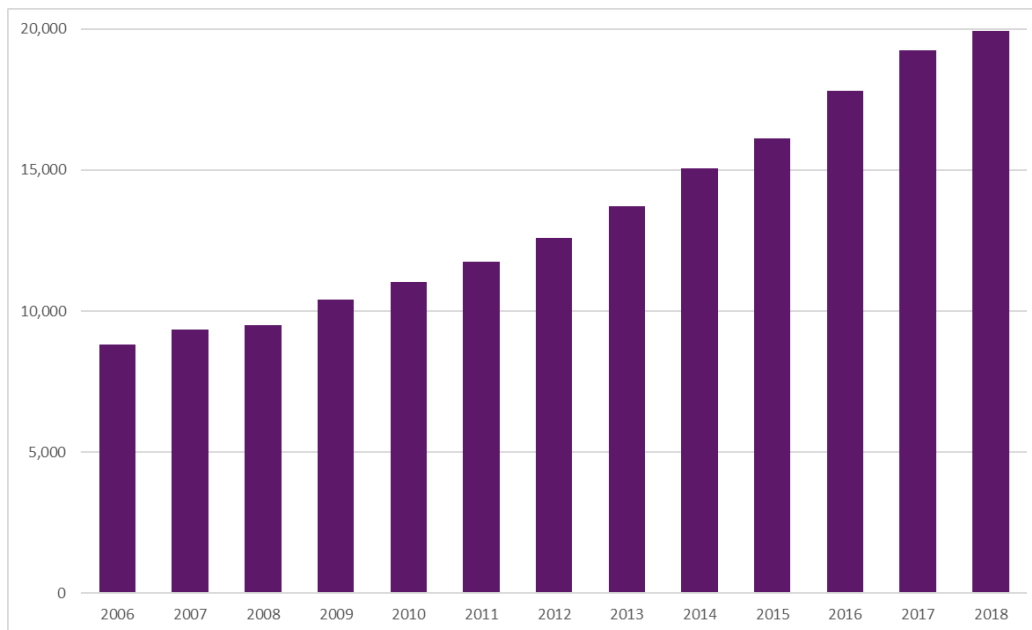
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is younger than the non-Indigenous population, with larger proportions of young people and smaller proportions of older people. This is reflective of higher fertility rates and higher mortality rates for Indigenous populations. The median age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was 23.0 years, compared to 37.8 years for the non-Indigenous population.¹

INDIGENOUS STUDENT ENROLMENTS

Figure 1 shows Indigenous student enrolments have more than doubled (110.1 per cent) since 2008, from 9,490 students in 2008 to 19,935 students in 2018. Despite this growth, the share of Indigenous student enrolments increased more modestly—up from 1.3 per cent in 2008 to 1.9 per cent in 2018 (Figure 2). To reach population parity, this would need to be 3.1 per cent.

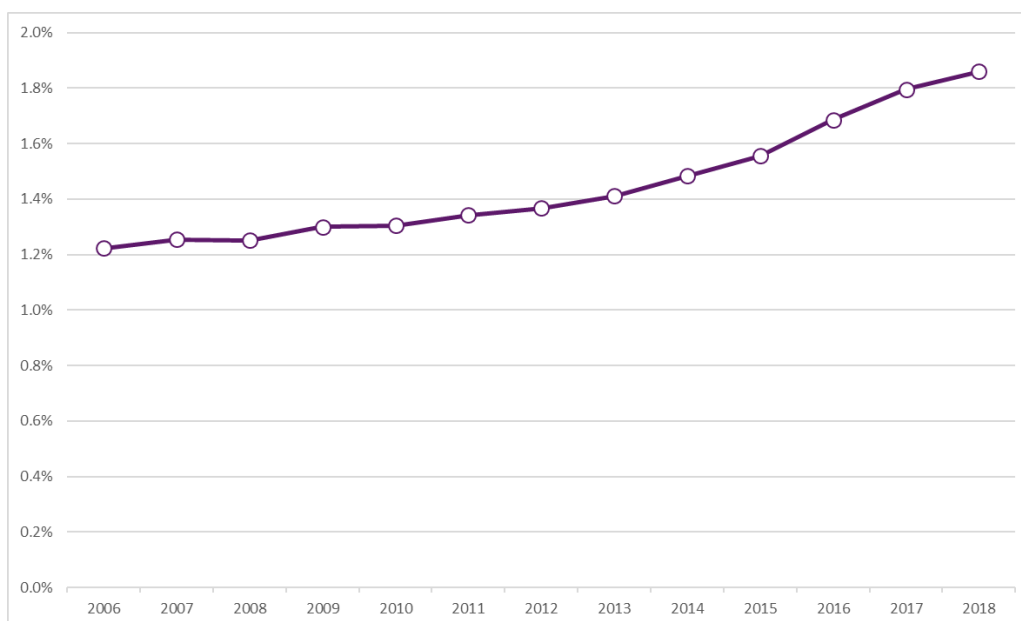
¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*, Cat. No. 3238.0.55.001 <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001>>.

Figure 1: Indigenous student enrolments, 2006 to 2018



Source: Department of Education (DoE) 2019, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2018 Student Data*

Figure 2: Share of Indigenous student enrolments, 2006 to 2018



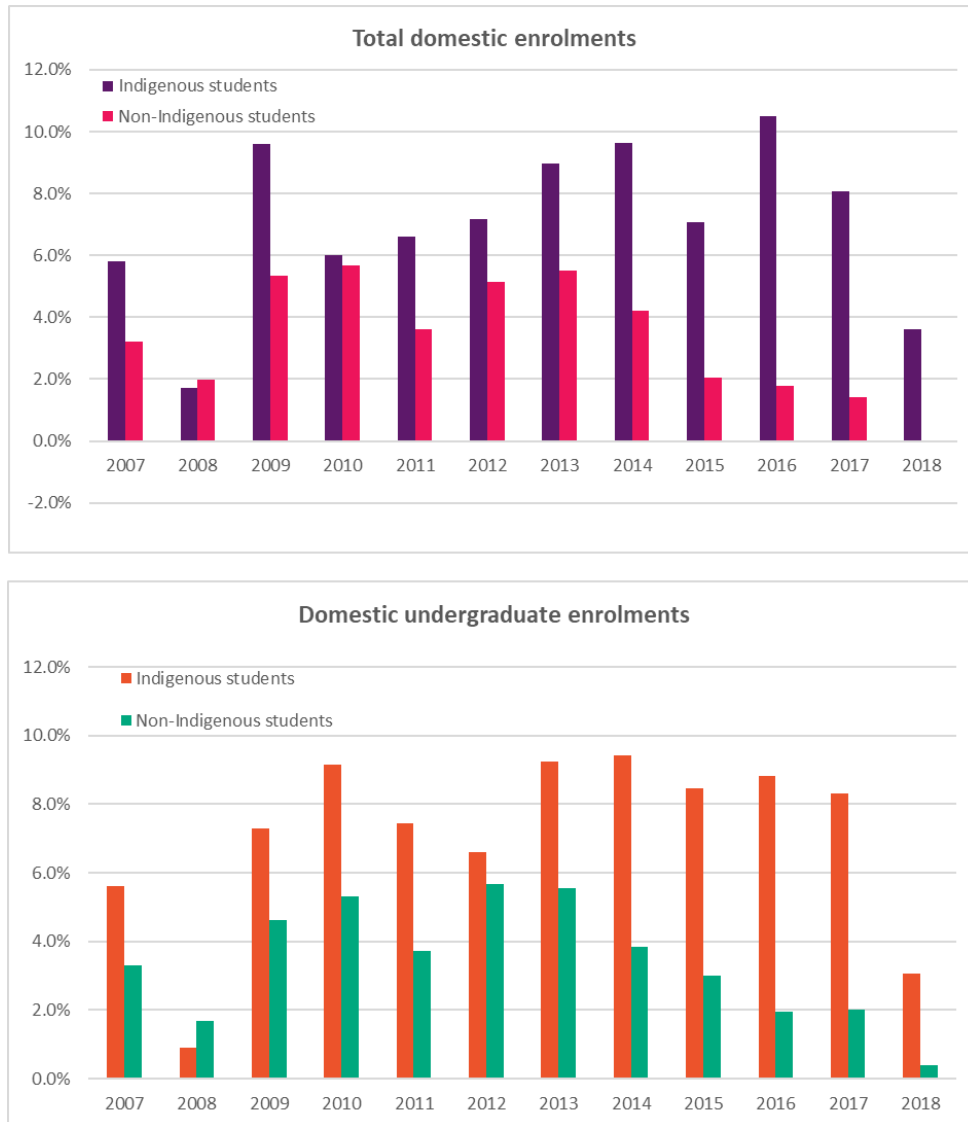
Source: DoE 2019, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2018 Student Data*

In the first and second years of the UA Strategy, Indigenous student enrolments exceeded a key UA target - enrolments at 50 per cent above the growth rate for non-Indigenous enrolments, and preferably at twice the rate.

Figure 3 shows annual growth in Indigenous student enrolments was more than triple that for non-Indigenous student enrolments in recent years. In 2018, Indigenous undergraduate enrolments grew by 3.1 per cent – compared to just 0.4 per cent growth for non-Indigenous undergraduate

enrolments; while total Indigenous enrolments rose by 3.6 per cent, compared to a marginal decline (-0.02 per cent) in total non-Indigenous enrolments.

Figure 3: Annual growth in Indigenous student enrolments, 2007 to 2018

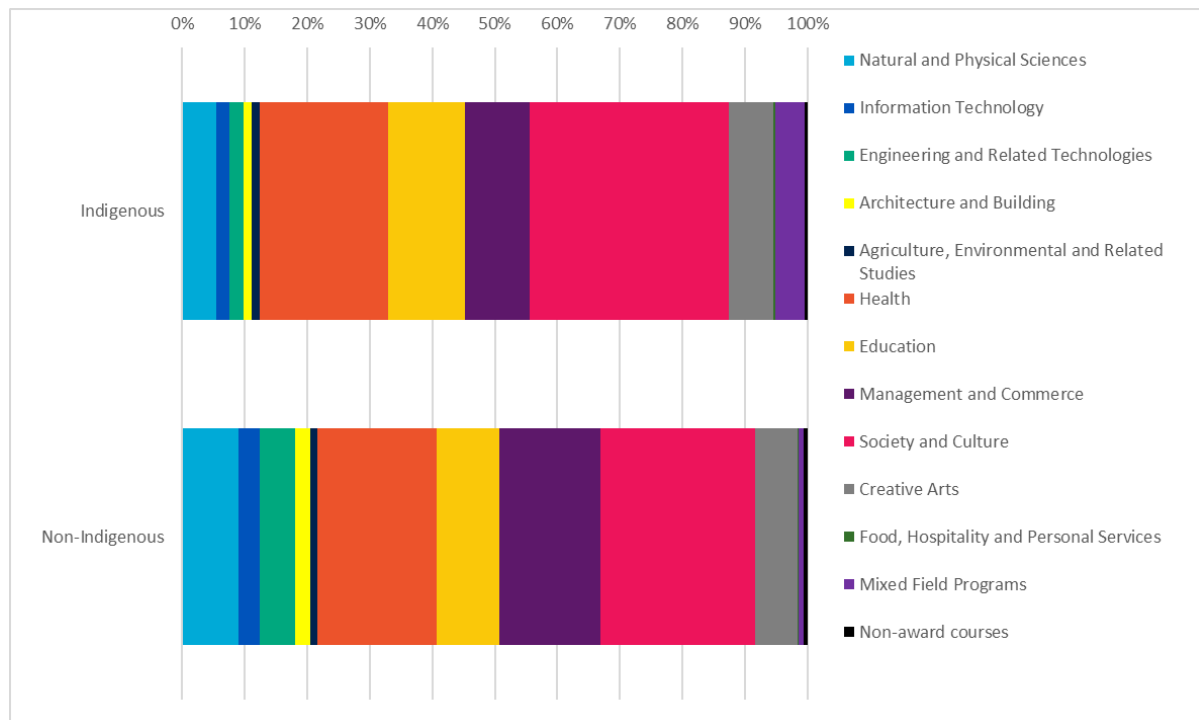


Source: DOE 2019, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2018 Student data*

Field of education

Compared to non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students continue to be more likely to enrol in courses in society and culture (31.8 per cent), health (20.5 per cent) and education (12.3 per cent) and less likely to enrol in management and commerce (10.3 per cent), natural and physical sciences (5.5 per cent) and engineering (2.3 per cent).

Figure 4: Enrolments by broad disciplines, 2018



Source: DoE 2019, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2018 Student Data*

Course level

Indigenous student enrolments have more than doubled between 2008 and 2018, with enrolments in Bachelor degree courses increasing 119.4 per cent – from 6,352 in 2008 to 13,926 in 2018.

Indigenous enrolments in enabling courses more than doubled, from 871 in 2008 to 1,810 in 2018. Enrolment data between 2015 and 2018 show much of this growth has come in the last few years.

Table 1: Indigenous enrolments, by course level, 2008 and 2018

Course level	2008	2018	Growth
Postgraduate research	393	641	63.1%
Postgraduate coursework	1,138	2,508	120.4%
Bachelor	6,352	13,936	119.4%
sub-Bachelor	686	935	36.3%
Enabling	871	1,810	107.8%
Non-award	50	105	110.0%
All courses	9,490	19,935	110.1%

Source: DoE 2019, *Visual analytics – Enrolment time-series*

Indigenous student enrolments in postgraduate coursework degrees have more than doubled, from 1,138 to 2,508, between 2008 and 2018. Indigenous student postgraduate research enrolments grew by 63.1 per cent over the period, from 393 in 2008 to 641 in 2018,

NOTE: Future role of Enabling programs for Indigenous pathway students.

In 2019, the Government provided advice to Table A universities on new rules for Enabling, sub-Bachelor and postgraduate course enrolments. In 2020, each university's allocation of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) places will remain the same as in 2019. However, universities now have the flexibility to redistribute allocated CSPs in a cost-neutral manner.

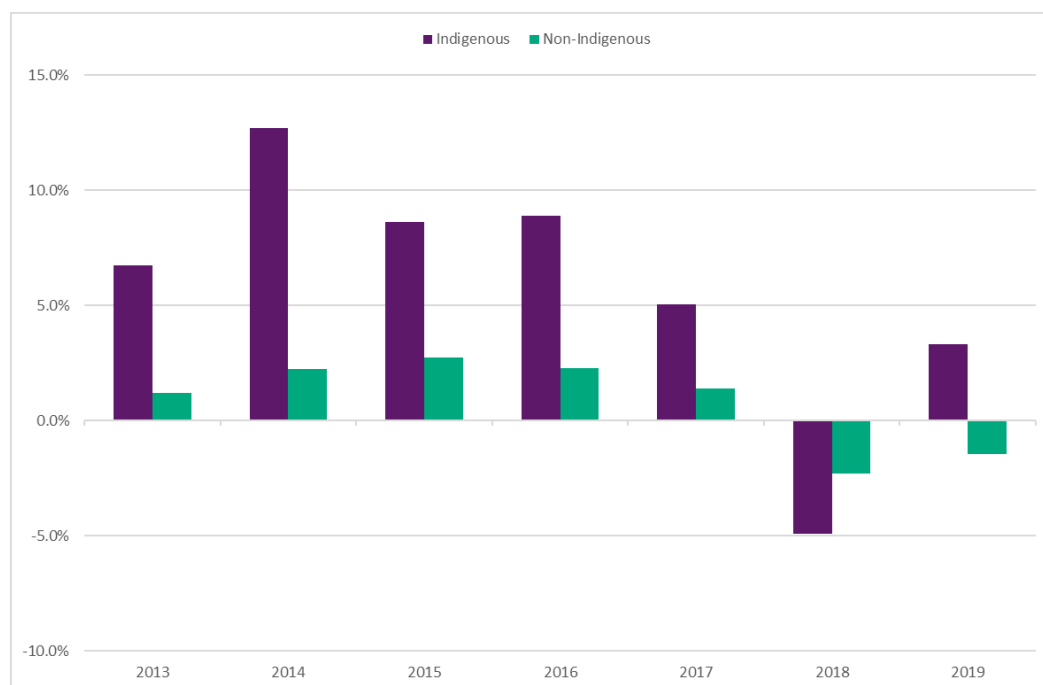
The caveat is that universities cannot transfer their allocated CSPs from either sub-Bachelor or postgraduate to Enabling (but they can transfer places from enabling places to other categories). The government's rationale is to encourage a greater focus on learning outcomes and movement of resources towards accredited courses that are transferable to other institutions, as highlighted by the Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

As outlined in Table 1, Enabling programs continue to play a crucial role in pathways into university for Indigenous students, and disadvantaged groups. They fulfil a preparatory function for students by equipping them with the necessary foundation skills and knowledge that would otherwise prevent students from participating in higher education. Universities will need to actively consider the impact of any decisions to redistribute allocated CSPs (especially taking away from Enabling places) alongside their commitments to continue growing participation of Indigenous students into the future.

INDIGENOUS UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATIONS

Figure 5 shows Indigenous undergraduate applications grew by 3.3 per cent in 2019 - following a decline of 4.9 per cent in 2018 - while applications from non-Indigenous students continued to decline (-1.4 per cent). Despite the increase, the share of Indigenous applications remained at around two per cent of all undergraduate applications in 2019.

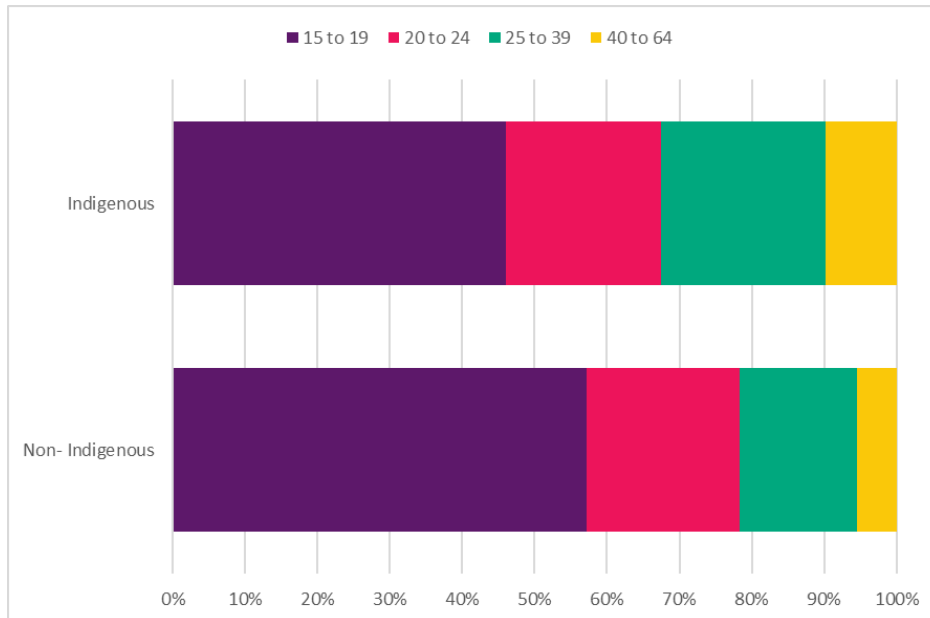
Figure 5: Annual growth in undergraduate applications, 2013 to 2019



Source: DoE 2019, *Undergraduate Applications Offers and Acceptances 2019*, unpublished data

Figure 6 shows Indigenous applicants for undergraduate courses are more likely to be older than non-Indigenous applicants. In 2019, one third of Indigenous applicants are aged 25 or older, compared to 21 per cent for non-Indigenous applicants.

Figure 6: Share of undergraduate applications, by age, 2019

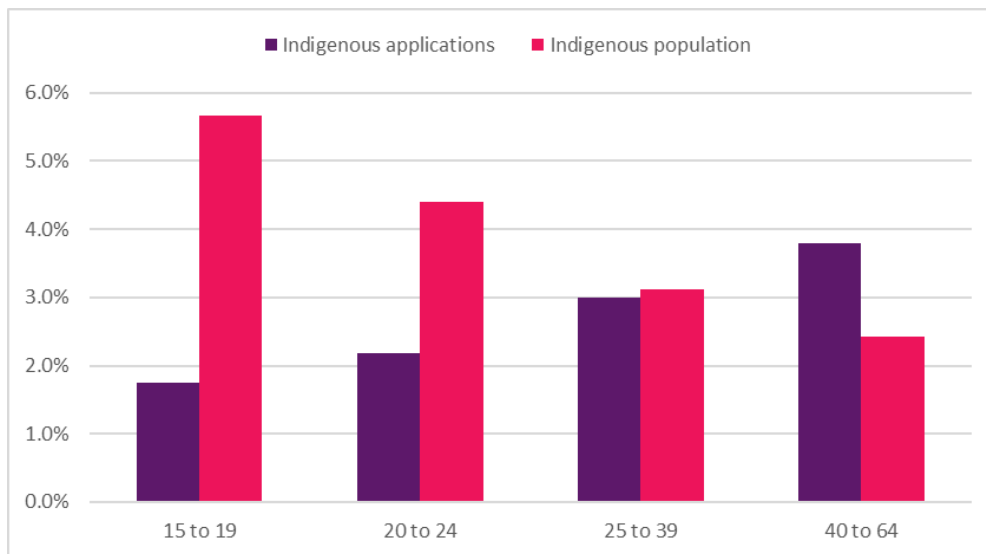


Source: DoE 2019, *Undergraduate Applications Offers and Acceptances 2019*, unpublished data

The share of Indigenous undergraduate applications at younger age cohorts remains significantly below the share of young Indigenous population.

Figure 7 shows only 1.7 per cent of all applicants aged 15–19 are Indigenous, compared with a population share of 5.7 per cent in 2019. In contrast, for the 40–64-year-old age group, Indigenous students are 3.8 per cent of applications but represent 2.4 per cent of the whole population.

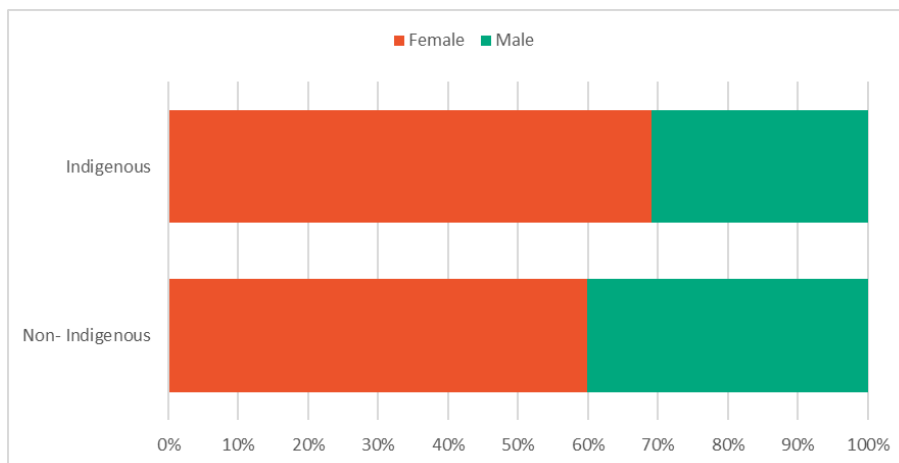
Figure 7: Share of Indigenous applications compared to share of Indigenous population, by age, 2019



Source: DoE 2019, *Undergraduate Applications Offers and Acceptances 2019*, unpublished data and ABS 2019, *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2016 to 2031*, Cat. No. 3238.0., Series B.

Indigenous undergraduate applicants are also more likely to be female compared to non-Indigenous applicants. In 2019, 69 per cent of Indigenous undergraduate applicants were female – compared to 60 per cent for non-Indigenous applicants (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Share of undergraduate applications, by gender, 2019



Source: DoE 2019, *Undergraduate Applications Offers and Acceptances 2019*, unpublished data.

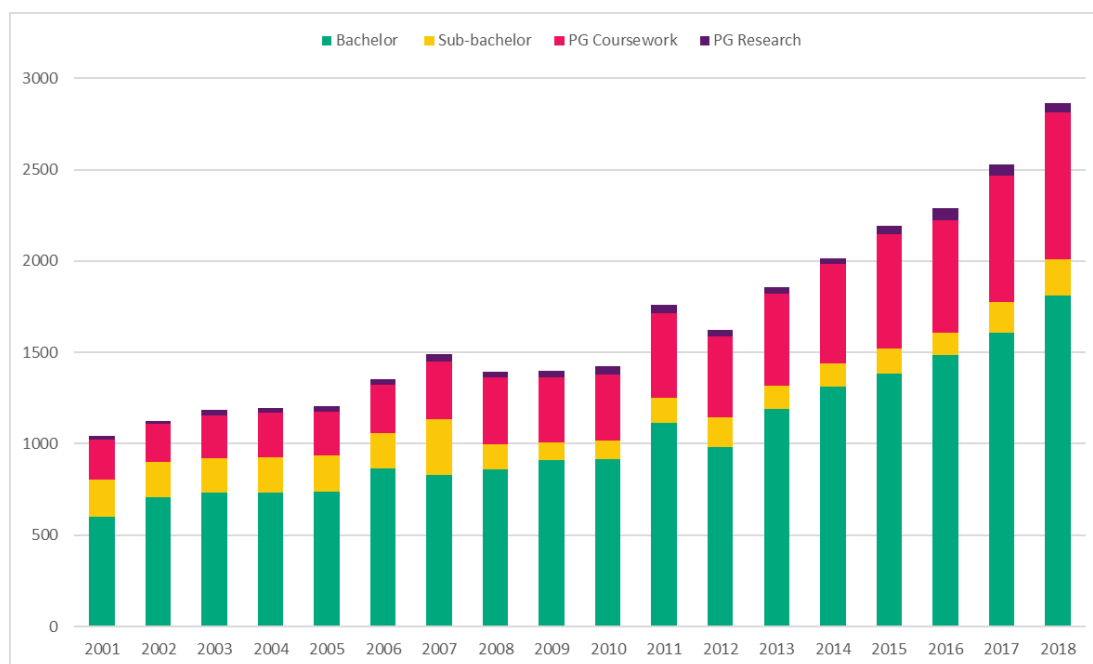
Both the ABS and applications data can inform our efforts to advance the participation and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. This includes identifying potential opportunities to better engage with certain demographics or age groups – such as young men – as well as continuing to ensure university programs and course offerings are accessible to a wide diversity of people and communities.

INDIGENOUS AWARD COURSE COMPLETION AND COMPLETION RATES

Since 2008, Indigenous award course completions have continued to grow year-on-year, consistent with the growth in Indigenous enrolments. Indigenous Bachelor award course completions grew by 110.6 per cent – from 860 degrees awarded to Indigenous students in 2008 to 1,811 in 2018.

Postgraduate research course completions rose 63.6 per cent – from 33 in 2008 to 54 in 2018. And postgraduate coursework completions rose 120.9 per cent – from 364 to 804 (Figure 9).

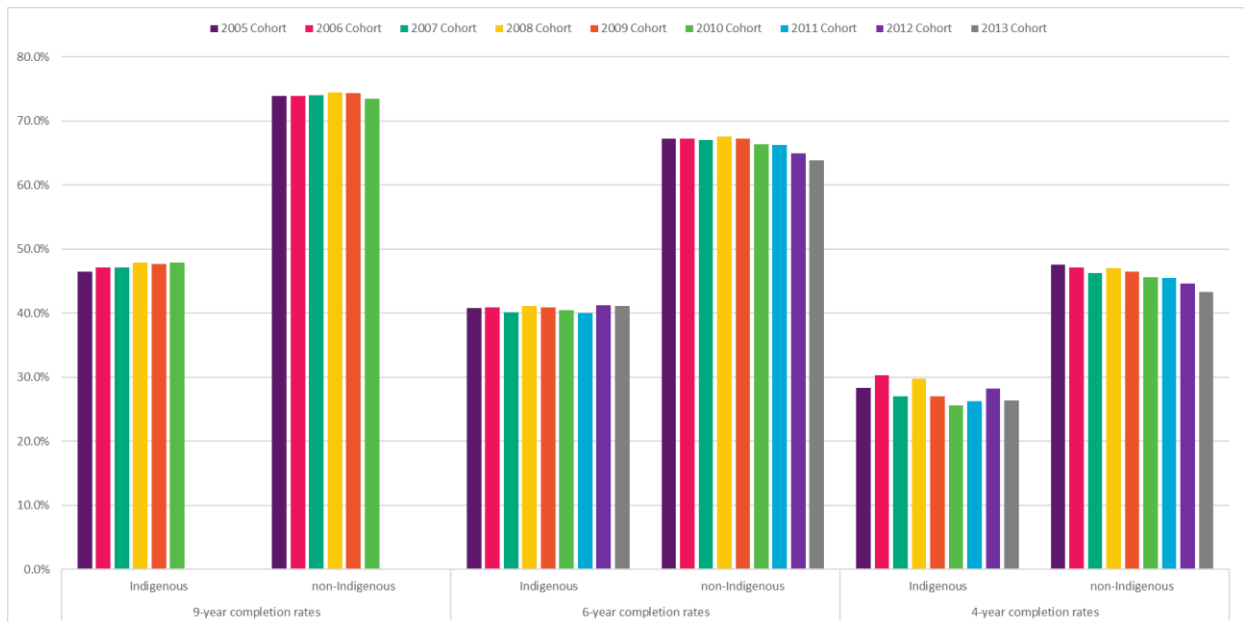
Figure 9: Number of Indigenous award course completions, by course level



Source: DoE 2019, *Visual Analytics—Award Course Completions Time Series*.

Despite the growth in Bachelor award course completions, Bachelor degree completion rates for Indigenous students remained a challenge compared to non-Indigenous students. While Indigenous students typically can take longer to graduate, nine-year completion rates for Indigenous students remains around 47 per cent, significantly below 74 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

Figure 10: Completion rates—9, 6 and 4 years—of commencing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Bachelor degree students

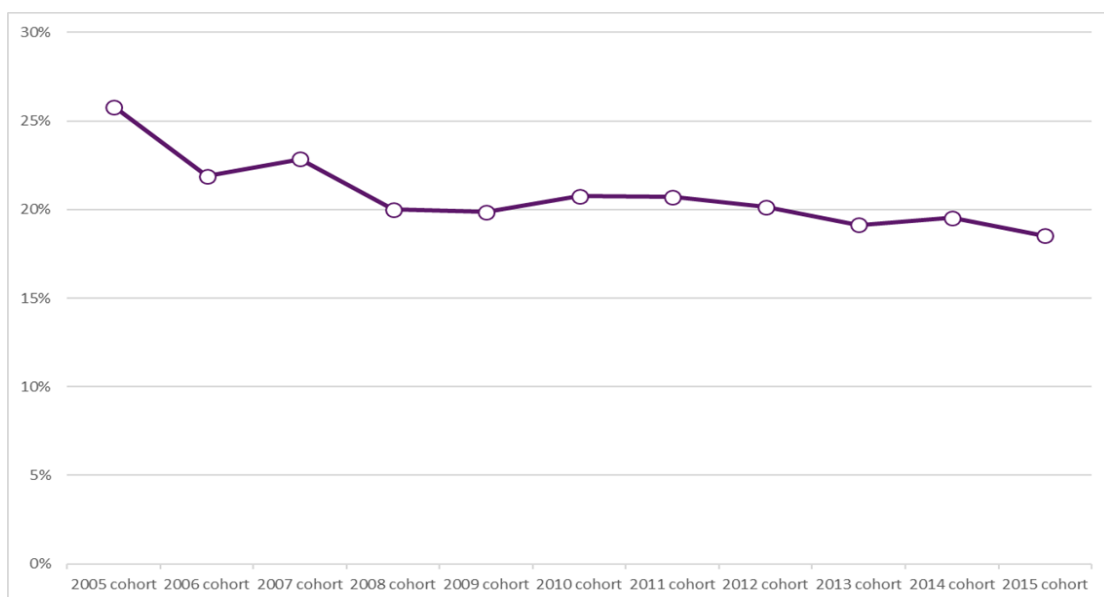


Source: DoE 2019, *Completion Rates of Higher Education Students – Cohort Analysis, 2005–2018*.

On a positive note, since 2005, the proportion of Indigenous students who drop out of their studies – and do not return – has declined.

Of the Indigenous students who started university in 2005, 26 per cent had dropped out four years later. For Indigenous students who started university in 2015, the dropout rate had fallen to 19 per cent – a substantial improvement.

Figure 11: Share of Indigenous commencing Bachelor degree students who leave their studies and do not return—after 4 years



Source: DoE 2019, *Completion Rates of Higher Education Students – Cohort Analysis, 2005–2018*.

Retention and success rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Bachelor degree students has remained relatively stable throughout the past decade.

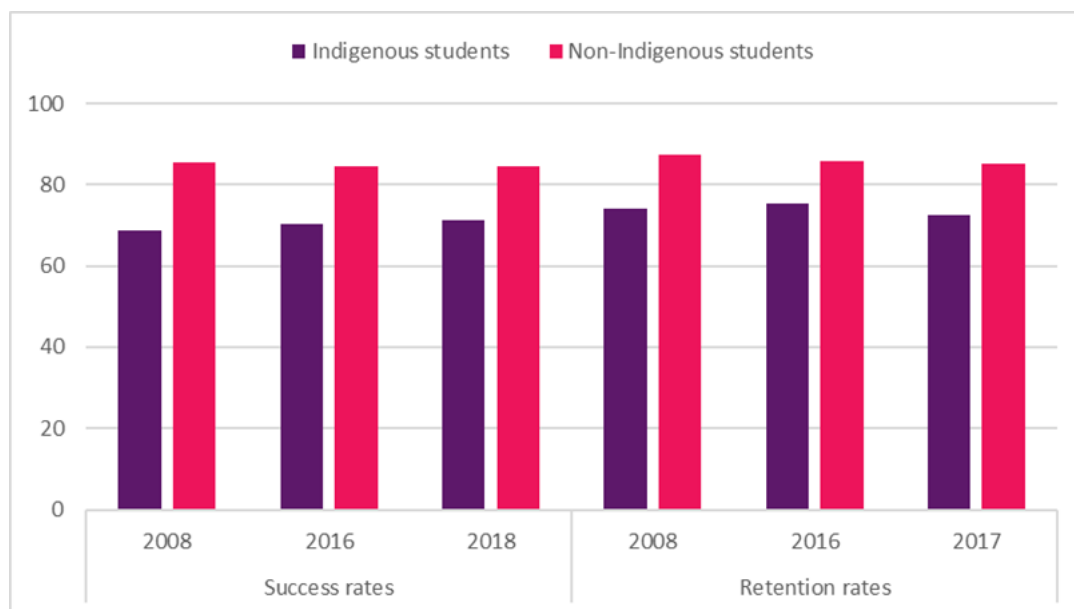
Success rates calculate the proportion of units that students pass in any given year.

Success rates for Indigenous students have consistently been in the 69 – 71 per cent range from 2008, with non-Indigenous students in the 83 – 85 per cent range (see figure 12).

Retention rates calculate the proportion of students who return to study after their first year.

Similarly, retention rates for Indigenous students have remained in the 72 – 76 per cent range from 2008, with non-Indigenous students typically remaining in the 84 – 87 per cent range.

Figure 12: Retention and success rates of Domestic Bachelor degree students, Indigenous vs non-Indigenous, per cent



Source: Department of Education 2019, Visual Analytics–Attrition, retention and success rates.

Note:

- Adjusted Retention rate for year (x) is the number of students who commenced a bachelor course in year (x) and did not complete in year (x), and continued in year (x + 1) (retained students), as a proportion of all students who commenced a bachelor course in year (x) and did not complete in year (x). If a student moves from one institution to another in the following year, he or she would be counted as retained in the adjusted retention rate calculation
- Success rate for year(x) is the proportion of actual student load (EFTSL) for units of study that are passed divided by all units of study attempted (passed + failed + withdrawn).

INDIGENOUS GRADUATE OUTCOMES

One of the great success stories for Australian higher education in recent years has been its role in helping to close the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous graduates generally have strong employment, comparable to non-Indigenous graduates.

Figure 13 shows short-term employment outcomes - four months after completion - for Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduates in 2019.

In 2019, 78.2 per cent of Indigenous undergraduates were in full-time employment four months after completion, outperforming non-Indigenous undergraduates (72.1 per cent).

For graduates with postgraduate degree, 84.7 per cent of Indigenous graduates were in full-time employment four months after completion, comparable with non-Indigenous graduates (86.8 per cent).

Figure 13: Short-term graduate employment outcomes, 2019

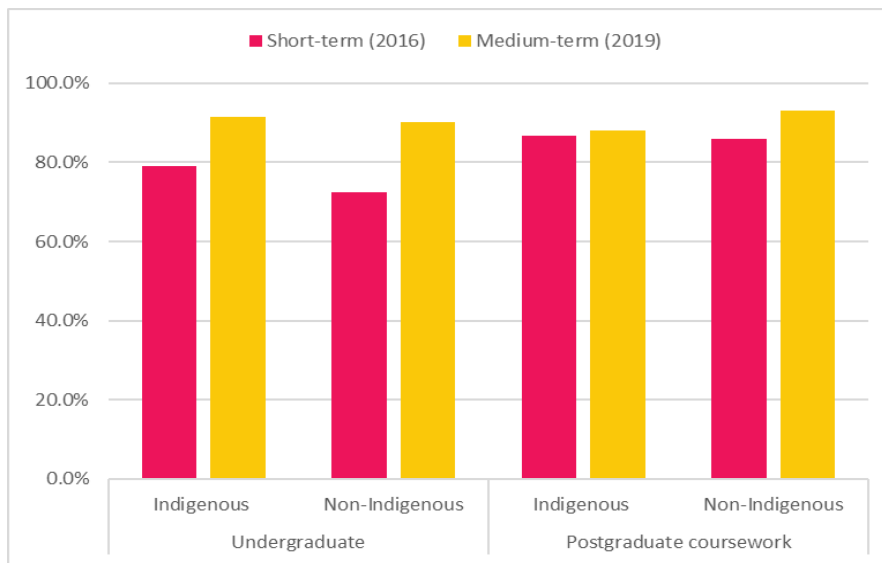


Source: Social Research Centre (SRC) 2019, *2019 Graduate Outcomes Survey*.

Over the medium-term (three years after finishing their degrees), employment outcomes for Indigenous undergraduates are comparable to non-Indigenous undergraduates.

While Indigenous graduates with an undergraduate degree have higher short-term full-time employment rates (79.1 per cent) than non-Indigenous graduates (72.5 per cent), non-Indigenous graduates close this gap in full-time employment in the medium-term to trail Indigenous graduates by around 1.5 percentage points.

Figure 14: Short-term graduate employment outcomes, 2019



Source: SRC 2019, *2019 Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal*.

Indigenous undergraduates continued to earn more than non-Indigenous undergraduates immediately upon graduation. In 2019, median full-time salaries of \$65,200 compared to \$62,600 for non-Indigenous graduates; while Indigenous undergraduates earned \$4,000 more than non-Indigenous undergraduates in 2018.

SECTION SUMMARY: STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

- In the first and second years of the UA Strategy, Indigenous student enrolments exceeded one of the key UA targets - enrolments at 50 per cent above the growth rate for non-Indigenous enrolments, and preferably at twice the rate. Annual growth in Indigenous student enrolments more than tripled the rate of growth in non-Indigenous student enrolments in recent years. In 2018, Indigenous undergraduate enrolments grew by 3.1 per cent – compared to just 0.4 per cent growth for non-Indigenous undergraduate enrolments.
- Indigenous undergraduate applications grew by 3.3 per cent in 2019 - following a decline of 4.9 per cent in 2018, as applications from non-Indigenous students declined by -1.4 per cent.
- Applications from Indigenous students are more likely to be from non-school leavers and from females. In 2019, one-third of Indigenous applicants are aged 25 or older, compared to 21 per cent for non-Indigenous applicants. In 2019, 69 per cent of Indigenous undergraduate applicants were female compared to just 60 per cent for non-Indigenous applicants.
- Indigenous students continue to be more likely to enrol in courses related to Society and Culture (31.8 per cent), Health (20.5 per cent) and Education (12.3 per cent) and less likely to enrol in Management and Commerce (10.3 per cent), Natural and Physical Sciences (5.5 per cent) and Engineering (2.3 per cent).
- Bachelor degree completion rates for Indigenous students remain a challenge compared to non-Indigenous students. While Indigenous students typically can take longer to graduate, nine-year completion rates for Indigenous students remains around 47 per cent, significantly below 74 per cent for non-Indigenous students.
- Since 2008, Indigenous award course completions have continued to increase year-on-year, consistent with the growth in Indigenous enrolments. Indigenous Bachelor award course completions increased 110.6 per cent, from 860 awards in 2008 to 1,811 awards in 2018.
- Retention and success rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Bachelor degree students has remained relatively stable throughout the past decade. In 2017, retention rates for Indigenous students was 72 per cent compared to 85 per cent for non-Indigenous students. In 2018, Success rates for Indigenous students was 71 per cent compared to 85 per cent for non-Indigenous students.
- Indigenous graduates generally have strong employment prospects – with higher rates of employment than non-Indigenous graduates. In 2019, 78.2 per cent of Indigenous undergraduates were in full-time work four months after completion, outperforming non-Indigenous undergraduates (72.1 per cent). Indigenous undergraduates also continued to earn more than non-Indigenous undergraduates immediately upon graduation. In 2019, median full-time salaries of \$65,200 compared to \$62,600 for non-Indigenous graduates.

PROMOTING PROFICIENCY IN INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Note: the following four sections of this report have been informed through the 2019 survey material submitted to UA by its 39 member universities.

STAFF

Action: Current executive staff and all new senior staff have completed cross-cultural training programs from 2018.

Cultural training and information for staff and students help to shape a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at university (or any environment). Levels of knowledge among non-Indigenous Australians about the richness and sophistication of Indigenous culture vary widely. Over time, this may change as school curricula expose young generations of Australians to Indigenous history, culture and knowledge during the early years of education. Universities have a powerful opportunity to deliver Indigenous cultural training to help to fill the gaps in knowledge for previous generations especially.

Q 1: Do executive staff and all new senior staff complete Indigenous cross-cultural training programs/professional development?

Overall, 32 universities reported they offer what could be considered 'formal' cultural competency training to executive/all new senior staff, or all staff more broadly.

Two universities indicated that whilst they don't offer formal training programs, they do offer professional development opportunities to staff through participation in events/programs such as the Garma Festival and the Jawun secondment program.

Of the five that do not currently offer formal training programs or professional development opportunities to staff, all indicated that programs were under review or in development, and would likely be implemented in 2020.

Q 1A: If yes, are these programs mandatory or voluntary? Describe the nature of these programs.

Ten universities reported that some form of training is mandatory for executive/senior leaders, or for all staff (if the training offered to all staff is the same). For example, the University of Canberra has made training mandatory through its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which states that "all senior executive staff will complete cultural competency training". Some universities highlighted that online training is mandatory for all staff, with face-to-face workshops or engagement in other professional development opportunities offered voluntarily.

Many universities reported that whilst attendance for executive/new senior staff is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. There was no suggestion that mandatory (as opposed to voluntary) attendance diminished the effectiveness of the overall training or engagement of Indigenous cultural competency by senior leadership. Many universities reported positive attendance for face-to-face sessions, irrespective of whether training was deemed to be mandatory or voluntary.

The types of programs offered (whether online, face-to-face workshops, immersion experiences, etc) varies across the sector. This, in part, allows each individual university to customise training to the specific Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures where its campuses are located. This approach can also be a platform to forge closer ties with local communities and lead to positive developments in a whole-of-university strategic engagement with Indigenous partnerships.

CASE STUDIES

The University of Western Australia

“UWA’s Senior Cultural Advisor provides a cultural induction to country (Whadjuk Noongar Boodja) and ongoing cultural advice for executive staff and new senior staff. To further promote cross-cultural training, new executive and senior staff meet with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education (PVCIE) about the university’s Indigenous strategy, programs and broader Aboriginal issues within the state and sector. Executive and senior management have regular and ongoing engagement with Indigenous students, staff and Aboriginal communities (local and regional) through various programs, workshops and events which enhance cultural competency.

“Programs are not generally mandatory but are sometimes requested by senior staff. In the main, programs are face-to-face, with the start point always to develop an understanding of place through an on-country experience, led by Noongar Elders. This can be one-to-one or involve a number of mid-senior level staff in an area. For example, in early 2019, the Chief Operating Officer (Corporate Services) and senior staff undertook cross-cultural training led by the senior cultural advisor. Campus management (corporate services) is currently developing a cultural heritage framework for UWA, so this was particularly important to them. From this, UWA staff have opportunities to build further cultural competency skills. For example, in 2019 two UWA senior staff members (one professional, one academic) are undertaking a cross-cultural training program with Jawun.

“In some cases, cross-cultural training is mandatory. For example, in 2019 prior to Semester 1, the Dean of the Law School and academic staff undertook mandatory cross-cultural training as part of a five-year curriculum project that is currently being implemented. The project aims to Indigenise curriculum in the Juris Doctor (i.e. embed Indigenous content throughout the course) and a key component of this is to ensure all faculty staff are suitably trained to deliver Aboriginal curriculum content.

“UWA’s ongoing commitment to cultural competency is strengthened in [UWA 2030](#), which was launched this year, and which sets out the 10-year vision for the university. UWA 2030, as one of UWA’s defining characteristic, includes a commitment to ‘embrace Indigenous knowledge and culture to drive culturally capable leadership’. Further, as part of UWA 2030, people and culture strategies ‘all staff will have completed cultural competency training and be fully aware of the cultural history associated with our workplaces’.”

The University of Newcastle

“The university’s Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy has a key action to achieve Indigenous cultural inclusion training broadly to professional and academic staff at the university. The strategy outlines a target for 100 per cent training of all executive and senior leaders, division, unit and faculty heads, head of schools and directors by September 2020.

“At a recent meeting of the University Executive Committee, a recommendation was endorsed to ensure senior leaders undertake Indigenous cultural capability program and that dedicated funding be allocated within faculty/division budgets.

“Some of the current offerings include:

- *Welcome to Wollotuka – face to face (mandatory as part of induction for all UON staff). Wollotuka is an all-Indigenous staffed unit overseen by an all-Indigenous [Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research](#). This program introduces all University of Newcastle staff to the history and purpose of Wollotuka Institute. The sessions also introduce staff to the Wollotuka cultural standards. These standards embrace the cultural essence to which Wollotuka's goals are directed. The standards inform the Institute's relationships with students, the community and the university.*
- *On-country experiences – Wollotuka encourages and promotes on-country experiences to all UON Faculties/Schools/Units. These experiences include visits to the Murrook Cultural Centre, Worimi Land Council – Port Stephens - Worimi Barray (Country) Cultural Awareness workshop and Wollombi Aboriginal Cultural Experience - Wollombi, Hunter Valley."*

Charles Sturt University

"CSU's three stage Indigenous cultural competency program has been developed and refined since its launch in 2015:

- *Stage 1 is the individual online cultural competency program (ICCP) and is part of employment and probation requirements for all CSU staff. This individual component of the journey to cultural competence has as its learning outcomes increased cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.*
- *Stage 2 of the program is a team-based discussion with a newly designed trigger resource Cassie's Story 2: Mingaan Migay Yalblinya which can be used as a tool to engage staff in further discussion with staff across the University. This stage also includes co-facilitated workshops with discussion centred on progress from a collective level as well as an individual level.*
- *Stage 3 encourages the creation by staff of a community of practice to share achievements and challenges and to build institutional capacity. This stage has often led to requests for cultural immersion experiences by disciplines and groups. This places cultural competence training on a sustainable footing within the institution.*

"Since 2018 there are self-directed online modules, tasks and an assessment in the Graduate Certificate University Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (GCLTHE) that focuses on the conceptual, pedagogical and applied aspects of cultural competency and engages all probationer academics in reflection about their teaching practice in relation to social justice for Indigenous Australians.

"Additionally, through the work of Gulaay, CSU also leads cultural immersion experiences to Ngiyeempaa country in Menindee. To date more than 100 academic, executive and senior university staff, including the Vice Chancellor and his predecessor, have participated in this journey. The objective is to give staff the experience of being connected to Country, of learning about Indigenous culture from Indigenous people and of reflecting upon their professional practice.

"The university's aim is not to force Indigenous community engagement and collaboration onto staff but to build it into performance management descriptors so that those who do engage are encouraged and rewarded."

Q 2: Are these programs for executive and senior staff different to the programs delivered to all staff? If so, how?

Results from the first annual progress report indicated almost all universities offered some form of cultural training (which is confirmed in this year's results). With that in mind, this question sought to ascertain the extent to which executive or senior staff participate in focused training compared to more general training programs offered to all staff.

Senior leadership positions are responsible for setting and managing the strategic priorities of the university. They are also required to communicate, and in some cases 'champion', these priorities to all staff. As the UA Indigenous strategy and each university's Indigenous commitments are core business, training offered to executive or senior staff typically needs to be more than just 'introductory' training – and focuses on how each senior leader can actively contribute to advancing Indigenous outcomes. The University of Queensland summarised this well when it stated:

The senior management group has been identified as a cohort with a set of specific training needs and it is envisioned that a program of activity will be provided in future years. It is envisioned that training will be specific to the group, with a view to supporting culturally appropriate governance and management practices.

Currently, 13 universities said they offered some form of different or additional training for their executive or senior leadership. For example, some of the university responses included:

- *“Training is specifically designed for executive level staff to promote public leadership development and advocacy in reconciliation.”*
- *“At their core, programs for all staff are similar but training for executive and senior staff may differ in the breadth of domains covered, exemplar cases utilised, and the depth of socio-political critique. Additionally, more time and analysis are directed at institutional barriers to good outcomes and factors supporting positive organisational change.”*
- *“A three stage (online and face-to-face) program is offered to all staff, but senior executive and leaders are encouraged to participate in the cultural immersion offerings.”*
- *“Training provided to the executive staff, including University Council members, is more extensive and nuanced to the roles and responsibilities of the participants compared to the online training for all staff.”*

This question was intended to highlight the potential to scaffold training into the future for those who may not have considered this previously.

Q 2B: If not, why have they not been introduced? When do you anticipate they will be introduced?

Only five universities reported they do not *currently* have programs available. All of these universities indicated the review of previous programs was underway and/or new programs were under development. Responses suggested all universities would have programs implemented by 2020.

STUDENTS

Action: Establish processes that ensure all students will encounter and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content as integral parts of their course of study by 2020.

Australia is home to the world's oldest continuous societies and cultures. This carries a wealth of knowledge and practices that have immense value – historically, today and for the future. An appreciation of Indigenous knowledges, history and cultures contributes to a breadth and depth of learning that helps prepare all graduates to operate effectively in global society.

Q3: Does your university have an Indigenous-specific graduate attribute or equivalent? If not, does it have a related cultural graduate attribute?

14 universities indicated they have an Indigenous-specific graduate attribute or equivalent.

A university-wide teaching and learning framework that specified an intent to incorporate Indigenous views or learning in course design was in some cases deemed to be 'equivalent' to an attribute.

17 universities indicated they have some form of broader cultural graduate attribute for students to be able to engage positively and professionally with different cultures and worldviews, or to act ethically and with social responsibility. Definitions for these cultural attributes universally included reference to Indigenous cultures, histories, protocols, contexts etc.

Six universities indicated graduate attributes or equivalent were currently under review.

An alternative approach – The University of Wollongong:

"UOW does not have graduate attributes, but it stated it is comfortable that graduates will have a degree of cultural awareness through completion of the base cultural awareness program which includes a mandatory test. Further, despite not having graduate attributes, UoW also incorporates Indigenous content and knowledges into its course offerings through the award winning Jindaola program. Jindaola is a development grants program facilitated by a local Traditional Knowledge Holder and established in consultation with local Aboriginal community. It engages participants (staff) in Aboriginal ways towards Curriculum Reconciliation (to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures and contributions). Indigenous teaching practice is enhanced by developing and providing sustainable Indigenous training resources for teaching staff that are based on best practice, current evidence and cultural knowledge. The resources are incorporated into the university's continuing professional development, learning and teaching program that is delivered both face-to-face and online."

Q 4: How are students assessed against this attribute prior to graduation?

Universities are self-accrediting, autonomous institutions. Design and assessment for learning, curriculum and teaching tasks varies across the sector (and within institutions).

The survey indicated students are assessed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content prior to graduation in a variety of ways. Responses also suggested that implementation of plans to ensure all students encounter content relevant to their Indigenous or cultural graduate attributes is similarly mixed. The points below represent a sample of university responses:

- *“Students’ Indigenous professional capacity is assessed via mainstream assessment mechanisms for each course/subject – the same mechanisms that are assessed to gauge students’ performance with respect to all graduate attributes. The specificity of these assessment mechanisms to the Indigenous graduate attribute will vary from faculty to faculty and course to course, to the degree that Indigenous content is woven into an existing subject or is a standalone subject.”*
- *“All undergraduate or postgraduate coursework programs must detail how the program will develop a comprehensive profile of the university graduate qualities, and how the student achievement of them is assessed.”*
- *“150 hours of Indigenous-related content must be embedded into all courses.”*
- *“If the attribute is articulated as an intended learning outcome in the respective unit or course, then they are assessed. If not, then they are not assessed.”*
- *“Students are not formally assessed against the graduate attributes. The university ensures that the graduate attributes are imparted to students by requiring new subjects and courses align with and detail how the attributes will be developed through the curriculum.”*
- *“Students are not assessed against any particular graduate attribute through any formal process. Rather, the graduate attributes are used as the foundation for the formulation and structuring of course, major and unit learning outcomes. Hence, students have the chance to develop the attributes and to be assessed in relation to those, no matter which course of study they complete.”*
- *“All new first year undergraduate students complete a mandatory online unit on Indigenous studies essentials.”*
- *“Student exposure to the factors that will help them develop the distinctive graduate qualities will be primarily through the formal course curriculum. However, the university learning experience is not limited to curriculum, and some aspects of the distinctive graduate quality may be facilitated through extracurricular activities.”*
- *“Indigenous Australian cultural competency of students is in the main addressed via the curriculum. Since most students are studying in online/distance mode, embedding cultural competency in the curriculum is the most appropriate vehicle for reaching all.”*
- *“The implementation plan for the recently approved graduate attributes policy will ensure that all graduate attributes, including the Indigenous-specific graduate attribute, are integrated into all programs by 2024.”*

Q 5: How does your university ensure Indigenous views are embedded into course design/re-accreditation processes?

Survey responses indicated a positive trend of growing investment in initiatives or ideas to embed Indigenous views into course design/re-accreditation processes. This may be due to the ongoing conversations which have occurred during the consultation process for the [*Good Practice Principles for Course Accreditation and Review of Indigenous Curriculum*](#) developed by Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic).

Three key strategies emerged from survey responses about projects seeking to ensure academic staff consider what, if any, Indigenous content can be embedded into curriculum. These were:

1. The use of dedicated staff, units or programs to support university faculties in this process. This involves providing faculties with the resources and if necessary, support or guidance to embed Indigenous content or views into curriculum where appropriate. Ultimately ownership of this process remains at the faculty level – but this strategy helps to remove any real or perceived barriers (such as lack of resources, lack of expert support, lack of confidence etc) to all academic staff to taking some responsibility.
2. Ensuring Indigenous representatives are appointed to relevant course review/design committees and sub-committees was cited as another important initiative.
3. Revision, or introduction, of templates to specifically address whether Indigenous views or content have been addressed in the course design process.

CASE STUDIES

University of Technology, Sydney

“The first stage relating to incorporation of Indigenous views in course design has been for faculties to engage with the academic team responsible for the implementation of Indigenous graduate attributes (IGA)/Indigenous Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ICILOs). From 2015–2018, this was the team in the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK), which established a set of values to guide curriculum development.

“Indigenous Graduate Attribute champions have been appointed in most of the faculties. These champions have worked with CAIK and their colleagues to develop curriculum, prepare small grants to fund resource development or teaching award nominations.

“Most faculties also have Indigenous Graduate Attribute working groups or other designated staff working on curriculum development and implementation. Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) within faculties play a leading role in this.

“Faculty-based senior Indigenous advice and leadership is also provided by the Associate Deans (Indigenous), who support deans in developing multi-year Indigenous strategies (including IGA/ICILO implementation and maintenance).

“In 2019, with IGA implementation well advanced in all faculties, oversight for the IGA project was moved to the Office of the PVC (ILE), specifically to the newly created Associate Dean (Indigenous Teaching and Learning) role. The Associate Dean (Indigenous Teaching and Learning) will work closely with staff in all faculties in ongoing oversight of IGA/ICILO implementation and maintenance.”

La Trobe University

“Since the commencement of the inaugural PVC (I) several intermediate steps have been taken in pursuance of this goal:

- 1. The PVC (I) has drawn from his now-completed National Senior Teaching Fellowship (commissioned by the former Australian Government’s Office of Learning and Teaching [OLT]), to develop a road map to engage the university in a systematic way to ensure such a successful and comprehensive embedding and, through the introduction of a good practice model, guide the operationalisation and roll-out of this complex, and challenging, work. The guide, *Having the Hard Conversations: A Guide to Good Practice*, along with accompanying video resources, launched and became available for public uptake on 4 October 2019.*
- 2. An Indigenous-identified Level C academic position has been created and filled within La Trobe Learning and Teaching (LTLT). The role has been charged with working with LTLT, the Office of the PVC (I), the two academic colleges and all campuses to support the embedding of Indigenous perspectives, which, in turn, are drawn from community-input, Indigenous knowledge, the literature and recognised good practice.*
- 3. An Indigenous Curriculum Advisory Group, drawn from Indigenous university staff-members with relevant skills, has been convened to support this work. One of the continuing tasks of the committee, begun in August 2019, is the development and updating of a university-wide, common resource bank.*
- 4. The Office of the PVC (I) has prioritised the convening of workshops, with selected teams, which include (amongst a range of objectives) an addressing of the rationale for, and the mechanisms supporting success of, the embedding of such perspectives in La Trobe University*

curricula. By December 2019, four preliminary sessions and seven four-hour workshops will have been conducted.”

Australian Catholic University

“ACU has a specific project and project team addressing this. Course approval templates require explanation of the ways in which Indigenous views are embedded in curriculum. Course development teams are supported by academic developers to ensure that Indigenous views and knowings are embedded into both course learning outcomes and into individual units in the course.

“The Building Cultural Capacity team within the Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) review all Indigenous teaching and learning resources using an in-house evaluation tool. High quality tools are stored on our intranet and are available to all academic staff. Faculty champions have been identified and support their colleagues to embed cultural safety and Indigenous knowings into units.

“Additionally, from 2019 ACU will introduce a specific round of internal teaching development grants with a focus on embedding Indigenous knowings into curricula.”

SECTION SUMMARY: PROMOTING PROFICIENCY IN INDIGENOUS CULTURE

- 34 universities indicated they offer cross-cultural programs or professional development opportunities for executive and senior staff (this includes those universities which offer the same or similar programs to all staff). The remaining five universities indicated relevant programs or opportunities were currently under review/development and would likely be implemented in 2020.
- 10 universities reported some form of training is mandatory for executive/senior leaders, or for all staff (if the training offered to all staff is the same). Most universities reported that whilst attendance for executive/new senior staff is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged.
- 13 universities indicated they offer additional or different training to executive/senior leaders compared to other staff.
- 31 universities indicated they currently have some form of *cultural graduate attribute* relating to students being able to engage positively and professionally with different cultures and worldviews, or to act ethically and with social responsibility – with Indigenous learning outcomes to be embedded as part of this cultural graduate attribute where appropriate. Of these universities, 14 indicated they have an *Indigenous specific graduate attribute* (or equivalent).
- Students are assessed on Indigenous content prior to graduation in a variety of ways, in line with the functioning of universities as autonomous, self-accrediting institutions. Responses suggested the implementation of plans to ensure all students encounter content relevant to their Indigenous or cultural graduate attributes is similarly mixed.
- Survey responses indicated a positive trend of growing investment in initiatives or ideas to embed Indigenous views in course design/re-accreditation process. The three main strategies emerging from survey responses were:
 - The use of dedicated academic staff, units or programs to support faculties in this process by developing resources, support or guidance for the university.
 - Ensuring that Indigenous representatives are appointed to relevant course review/design committees and sub-committees.
 - The revision or introduction of templates to specifically address whether Indigenous views or content have been addressed in the course design process.

INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Action: Include Indigenous higher education, research and employment as priority areas in core policy documents, including institutional strategic and business plans

Universities are committed to grow their Indigenous workforces both through actions in the sector's UA Indigenous Strategy and Indigenous employment initiatives stipulated in the Australian Government's Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP).

The ISSP commenced on 1 January 2017 and provides supplementary funding to universities to help students take on the demands of university and succeed. The new program combines and simplifies three former programs that offered similar but less flexible funding.

Universities can offer scholarships, tutorial assistance, mentoring, safe cultural spaces and other personal support services. The ISSP guidelines require universities to demonstrate they are taking actions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment, success and employment to be eligible for funding. Key requirements of the UA strategy generally align with, and complement, the ISSP.

To meet the requirements of the ISSP guidelines, the Indigenous workforce strategy of universities must aim for an Indigenous staff population is at least 3 per cent, or other higher percentage agreed by the Minister.

The guidelines also state universities must also prioritise:

- (i) *increasing the number of academic employees engaged by the provider who are Indigenous persons;*
- (ii) *the professional development and career advancement of academic employees engaged by the provider who are Indigenous persons;*
- (iii) *employment of at least one Indigenous person as a senior executive employee at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor, or equivalent level.²*

INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL (NON-ACADEMIC) STAFF

The data below contextualises Indigenous employment in the university sector. Results from the first annual report indicated universities had already made employment a priority in core policy documents and strategic plans.

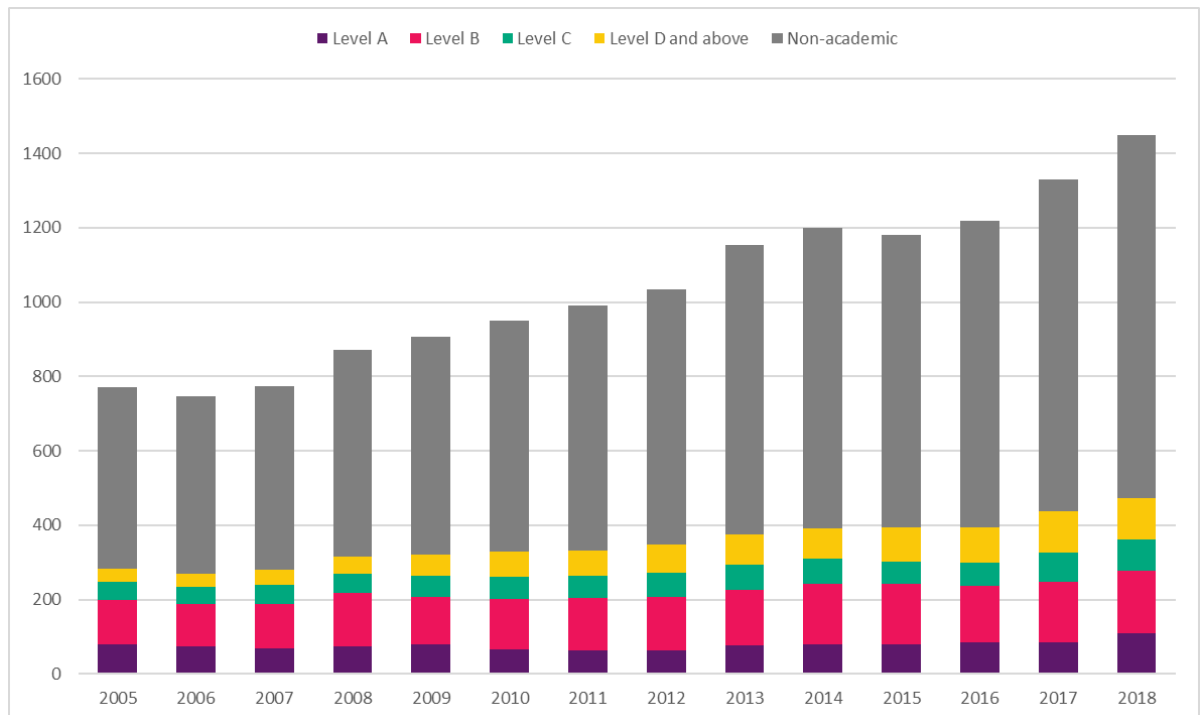
The total number of Indigenous staff at Australian universities has grown by 88.6 per cent since 2005 – from 771 staff to 1,454 staff in 2018 ³. Of these, around one-third are academic staff – in teaching, learning or research roles – and two-thirds are professional staff.

The number of Indigenous academic staff grew by 70.2 per cent over the sample period – from 282 in 2005 to 480 in 2018.

² Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017 (ISSP Guidelines) – section 12, Indigenous Workforce Strategy

³ Data and findings presented in this section only include staff (headcount) employed on full-time and fractional full-time work contract and exclude casual staff. HEIMS only collects information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent for full-time and fractional full-time staff.

Figure 15: Number of Indigenous staff by duties classification, 2005 to 2018



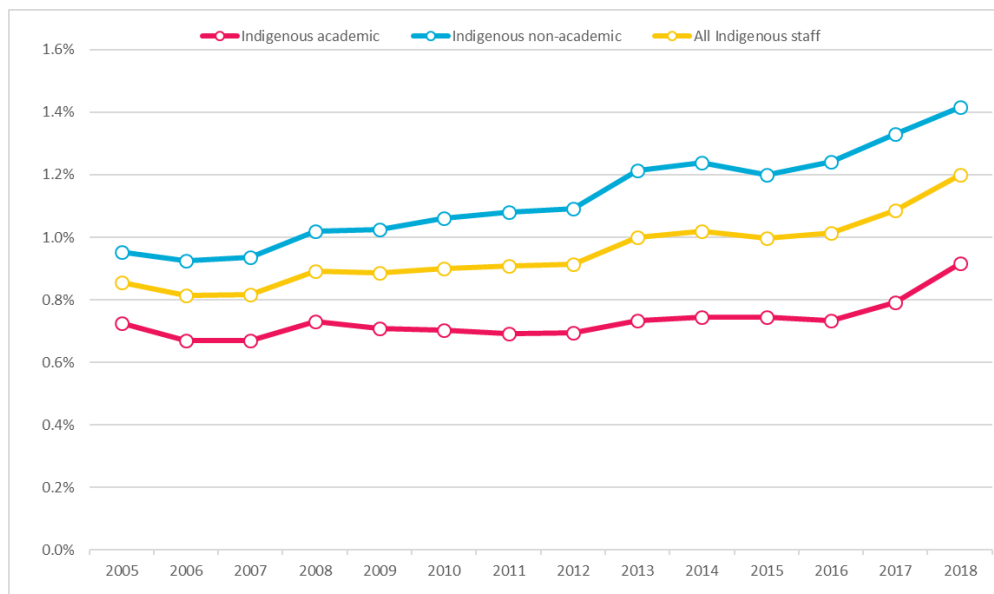
Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

Despite the strong growth in the number of Indigenous staff, the proportion of Indigenous academic staff only increased from 0.73 per cent in 2005 to 0.92 per cent in 2018 (see figure 16).

There has been some growth in the proportion of professional positions held by Indigenous people over the same period. The share of professional Indigenous staff increased from 0.95 per cent in 2005 to 1.42 per cent in 2018.

In 2018, 1.2 per cent of Australian university staff - both academic and professional - were from an Indigenous background, significantly below the working age population parity of 3.1 per cent.

Figure 16: Share of Indigenous staff, 2005 to 2018

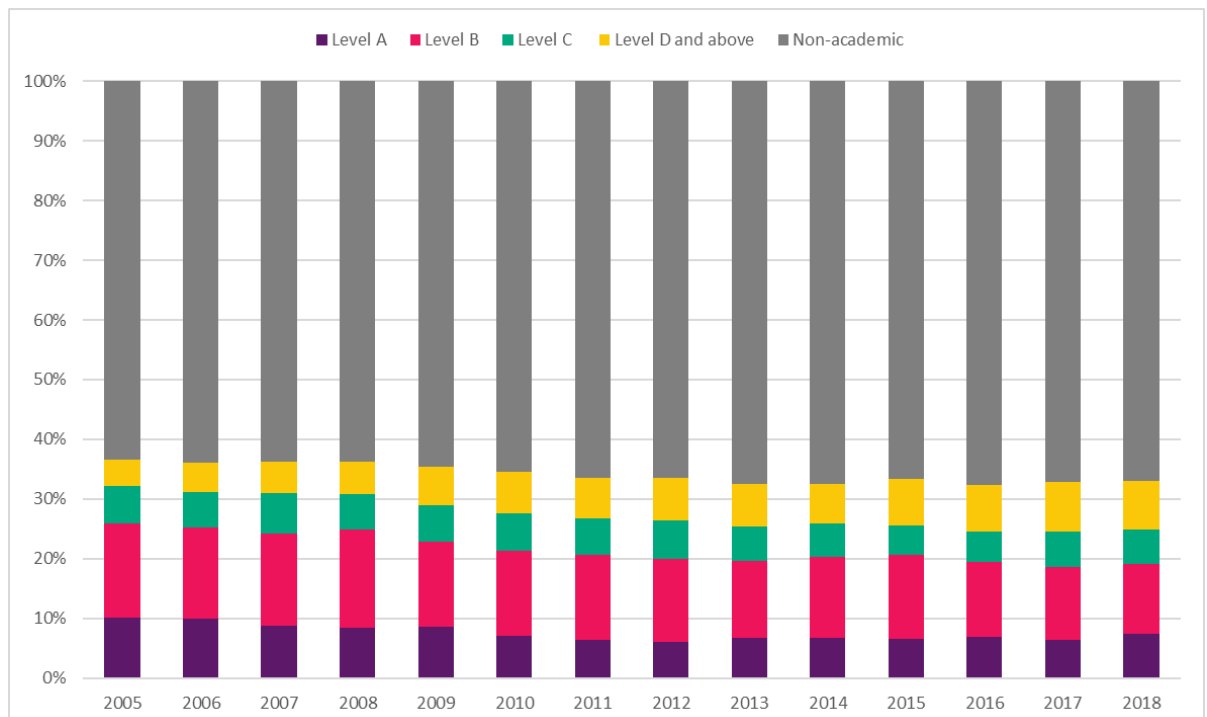


Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

The share of Indigenous staff in professional roles grew from 63.4 per cent in 2005 to 67 per cent in 2018 (see figure 17). Meanwhile the share of Indigenous staff in academic Level A positions has declined from 10.1 per cent to 7.5 per cent over the period.

In 2018, 8.1 per cent of Indigenous staff were employed in senior academic roles—Level D and above—which is up from 4.4 per cent in 2005.

Figure 17: Proportion of Indigenous staff by duties classification, 2005 to 2018



Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

COMPARISONS TO NON-INDIGENOUS STAFF

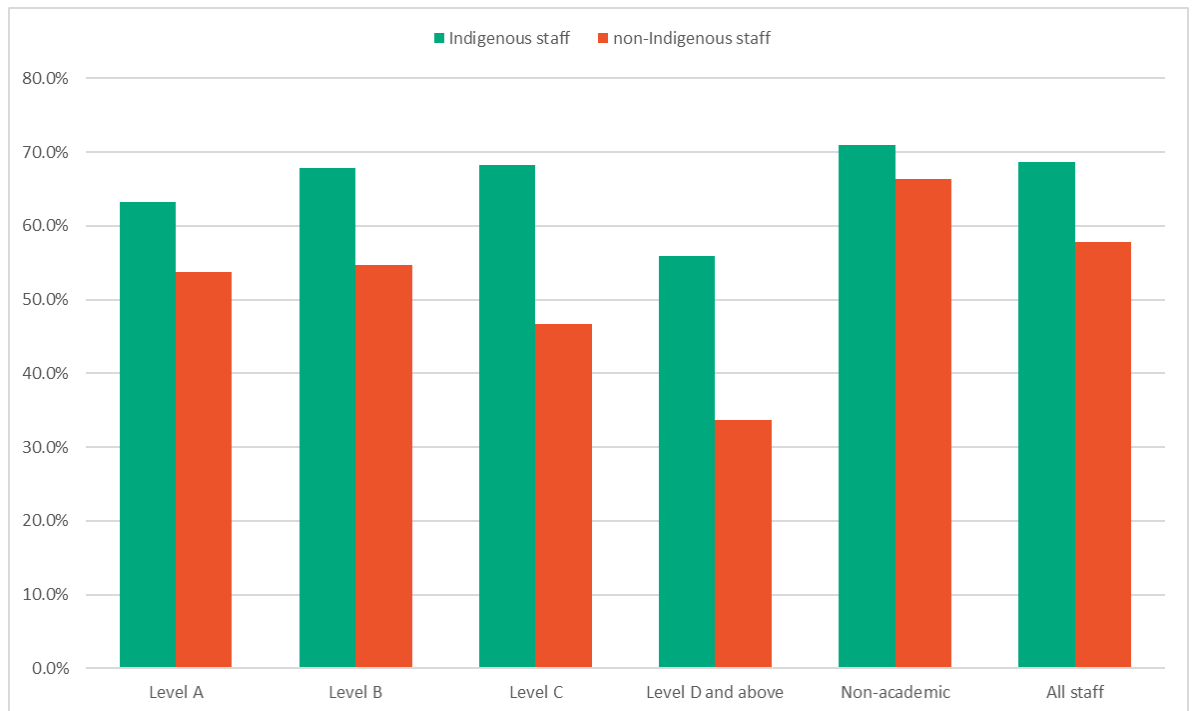
In 2018, a greater proportion of Indigenous staff were women, over 40 years old and in less senior academic roles compared with non-Indigenous staff.

Gender

Indigenous staff are more likely to be female compared to non-Indigenous staff (see figure 18).

In 2018, 68.6 per cent of Indigenous staff were female – compared to 57.8 per cent of non-Indigenous staff.

Figure 18: Share of female staff by duties classification, 2018



Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

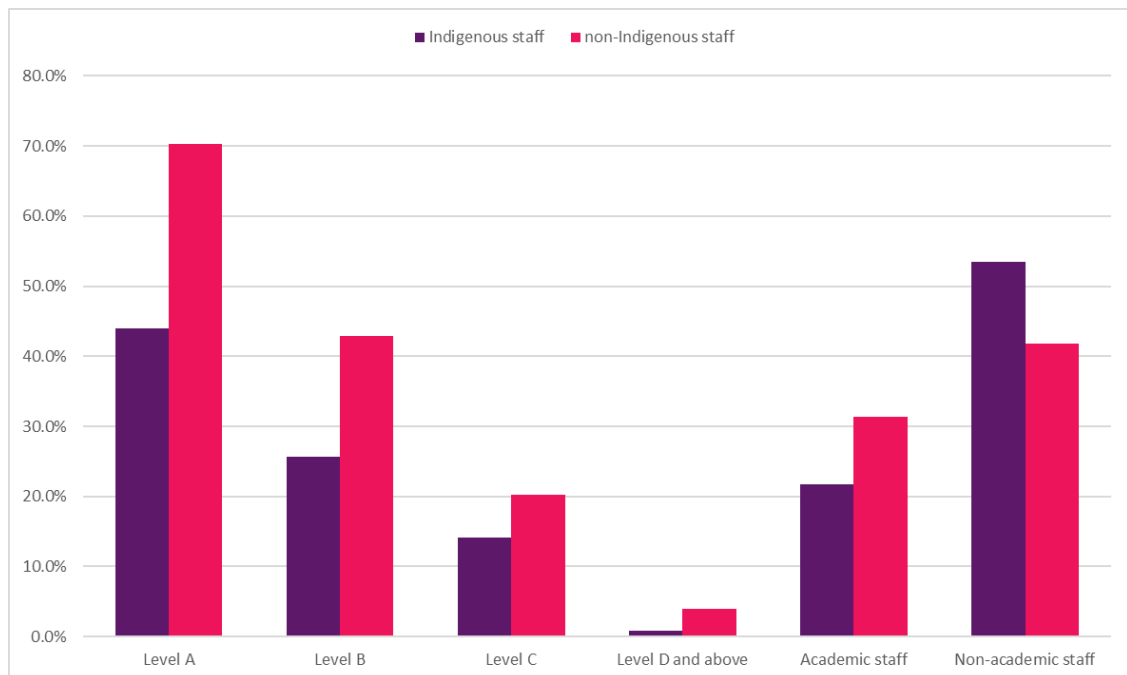
Age

Indigenous academic staff are likely to be older than non-Indigenous staff (see figure 19).

In 2018, only 21.7 per cent of Indigenous academic staff were aged under 40 – compared to 31.3 per cent of non-Indigenous academic staff.

In contrast, 53.5 per cent of Indigenous staff employed in professional roles were aged under 40, compared to 41.8 per cent of non-Indigenous staff.

Figure 19: Share of staff aged under 40 by duties classification, 2018



Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

Academic roles

Indigenous academic staff are more likely to be employed in teaching and research and teaching-only positions and less likely in research-only positions (see figure 20).

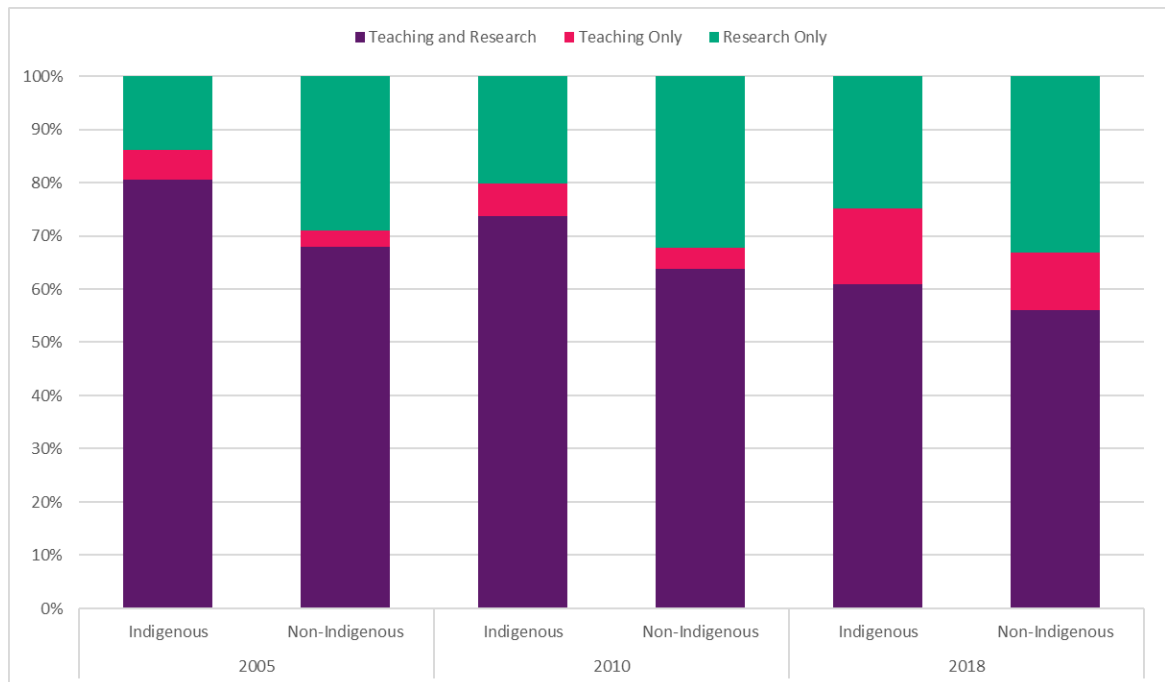
In 2018, most Indigenous academic staff (61 per cent) were employed in roles that combine teaching and research – down from 80.6 per cent in 2005.

The proportion of Indigenous academic staff employed in teaching-only roles grew from 5.6 per cent in 2005 to 14.1 per cent in 2018.

The proportion of Indigenous academic staff employed in research-only roles rose from 13.9 per cent in 2005 to 24.9 per cent in 2018.

This compares to only 10.8 per cent of non-Indigenous academic staff employed in a teaching-only role; 33.2 per cent in a research-only role, and the remaining 56 per cent in a role that combined teaching and research in 2018.

Figure 20: Share of staff by academic functions, 2005, 2010 and 2018



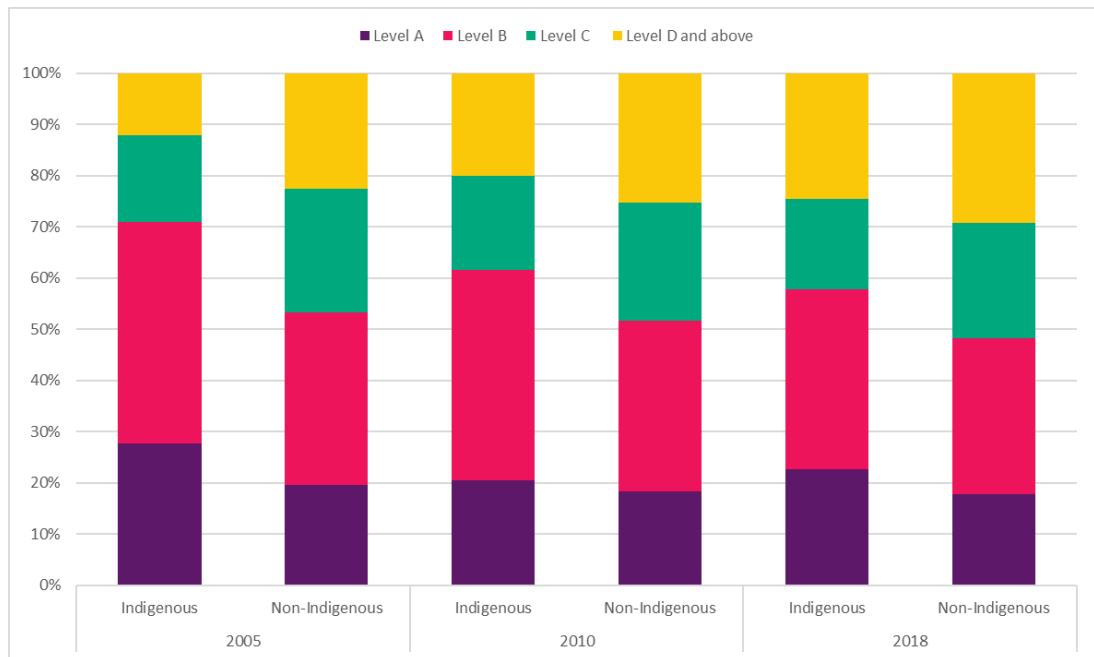
Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

Duties classification

In 2018, Indigenous academic staff were proportionally over-represented at below lecturer (Level A) (22.7 per cent, compared to 17.8 per cent for non-Indigenous) and lecturer (Level B) (35 per cent, compared to 30.5 per cent for non-Indigenous).

In contrast, Indigenous academic staff were proportionally under-represented at senior lecturer (Level C) (17.7 per cent, compared to 22.5 per cent for non-Indigenous) and above senior lecturer (Level D and above) (24.6 per cent, compared to 29.2 per cent for non-Indigenous). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the share of Indigenous staff in senior academic roles - Level D and above - has doubled since 2005, from 12.1 per cent to 24.6 per cent.

Figure 21: Share of staff by academic duties classification, 2005, 2010 and 2018



Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

POPULATION PARITY – STAFF

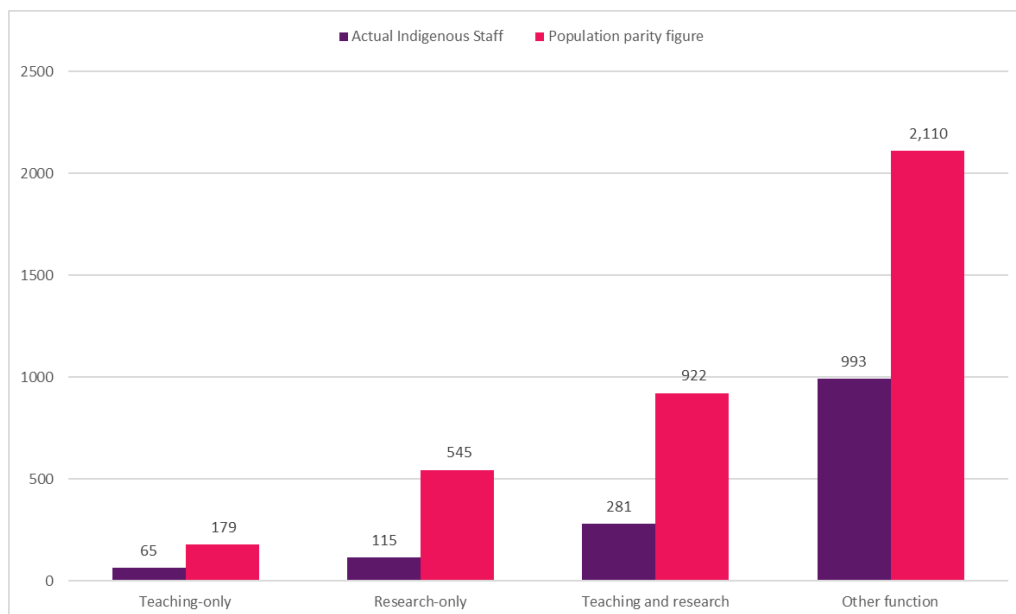
In 2018, 461 Indigenous staff were employed in a teaching or research role in Australian universities, representing 0.87 per cent of all staff employed in teaching or research roles.

Whilst it is not an action under the UA Strategy to have reached population parity of 3.1 per cent in 2018, an additional 1,185 Indigenous academic staff would need to have been employed to meet that target (see

Figure 22).

In terms of types of roles, the sector would have needed to employ an extra 114 Indigenous staff in teaching-only roles, 430 in research-only roles, and 641 in roles that combined teaching and research in 2017.

Figure 22: Indigenous staff, actual vs population parity figures, 2018



Source: UA estimates based on 2018 actual Indigenous staff numbers compared to if Indigenous staff numbers are at 3.1 per cent population parity.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Indigenous leadership models and opportunities for senior Indigenous staff emerged as key topic for discussion during 2019.

This was explored in discussions between NATSIHEC and UA at the joint annual Board meeting, with Vice-Chancellors at a Plenary meeting in early 2019 and at UA Higher Education Conference.

These discussions canvassed:

- The rate of recruitment and appointment of Pro or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (PVC/DVC) Indigenous or equivalent positions across the sector – and what, if any, barriers exist for universities seeking to fill these positions
 - What are the intended university objectives for creating and filling these roles?
- Where these positions fit in the governance structure of the university and their proximity to senior decision making
 - How are universities leveraging these roles to implement change/outcomes?
- Whether pathways exist for senior Indigenous officers to progress from PVC/DVC Indigenous positions into DVC Academic, Students, Research, International roles etc – and into VC roles.
- The role of the growing network of PVC/DVC Indigenous staff across the sector
 - The questions on these topics in this year's survey were not intended to draw conclusions on what governance structures are 'best practice'. Rather, they sought to gather information on an array of diverse approaches across institutions, to enable universities to learn from each other's innovations – and to inform ongoing discussion on these questions.

Q6: Who is the senior Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander manager within the university? What is his/her title and how long has the position been occupied?

By January 2020, 22 Australian universities had a PVC/DVC Indigenous position in their executive or leadership structure. This number has remained relatively constant across the sector for the past two years, as new appointments were offset by retirements or incumbents moving to new roles.

Seven universities indicated they are currently recruiting to fill PVC/DVC Indigenous level positions. Two of these had previously had this position occupied. Five were recruiting to fill 'new positions').

The remaining universities currently have Indigenous leadership spread throughout a mix of deans, directors, Elders in Residence and consultative group mechanisms. These universities did not indicate they were actively seeking to recruit for PVC/DVC Indigenous level positions.

Q6A: If you do not currently have a PVC or DVC Indigenous equivalent position, please explain what alternative mechanism is used in lieu of this position.

Responses highlight some examples of the rationale for those who indicated they are not currently actively seeking to recruit a PVC/DVC Indigenous equivalent position:

- One university explained that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership is deliberately provided through its Indigenous leadership group (ILG) as this reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forms of leadership. The ILG provides collaborative guidance to the university on a range of important strategic and operational initiatives to improve outcomes and engagement of Indigenous students, research and community with the university.
- Another university responded by stating its RAP Committee and Indigenous Governance Committee are providing advice directly to the VC. The university is currently exploring options with other regionally-based universities to address a possible alternative mechanism to fulfil roles traditionally undertaken by a PVC or DVC Indigenous.

- Another indicated the VC is the executive lead for Indigenous issues. He has regular meetings with senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, both academic and professional to gain their feedback and consult with them about Indigenous issues. The director of the university's Indigenous centre is an identified Indigenous position and is a member of the senior management, the university's executive decision-making body.
- One university responded by stating its model of Indigenous leadership shares responsibility via:
 - the Dean of the university's centre for Indigenous education and research;
 - the university's Indigenous governance mechanism;
 - an Elders Advisory Board
 - the Elder in Residence
 - graduating Indigenous leaders commitment board
 - policy and planning frameworks

Q7: Is the appointment an executive or senior management position?

Universities use different titles for what are broadly similar governance structures. The following structure was used as a guide to categorise university responses:

- i. Senior executive/senior leadership team (highest strategic decision-making body)
- ii. Executive team or senior managers
- iii. Managers and senior academic positions

Five universities clearly demonstrated their senior Indigenous role is part of the highest senior executive/leadership team at their university.

Some 20 universities demonstrated they have (or are recruiting for) a senior Indigenous role which fits in the "executive or senior manager" structures.

The remaining universities senior Indigenous roles fall into the 'managers and senior academic' category – or no category at all if a consultative group mechanism was identified as the primary mechanism. Further, as outlined further below, some universities have separate Indigenous representation on their respective university councils or senates.

Again, these questions were not designed to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of individual governance arrangements. Universities with a more devolved structure of Indigenous leadership and consultation have developed their own systems over time to engage with Indigenous executive officers or consultative groups in local communities.

Q8: What are the senior management or executive reporting lines for the PVC or DVC Indigenous position (or consultative group) within the university management structure?

Seven universities indicated their senior Indigenous managers report, or will report, directly to the Vice-Chancellor. Three universities also indicated their consultative groups with responsibility for Indigenous leadership similarly report directly to the VC. These numbers have not been combined as many universities have IGMs that also provide annual advice directly to VCs or university councils.

In total, 23 universities indicated their senior Indigenous manager reports to Deputy Vice-Chancellors (or Vice-Presidents) or Provosts, who in turn report to the VC. Many of those in these situations highlighted that the VC would still go directly for advice to the relevant senior Indigenous managers through regular meetings or from time to time as required.

Six universities indicated their senior Indigenous managers have an additional line of reporting. That is, they report to an Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellors, who then report to a DVC or Provost, who reports to the VC. Again, some of those in this category highlighted that the VC would still seek advice directly from Indigenous managers or consultative groups for specific purposes.

Q9: Does the PVC or DVC Indigenous (or consultative Group) sit on the university council or senate? What other senior university boards, committees, sub-committees do they sit on?

Six universities indicated they have Indigenous representation on the university council (or equivalent). This included Emeritus Professors, Chancellors, community Elders or other prominent figures.

Survey responses indicated Indigenous staff are represented on boards, committees and sub-committees throughout their respective institutions. Some of these bodies are highlighted below.

CASE STUDIES

The University of Sydney

“The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Services (DVC ISS) leads our institution-wide efforts to advance Indigenous participation, engagement, education and research, including the Wingara-Mura Bunga Barrabugu Indigenous strategy.

“The DVC ISS participates as a full member of the university executive (UE). Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, UE is the highest-level decision-making body in the university’s management structure. The DVC ISS is also a member of the university’s senior executive team (VC, DVCs, VPs and Pro-VCs) and the Academic Board, and participates in many other senior level university committees and sub-committees.

“The DVC ISS is a direct report to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. The office of the DVC ISS works with others across the university’s faculties, schools and centres and its professional support units to embed the Indigenous strategy as part of the university core business and to develop the leadership capabilities of Indigenous staff through our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework.”

Queensland University of Technology

“The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy) is a new position at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) which is responsible for providing leadership in the strategic direction of the University pertaining to Indigenous matters. This includes institutional policy, strategy and advice in relation to all aspects of Indigenous higher education at QUT. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy) is a senior executive level position that reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

“The PVC (Indigenous Strategy) sits on the University Executive Committee which, in support of the VC and President’s responsibilities as chief executive officer, provides high level advice on QUT-wide strategic issues and significant operational and management initiatives, risks, programs and issues.

“The PVC (Indigenous Strategy) is also an ex officio member of the University Academic Board which is responsible for oversight of academic governance at the University, especially ensuring the effective development, implementation and review of academic programs and policies and the maintenance of academic standards. The PVC (Indigenous Strategy) chairs the university’s Indigenous education, research and employment committee.”

The University of Western Australia

“The Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education (PVCIE) leads the development of all aspects of Indigenous education and activities throughout the university. The UWA management structure situates the PVCIE alongside the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellors and the Executive Director for Corporate Services to illustrate the reporting lines directly to the Vice Chancellor. The UWA management structure also positions the Indigenous education portfolio as one of six portfolio areas that has responsibility across the University. The PVC Indigenous Education reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

“The PVCIE is a recognised leadership role that is embedded within the University’s decision-making structures as a member of, or able to appoint a nominee to the following key committees:

- *The Planning and Resource Committee, which advises the Vice-Chancellor on strategic and operational planning, resource allocations, budgets, revenue targets and expenditure of resources.*
- *The Inclusion and Diversity Committee which advises the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to equality, inclusivity, equity and diversity, strategy and development.*
- *Academic Board, which is the peak academic body established by UWA Senate, and Academic Council, which is the Board's executive committee.*
- *University Research Committee which is a standing committee of Academic Council.*
- *Education Committee, and its standing committees: Learning and Teaching Committee; Curriculum Committee; Academic Quality and Standards Committee; and Student Experience Committee.*
- *Board of the Graduate Research School which advises Academic Council and/or other University bodies or officers, as appropriate, on matters relating to postgraduate research, research training and supervision within the university.*
- *The PVCIE is engaged in the university's integrated planning framework and planning forums through the senior leadership group (advises on the establishment and/or implementation of development priorities) and planning network (to communicate and coordinate planning processes, resolve issues and ensure alignment).*
- *The PVCIE attends the executive leadership and strategy retreat held up to three times each year.*

"In 2019, a senior Indigenous community member was appointed as an elected member (2019-2021) to UWA's Senate."

University of South Australia

"The Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership and Strategy (ALS) has responsibility for the development of a whole-of-institution approach to the recruitment, support, retention and success of Aboriginal people at the University and meeting UniSA's ambition to be the Australia's university of choice for Aboriginal Peoples."

"The PVC ALS is currently a full member of the university's senior management group (SMG). The PVC ALS will continue to report directly to the VC in a new management structure to be introduced shortly."

"The PVC ALS is not a formal member of the University Council but is invited to attend as a member of the SMG. The PVC ALS sits on several other boards, committees and sub committees throughout the university including:

- *Academic Board*
- *Yaitya Warra-itya (RAP governance mechanism)*
- *Indigenous Student Success Program Governance Group*
- *Interactive and virtual Environments University Centre Board*
- *School of Law Board*
- *Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre Board*
- *UniSA College Board."*

How is your university facilitating the professional development of senior Indigenous managers for future opportunities?

- This question served two purposes. Firstly, it was to highlight ways in which universities are offering targeted forms of professional development for Indigenous staff into senior leadership positions. Secondly, it was designed promote further thinking on whether pathways currently exist from PVC/DVC Indigenous roles into other senior leadership positions.
- Universities continue to implement respective Indigenous employment strategies, or equivalent. Many universities outlined that part of these strategies involved specific clauses committing to professional development for all Indigenous staff, along with more targeted forms of professional development to develop pipelines into leadership.
- Some survey responses did not refer to specific professional development opportunities for their Indigenous staff but indicated that opportunities exist for all staff. In this scenario, Indigenous staff would typically be encouraged to seek the form of professional development that aligns with their needs and career aspirations, such as mentoring relationships with more senior staff. This process was considered “business as usual”.
- The commonly identified programs or initiatives included:
 - Formal mentoring and supervision from senior leaders – including regular meetings with the VC and DVCs to discuss opportunities & targets for number of Indigenous staff with mentors
 - Membership on senior women’s groups that provide professional development and advice and engagement opportunities from female members of the executive
 - Identifying opportunities through individual performance planning and review processes – including early career plans
 - Leadership courses and professional coaching (internal and external)
 - Establishment of Indigenous staff forums and networks
 - Appointment to and engagement in wide-ranging university committees, working groups and reviews.
 - Support to attend and present at Australian and international conferences
- Some of the unique opportunities highlighted in survey responses included:
 - Acting roles for PVC/DVC Indigenous staff into DVC or equivalent roles across the institution (particularly Academic). Similarly, opportunities for Deans, Deputy Directors etc to act in the PVC/DVC Indigenous roles and providing opportunities for staff to be proxy members of key university committees so they can contribute their own knowledges and experiences, network with other senior staff and for the purpose of broader professional development.
 - A university supporting a joint fractional appointment to act in the PVC Indigenous position to provide them a senior management professional development opportunity whilst the substantive position was in recruitment.
 - The creation of Associate Dean (Indigenous) positions within all university faculties to not only ensure senior Indigenous academic leadership at a faculty level but provide future opportunities for existing academic staff.
 - An MoU with the Aurora Foundation which includes providing executive education bursaries for current and emerging Indigenous leaders and managers to attend short executive education programs at international universities, such as Harvard and INSEAD.

- One response indicated joining the PVC/DVC (Indigenous) professional group, which is a group of DVC's and PVC's in Australian Universities in charge of Indigenous Strategies within their Universities, would continue to be an essential professional development opportunity moving forward.
 - It is also worth noting the opportunities which exist for eight Indigenous representatives who join the four UA Deputy Vice Chancellor Committees with full membership rights. In addition, three Indigenous observers are invited to attend two of the UA Plenary meetings of Vice-Chancellors each year. These formal, and ongoing, arrangements provide meaningful professional development and networking opportunities by gaining exposure to the breadth of strategic issues senior university leaders consider and address.

SECTION SUMMARY: INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP

- The total number of Indigenous staff at Australian universities has grown by 88.6 per cent in 13 years – increasing from 771 staff in 2005 to 1,454 staff in 2018. From 2017 to 2018, Indigenous staff numbers grew 9.2 per cent sector wide. Around one-third of these roles are academic staff and two-thirds are professional staff.
- The overall proportion of Australian university staff - both academic and professional - from an Indigenous background grew from 1.09 per cent in 2017, to 1.2 per cent in 2018. This remains significantly below the working-age population parity of 3.1 per cent.
- Twenty-two universities currently have a PVC/DVC Indigenous role. This number has remained relatively constant across the sector for the past two years, as new appointments were offset by retirements or incumbents moving to new roles. A further seven universities indicated they are currently recruiting to fill PVC/DVC Indigenous level positions.
- The remaining universities currently had Indigenous leadership spread through a mix of Deans, Directors, Elders in Residence and consultative group mechanisms. Some commented that consultative group forms of leadership, for example, was the preferred mechanism as this more closely represented Aboriginal community expectations of leadership.
- Five universities clearly demonstrated their senior Indigenous manager is part of the highest senior executive/leadership team within their university. Some 20 universities demonstrated they have (or are recruiting for) a senior Indigenous manager which fits in the “executive or senior manager” structures.
- Universities continue to implement respective Indigenous employment strategies, or equivalent. Many universities outlined that part of these strategies involved specific clauses committing to professional development for all Indigenous staff, along with more targeted forms of professional development to develop pipelines into leadership.
- Commonly identified forms of professional development included formal mentoring and supervision from VCs or DVCs, professional coaching, membership on formal senior women’s groups, establishment of Indigenous staff forums, appointment to wide-ranging university committees, boards, senates and working parties.
 - Some of the unique initiatives included recent opportunities for Indigenous staff to act in DVC roles (and gaining exposure to wide-ranging responsibilities), supporting job-sharing roles in PVC opportunities and the creation of Associate Dean positions in all faculties.

RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDY

Action: Indigenous research strategies to be in place by 2018.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges contribute to Australia's intellectual and cultural capacity. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research undertaken across Australia's universities includes research on languages and cultural expression, education and health, social justice, native title and traditional ownership, governance and public policy.

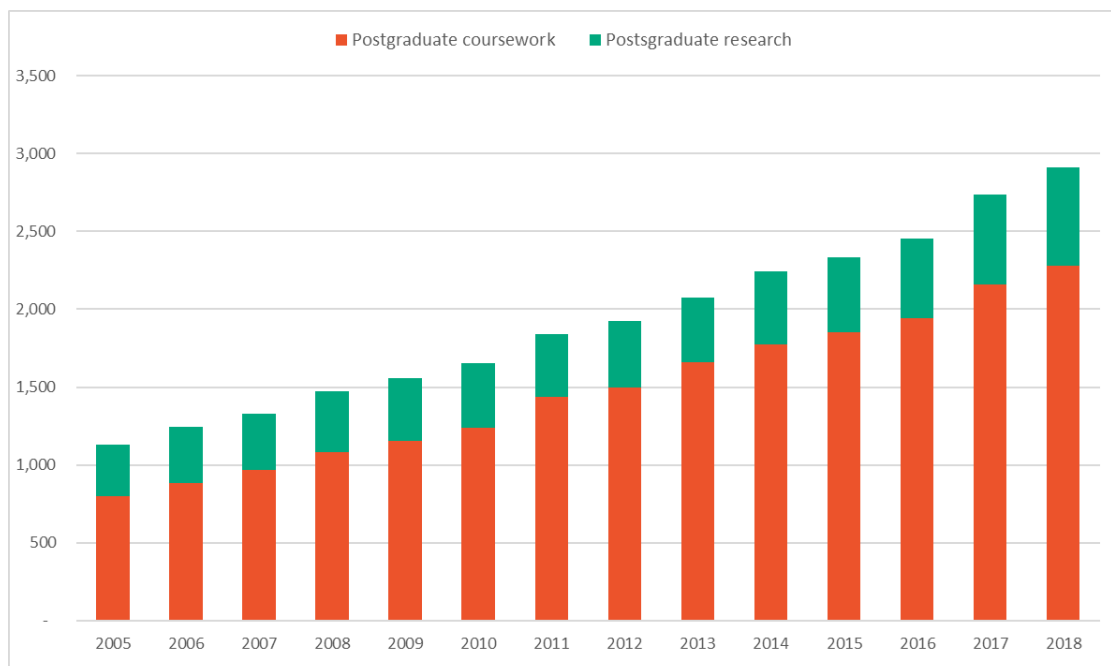
2019 saw the review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC). The ANZSRC is respected and used both in and beyond the university sector. It underpins a range of important processes including research funding and national statistics. However, UA agreed there is a lack of recognition and visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Maori and Pacific Peoples studies in the current classifications.

CURRENT RESEARCH LANDSCAPE AND THE PIPELINE OF INDIGENOUS ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS

Universities indicate they are seeking to 'grow their own' Indigenous academics and researchers by building a pipeline of high performing undergraduate students, postgraduate students and alumni from Indigenous backgrounds. Indigenous postgraduate student enrolments have increased since 2005 (see Figure).

The number of Indigenous enrolments in postgraduate research has increased 89 per cent since 2005 – from 334 students to 630 students in 2018. Enrolment in postgraduate coursework degrees has almost tripled (growing by 185 per cent) – rising from 799 Indigenous students in 2005 to 2,279 Indigenous students in 2018.

Figure 23: Indigenous postgraduate enrolments, 2005 to 2018

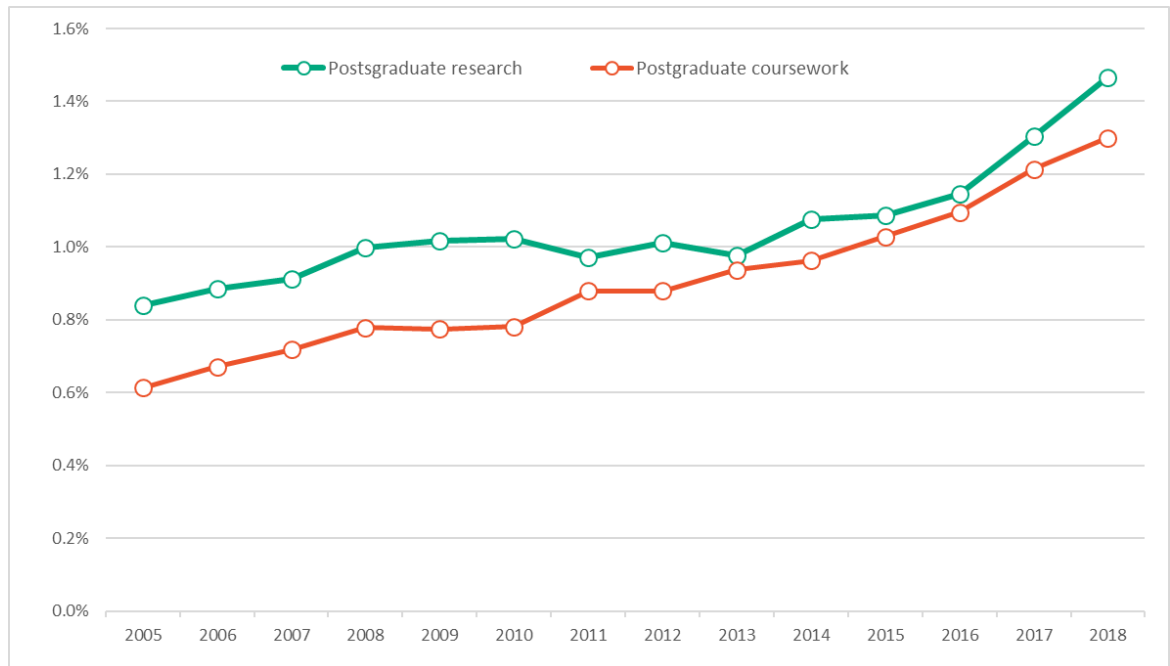


Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

As a result, the total number of Indigenous postgraduate students as a proportion of all domestic postgraduate students grew to 1.33 per cent in 2018, from 0.67 per cent in 2005.

The share of Indigenous postgraduate research students grew from 0.84 per cent in 2005 to 1.47 per cent in 2018 (see figure 24), while the share of Indigenous postgraduate coursework students also grew from 0.61 per cent to 1.3 per cent over the same period.

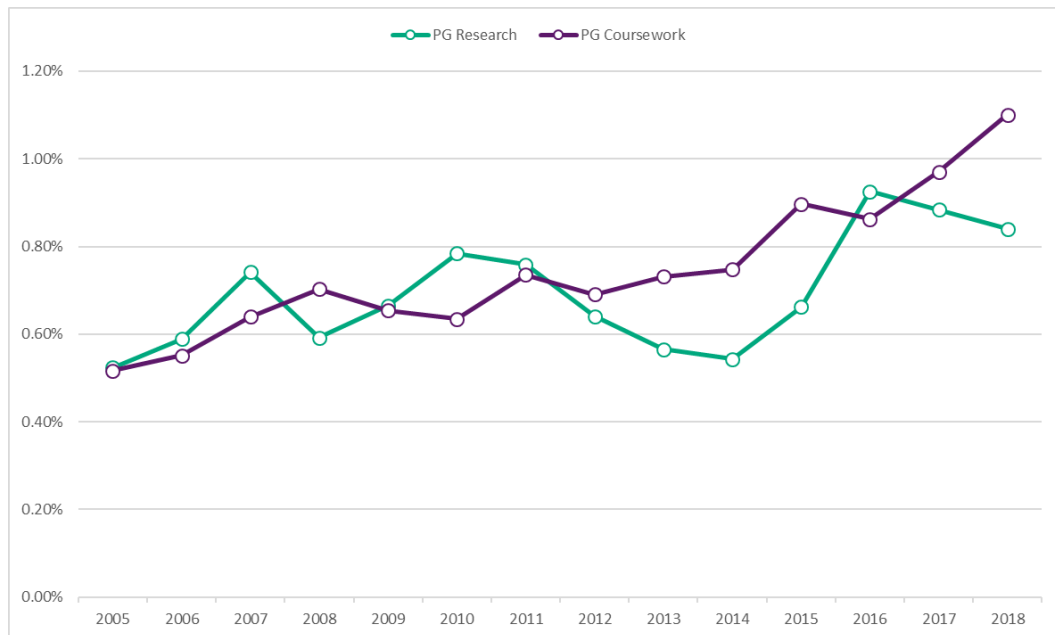
Figure 24: Share of Indigenous postgraduate enrolments, 2005 to 2018



Source: DoE 2019, Unpublished HEIMS data.

Despite the growth in postgraduate enrolments, Indigenous postgraduate student award completions remain low despite the growth in recent years (see figure 25). Indigenous students comprised one per cent of all domestic postgraduate coursework completions (1.1 per cent or 804 completions) and all domestic postgraduate research award completions (0.84 per cent or 54 completions) in 2018.

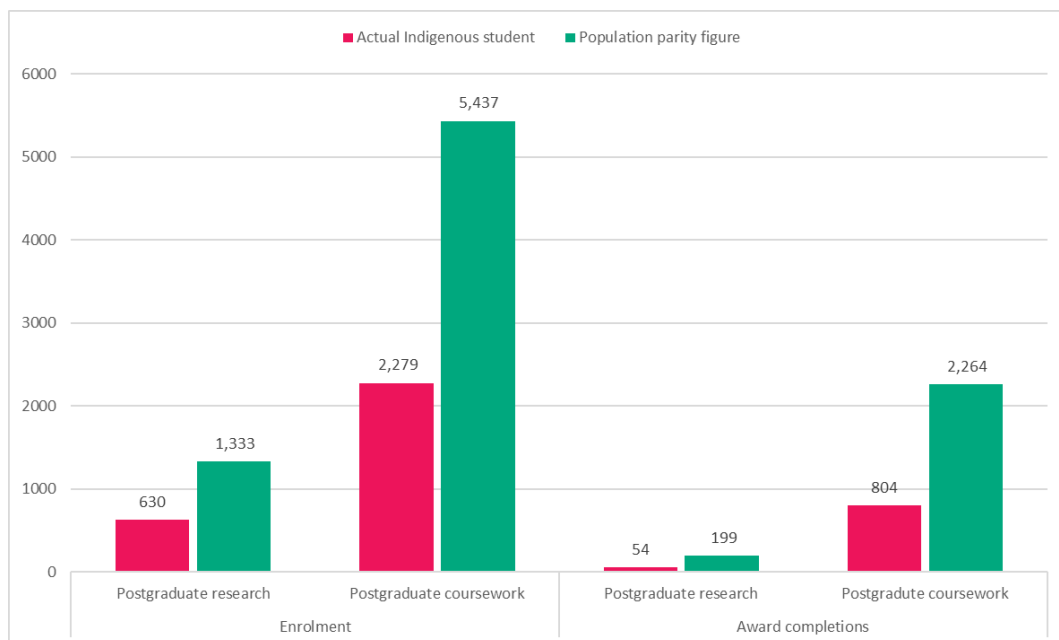
Figure 25: Share of Indigenous postgraduate award completions, 2005 to 2018



Source: DoE 2019, *Visual Analytics – Award Course Completions Time Series*.

To reach population parity of 3.1 per cent, the sector would have needed to enrol an additional 703 Indigenous postgraduate research students and an additional 3,158 postgraduate coursework students in 2018; and graduate an additional 145 postgraduate research students and an additional 1,460 postgraduate coursework students from Indigenous backgrounds in 2018.

Figure 26: Indigenous postgraduate student, actual and population parity figures, 2018



Source: UA estimates based on 2018 actual Indigenous enrolments and award course completions compared to if Indigenous enrolments and award completions are at 3.1 per cent population parity.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Responses to the 2019 survey indicated limited progress had been made over the past 12 months at the individual institutional level on Indigenous research strategies. There were however some strong examples of individual institutions that have Indigenous research strategies.

Q10: Does your university have an Indigenous research strategy in place and is it reflected in the University's research strategy?

Twenty-one universities indicated they have an Indigenous research strategy. This includes a small number of universities which might not have had a standalone document, but where clear Indigenous research objectives and targets were articulated in other key university strategic documents.

Of the 21 universities with an Indigenous research strategy or equivalent in place, 18 indicated the key components or targets of such strategies have been integrated into university research strategies or university strategic plans.

Q11: If yes, how would you describe implementation of this strategy?

There was a diversity of approaches on implementation of Indigenous research strategies. A large proportion of responses spoke of the governance structures that exist to monitor and progress the actions contained in them. For example, outlining the responsibilities of senior university officials and faculties against the relevant actions in them, as well as the reporting and review systems in place to monitor progress. This may indicate universities are still in the current lifecycle of implementing their Indigenous research strategies or it is too early to evaluate the impact of respective strategies.

Others provided a brief commentary on the relative success in meeting targets. Some members clearly outlined their strong performance in research and/or increases to their Indigenous research pipeline. However, at least one university indicated that while there is strong goodwill towards Indigenous research across the university, progress to attract and complete greater numbers of Indigenous higher degree research students had been more limited than their ambitions.

Some examples and insights on implementing Indigenous research strategies follow.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Monash University

"The Research Agenda 2020 was launched in May 2019 and directly supports the Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework launched in November 2018. A detailed implementation plan for the framework will be developed in late 2019, outlining the commitments relating to research as well as those accountable for delivering them."

"As part of the launch of the research strategy and coinciding with Reconciliation Week activities around the university, an Indigenous research showcase was held in June 2019. Indigenous researchers from Monash discussed the importance of Indigenous methodologies in their research. An expert panel also shed light on Indigenous research ethics and answered questions about researcher engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities."

“In response to the framework, several faculties are well advanced in progressing the commitments outlined relating to research, including Monash Art Design and Architecture (MADA) who have already onboarded an Indigenous Associate Dean and established connections with other institutions to have visiting Indigenous researchers to that encourage new national and international collaborations.

“An Indigenous postgraduate forum is being held in September 2019.”

Queensland University of Technology

“The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research strategy has an accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research strategy implementation plan. The implementation plan outlines key activities for the Indigenous research and engagement unit and for the faculties and research institutes of the university.

“In the first year of implementation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) chaired a working party with Associate Deans, Research Directors from each Faculty; Deputy Directors of each research institute; and the Director and representatives of the Indigenous Research and Engagement Unit. The aim of the working party was to promote awareness of the strategy and implementation plan, share best practice and innovative ideas, and coordinate reporting to the University Research and Innovation Committee.

“In support of the implementation plan the Indigenous Research and Engagement Unit and the Research Information and Systems Support teams collaborated on the development of a comprehensive report of Indigenous research activity at QUT. The report combined data for Indigenous HDR students, Indigenous HDR supervisors, Indigenous researchers and keywords to highlight projects, publications and thesis topics with Indigenous connections.”

Swinburne University

“Swinburne developed and implemented an Indigenous Research Strategy in 2017. This strategy builds on our 2017 – 19 Reconciliation Action Plan, particularly the research theme. Swinburne is currently developing the 2020 – 2022 Indigenous Research Strategy and will ensure this Strategy is reflected in the overall new Swinburne Research Strategy which is also being developed.

“There are three broad and interconnected themes in the Swinburne 2017 - 19 Indigenous research strategy. These are:

- *Strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research across the faculties and TAFE;*
- *Increase the number of, and support for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers;*
- *Increase the number of, and support for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDRs.*

“There has been a significant increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research at Swinburne, with Swinburne Indigenous Studies academics being award two ARC Discovery grants, one ARC Discovery grant, and many other grants in the past year. This includes the first ARC Discovery grant and the first ARC Discovery Indigenous grant awarded to Swinburne Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander academics.

“There has also been a significant increase of 700 per cent in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander academics over the past three years. There has similarly been an increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander HDR student enrolments and completions across a range of humanities and business disciplines.”

Q12: If yes, do you have specific programs for Indigenous students? What impact are you seeing from those programs?

Twenty-one universities said they currently have programs for Indigenous students, with several others in the process of introducing them. Current programs or initiatives being offered for, or to attract, Indigenous HDR students include:

- Preparatory courses that Indigenous HDR applicants can complete to demonstrate their capabilities for a PhD or Masters. The courses include information about how to choose a research topic, questions, and supervisors, how to select appropriate methodologies and methods to collect and analyse data, and how to write effectively, for example.
- Providing scholarships to all HDR candidates studying full-time, and forums, writing workshops, symposiums/panels to present their research progress and networking is regularly facilitated to create a strong intellectual and empowering environment that supports progress and success
- Establishment of early career academic positions across faculties that include the providing of time allowing for completion of PhDs, as well as minimal teaching and research workloads and commitments to tenured positions upon completion of PhDs.
- “Masterclasses” for supervisors of Indigenous topics and Indigenous research approaches to target capacities needed for fostering an environment conducive to increasing Indigenous student engagement.
- Creation of dedicated professional positions to promote, attract and support Indigenous students into academic pathways.

Some examples below highlight current practices or initiatives across the sector in further detail.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

University of Technology, Sydney

“UTS has several programs aimed at improving Indigenous higher degree by research student participation and retention outcomes.

“Jumbunna Institute in 2018 appointed a coordinator, Indigenous HDR to promote research study to potential students, develop HDR recruitment strategies, and assist prospective students with HDR application processes.

“Staff within the Jumbunna Institute work with the manager, Indigenous employment and coordinator, Indigenous HDR to identify undergraduate students who are performing well and who might be suitable for the Academics of the Future program, designed to be a pathway to HDR study.

“The coordinator, Indigenous HDR runs a range of programs to assist potential Indigenous HDR students, including running a workshop for prospective students, to demystify the HDR application process and familiarise candidates with what HDR study entails. The Centre for Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges, and the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building run similar workshops, which have proved very successful.

“The Jumbunna Institute also employs an Indigenous HDR Peer Liaison officer, who runs social networking events for Indigenous research students. Jumbunna Institute also runs an annual writers retreat for Indigenous HDR students and academics, usually held in Canberra at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

“The UTS Graduate Research School, in conjunction with senior Indigenous academics, runs Indigenous capability training for supervisors of Indigenous HDR students and those undertaking interdisciplinary research supervision.

“UTS has a generous \$50,000 per annum scholarship program for Indigenous HDR students, which has been a significant factor in increasing enrolments since 2011, as many HDR students face a difficult financial decision between full-time work and study.

“Additionally, Indigenous HDR students can be employed as academic interns, a program that is designed to begin preparing them for a career in academia.

“The programs for Indigenous HDR students have resulted in the following significant impact in participation and retention rates:

Participation by headcount and % of domestic students:

- 2011 = 7 (0.9%)
- 2019 = 43 (3.9% – a 514% increase since 2011)

Retention:

- 2011 = 50% (non-Indigenous 80.2%)
- 2019 = 83.3% (non-Indigenous 87.1%)”

University of Tasmania

“There are specific programs for Indigenous students. These include:

- *The development and delivery of tailored research workshops for Indigenous HDR candidates. For example, we ran an Indigenous student specific workshop on literature reviews on the 26 August 2019. In 2018 UTS ran a workshop on Indigenous methodologies and a held an Indigenous HDR writing retreat.*
- *Indigenous specific HDR scholarships (six current)*
- *Top-up bursaries of \$3,000-\$5,000 for qualifying full time HDR candidates*
- *A separate funding program to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR candidates’ national and international conference participation.*

“The primary strategy of the senior Aboriginal researcher program is a set of Indigenous identified elite research scholarships. These scholarships support senior members of the Aboriginal community to undertake research in the broad fields of Tasmanian Aboriginal people/s, organisations, political activism, language, history, culture and/or country. The scholarships are open to candidates who have the demonstrated capacity to make a significant contribution to Tasmanian Aboriginal knowledges.

“The scholarship is offered full-time at the rate of \$40,000 per annum for three years with a selection committee consisting of the University of Tasmania Aboriginal leadership team, staff from the scholarships office plus two members of the strategic plan for Aboriginal engagement steering committee. Criteria for eligibility are:

- *The scholarly quality of the research program proposed*

- *The perceived importance of the topic to Tasmanian Aboriginal people/community*
- *The demonstrated capacity of the candidate to successfully complete the proposed research*

“As at June 2019, five senior Aboriginal research scholarships had been awarded with candidates undertaking research across a variety of areas including language revival, museum practices, Aboriginal philosophy and Tasmanian Aboriginal history.”

The University of Melbourne

“The University has several initiatives focusing on improving the research experience and numbers of Indigenous students.

Support for accessing graduate research

“The Research Higher Degrees Committee has adopted eligibility guidelines that guarantee all Indigenous students offered a place in a graduate research program a research training program scholarship (formerly known as Australian Postgraduate Awards) or another stipend of equal value.

“The Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and the Hallmark Indigenous Research Initiative have held Indigenous PhD familiarisation programs for future Indigenous researchers across the creative arts, humanities, social sciences, law, business, education and health sciences. These programs are:

- *Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health PhD familiarisation program; and*
- *HASS Indigenous PhD familiarisation program.*

“The programs are the first of their kind and involve a series of PhD preparation workshops targeted at helping students who are considering applying for a PhD. Participants are provided with the opportunity to engage and network with Indigenous academics and current PhD students, as well as work on research ideas as a cohort and with prospective supervisors. They aim to make potential PhD students aware of study options and the strong Indigenous networks that exist at the university.

“The university has set targets for Indigenous PhD enrolments and completions and is on track to meet those targets with 44 Indigenous Doctoral candidates currently enrolled at the university. The university has made significant progress towards meeting its Indigenous research goals. For example, Indigenous graduate research student numbers have grown from 15 to 50 between 2013 and 2018.

Research development programs

“The Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education (MCSHE) offers a Professional Certificate in Indigenous Research and a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Research and Leadership. The Professional Certificate provides graduate research students with a wide range of research skills in a culturally respectful learning environment underpinned by Indigenous perspectives. The Graduate Certificate builds on the Professional Certificate and aims to develop leadership skills and capacity in, or involving, Indigenous research. The courses are intended for people undertaking research on Indigenous topics and people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent wanting to take on a leadership role.

Peer support and development networks

“The Indigenous Studies PhD Program was established in 2017 and is developing its program of events. The Program will enhance and enrich the graduate research experience for all graduate researchers in Indigenous Studies, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. By bringing together as a Community of Practice, students and supervisors from across the University, participants will have the opportunity to share perspectives, experiences, knowledge networks, and research findings to colleagues, community, and experts in Indigenous studies.

“The Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA) is active and “exists to foster collaboration and communication of research ideas between all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate students, and non-indigenous students, while engaging and supporting undergraduate students and other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who are interested in undertaking postgraduate study”.

Recognition of achievements

“The Chancellor’s Prize for Excellence in the PhD Thesis acknowledges six graduates per year, two each in the categories of Humanities, Creative Arts and Social Sciences; Science and Engineering; and Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. A seventh award may be made to an Indigenous student. This provision was introduced in 2014, a year in which an Indigenous graduate was awarded the prize in the Humanities category. While the category has not been used to award a prize to date, three graduates who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people have been awarded a Chancellors Thesis Prize since 2003.”

Griffith University

“The current “Grow Our Own” strategy aims to support undergraduate students by providing enabling programs such as the Kungullanji Indigenous Summer Research Program. This summer research program includes professional development and research skills training through a summer research internship to support the transition from coursework programs to higher degree research

“Now in its sixth year, the Kungullanji Indigenous Research Program provides a practical experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduate students to work within an academic research environment while facilitating a pathway for those interested in pursuing a research career.

“The Kungullanji program has had a positive impact on student retention with more than 90% of Kungullanji’s participants remaining in their studies, a significantly higher rate compared to all Griffith University domestic undergraduates. Students may also receive a scholarship of \$3,000 to support participants throughout the duration of the program.

“Indigenous Australian Higher Degree Research Top Up Scholarships are also available to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates who have been awarded, or are in receipt of, a university postgraduate research scholarship. Merit-based, competitive postdoctoral fellowships are awarded annually to Indigenous early career researchers as part of the Griffith University Postdoctoral Fellowship (GUPF) Scheme. Since the commencement of the Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship program, four Fellows have been appointed.

“The IRU’s Small Research Grants Scheme provides project seeding opportunities up to a maximum of \$10,000 for 12 months, for members of the IRU Network to increase their research profile and output. This scheme provides IRU members with an opportunity to collaborate with and mentor Indigenous HDR candidates within research projects and facilitates an opportunity for increasing candidates’ research output via publication and conference presentations.

“Conference support is also available to IRU Network members and Indigenous HDR candidates to present their research findings at national (up to \$1,000) and international (up to \$2,000) research conferences.”

Q13: If no, what have been the barriers to finalising a strategy? When do you anticipate it will be finalised?

Universities provided some frank responses regarding barriers to finalising an Indigenous research strategy. These covered:

- The importance of genuine consultation across the university, including with Indigenous academic staff, and with local communities to develop an Indigenous Research Strategy that is reflective of university-wide and community expectations. Consultation can of course take considerable time, including time to fully consider outcomes of any reviews that are done in connection to these processes.
- Recruitment of the PVC position or equivalent to provide strategic direction and leadership on this project, including to support and nurture appropriate relationships with external Indigenous partners and with research partners.
- Previous management having a narrower focus on Indigenous student and staff recruitment and support.
- The limited number of Aboriginal academics to either lead Indigenous research or to supervise students (cited several times).
- Lack of 'ownership' across the university and staff fluctuations combined with the loss of key Indigenous academic staff due to increased opportunities across the sector.
- University-wide reforms and the introduction of a new operating model for the delivery of all research services.

Universities indicated timeframes for completing an Indigenous research strategy were generally subject to the finalisation of consultation processes and/or appointment of PVC Indigenous or equivalent positions. Of those who were able to provide a timeframe for finalisation, all indicated this would be achieved by the end of 2020.

SECTION SUMMARY: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDY

- The number of Indigenous enrolments in postgraduate research increased 89 per cent since 2005, from 334 students to 630 students in 2018; while enrolments in postgraduate coursework degrees have almost tripled, from 799 Indigenous students in 2005 to 2,279 in 2018.
- As a result, the total number of Indigenous postgraduate students as a proportion of all domestic postgraduate students rose to 1.33 per cent in 2018, from 0.67 per cent in 2005.
- Despite the growth in postgraduate enrolments, Indigenous postgraduate student award completions remain a challenge, representing around one per cent of all domestic postgraduate coursework completions (1.1 per cent or 804 completions) and all domestic postgraduate research award completions (0.84 per cent or 54 completions) in 2018.
- Twenty-one universities indicated they have an Indigenous research strategy in place. Implementation of respective strategies was varied, with only some universities providing data and review outcomes to suggest positive improvement in building their respective Indigenous research portfolios and academic pipelines. Many universities had established formal, university-wide governance structures to monitor and review progress into the future.
- Twenty-one universities indicated they currently have programs for Indigenous HDR students, with several others currently in the process of introducing them. Broadly speaking, most universities were seeing positive outcomes in terms of overall growth and completion of Indigenous HDR students as a result of these programs.
- Barriers for those universities yet to finalise their Indigenous research strategies included extensive consultation processes (which were important in order to ensure community and academic standards were met) and the recruitment of PVC/DVC Indigenous positions to take this task forward. Of those able to provide a timeframe for finalisation, all indicated this would be achieved by the end of 2020.

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

International mobility programs offer significant and transformative educational experiences for university staff and students.

They can lead to enhanced intercultural understanding, a more global outlook, and better academic and research performance. It is important that these opportunities are afforded - and encouraged - to all students, particularly Indigenous students where take-up has traditionally been low.

Conversely, international students coming to Australia have a keen interest in learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. This was emphasised during a consultation process with international students undertaken by UA on the information they would like before and during their study in Australia.

The following questions were asked to inform work by the DVC International committee which is responsible for the development of a sectoral strategy to increase mobility and exchanges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Q14: Does your university have an international student mobility program that specifically encourages participation from Indigenous students?

Eighteen universities have study abroad programs specifically designed for, or targeted to, participation by Indigenous students.

Some universities have explicit targets reflected in RAPs or other strategic documents for Indigenous student participation in international study programs. Several others were exploring such initiatives.

Many universities that did not have Indigenous-specific study abroad programs indicated they encourage students to participate in the broader international university opportunities, for example through marketing information that is targeted for Indigenous students. A few universities noted take-up in short term programs compared to longer-term programs had been more successful at attracting Indigenous students – and this has informed their approaches.

Others commented briefly on opportunities for greater engagement through the New Colombo Plan.

Q15: Are the programs tailored towards specific countries?

As might be expected, many of the targeted programs for Indigenous students were tailored towards specific countries. These countries included:

- Canada
- New Zealand
- USA
- Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia
- Peru
- Pacific island nations such as Fiji and the Solomon Islands
 - Many Australian universities have actively sought to partner with universities with a high proportion of Indigenous populations or a strong interest in global Indigenous issues. These include shared Indigenous perspectives, research connections and opportunities to build on Indigenous curriculum. Survey responses also highlighted the importance of cultural traditions based on kinship and strong interest by student in different Indigenous worldviews.

CASE STUDIES

University of Tasmania Northern Arizona University Educational and Cultural Exchange

"In 2015, the University of Tasmania entered a memorandum of understanding with the Northern Arizona University (NAU) to enact an annual two-week education and cultural exchange program for high achieving Indigenous students. Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, at the edge of the Navajo and Hopi nations, provides extraordinary opportunities for community cultural interaction, attending Indigenous studies classes and mixing with Native American students on campus.

"At the University of Tasmania, the exchange program is implemented by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal Research and Leadership with the support of the global division. The program is open to undergraduate and post-graduate students, with students submitting applications that are assessed on a competitive basis with GPA being the primary selection criterion. The program does not directly involve study credits, but students can use a diary from their time on the program as the major assignment in the Indigenous Breadth Unit XBR113 Indigenous Lifeworlds: Local to the Global.

"This program provides opportunities for Indigenous students to gain a wider understanding of the field of Indigenous scholarship and to build networks. The aim is to support students to broaden their world view and their own academic aspirations. Success and retention outcomes from the project show that all 28 University of Tasmania participating students since 2015 have either completed their degrees or are still studying. Additionally, four completing participating students have enrolled in higher degree research programs.

"The 2019 program expanded to include the University of Sydney and the University of Waikato in the Southern Hemisphere part of the trip (15 staff and students from North America participated in the 2019 Exchange in July/August 2019) and University of Arizona and Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia on the Northern hemisphere side (14 staff and students from UTAS as well as the Universities of Sydney and Waikato participated in the Southern Hemisphere side in February 2019)."

Monash University

“Monash University has several programs/initiatives specifically established to enhance the participation of Indigenous students in international mobility opportunities.

“Canada: The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) study tour to Canada to will see ten students involved travel to the University of British Columbia to meet with First Nations (Inuit) people.

“New Zealand: The University of Auckland summer school program, supported by the Australian Government via the Endeavour Leader program (short-term) funded grant which provides up to \$2,500 to five undergraduate Indigenous students to participate in this opportunity. Students will experience Maori and Pacific culture, whilst completing up to two equivalent Monash units.

“England/Malaysia: The Monash Warwick Alliance, Monash Abroad, and Access Monash have partnered together to run a leadership program hosted in Malaysia, England and Australia (Malaysia in 2019). The Global Leader Experience (GLE) is being run by Monash’s partner, Common Purpose, a leadership development organisation that specialises in cross-boundary leadership. Although this program is open to all current undergraduate students, there is a place reserved for an Indigenous student to participate. All costs are covered for successful applicants.”

Griffith University

“In 2018, 20 Indigenous students from Griffith participated in an international mobility program at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, to various countries within Asia, North America, Europe and the Pacific. Initiatives include:

- *Griffith University Health Group is a partner in the International Indigenous Academic Health Network (IIHAN), a partnership among the Faculties of Medicine at five universities around the world that facilitates Indigenous student exchange among the partner organisations.*
- *Griffith University has an agreement with Simon Fraser University in Canada that was initiated in 2010 to facilitate the exchange of Indigenous students, including a commitment from each institution to provide support to students on exchange through the respective Indigenous student support units.*
- *Griffith actively encourages Indigenous students to apply for New Colombo Plan (NCP) prestigious scholarships. In 2016 an Indigenous student undertaking a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Government and International Relations was a New Colombo Plan Scholar. She completed an internship in Hong Kong and went on to be named Indigenous NCP Alumni Ambassador 2018-2019.*
- *Griffith is the Innovative Research Universities’ consortium lead for a New Colombo Plan funded community nursing short-term program in Vietnam. Participation by Indigenous students in this program is a specific priority.*
- *Students have also been supported to attend Indigenous conferences including WINHEC, WIRA, Global Youth Alliance, and WIPCE.”*

The University of Newcastle

Endeavour Leadership Program – target country Canada

“The Endeavour Leadership Program grant will provide funding opportunities for two Australian Indigenous students and two First Nations Canadian students to undertake an exchange. This unique Indigenous to Indigenous cultural exchange program will contribute to the development of

an international Indigenous education exchange community and strengthen an existing relationship with the University of Victoria (UVic).

“Through participation in an international exchange/collaboration, students will develop individual leadership skills by problem solving, adaptability, networking and communication. In the case of the proposed mobility program between UON and UVic, students will also be exposed to the Indigenous languages, which will enrich their experience through cultural immersion.

“In 2019, the University of Newcastle in conjunction with the Wollotuka Institute, launched the Bachelor of Global Indigenous Studies. This exciting program will open the door for Australian Indigenous students to major in Global Indigenous Comparative Studies. This course will allow students to research an Indigenous culture (outside of Australia) and how perceptions/understanding of Indigenous cultures have been shaped by Eurocentric models of thinking’.

New Colombo Plan - target country Solomon Islands

“This project will offer students of Aboriginal professional practice study and other students interested in the Aboriginal course at UON the opportunity to participate in a two-week Indigenous immersion in the Solomon Islands. There are many cultural differences in traditions in the Solomon Islands that vary based on kinship. The students will be introduced to the 'Kastom'. Through a series of community visits, literature review and practical engagement with the community and local organisations the students will learn more about indigenous tradition.”

Southern Cross University

“Southern Cross University has an established international student mobility and Global Experience program. While this program does not specifically encourage participation from Indigenous students, Indigenous students from all courses are invited to take part in the range of offerings such as international exchange, study tours, Colombo Plan activities.

“Southern Cross University has a relatively high number of Indigenous students (5.6%). Staff from SCU International work closely and collaboratively with staff from Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples to ensure that all indigenous students have overseas learning opportunities.

“The university has intentionally developed mobility partnership agreements with both the University of Lethbridge, Canada as well as the University of Montana, USA - specifically because of their shared indigenous perspectives and research connections as well as for opportunities to build on indigenous curriculum.

“Last year an Indigenous SCU student was awarded a National Colombo Plan Scholarship (valued at about \$55,000) to study Marine Science at the University of South Pacific in Fiji.”

SECTION SUMMARY: INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

- Eighteen universities had dedicated programs to increase participation from Indigenous students in study abroad. Some universities have international participation targets tied to RAPs or other university strategic documents – providing them further imperatives to forge partnerships overseas.
- Programs were typically targeted to countries with a higher proportion of Indigenous populations, such as New Zealand, Canada and Pacific nations. The rationale for these partnerships includes the opportunity to learn from other Indigenous perspectives, research connections and opportunities to build on Indigenous curriculum.
- Universities generally indicated that shorter term opportunities appear to be more attractive and successful experiences for Indigenous student cohorts.
- Many of those without Indigenous-specific study abroad programs indicated they encourage Indigenous students to participate in broader international university opportunities, for example through marketing information specifically targeted to Indigenous students. Some commented on opportunities for greater engagement through the new Colombo Plan.

UA ACTIVITIES

The UA strategy is guided by the principle that the greatest impetus to forge further progress on Indigenous participation, success and leadership in universities rests with universities themselves.

However, as the peak body for Australian universities, UA has a leadership role to:

- demonstrate sectoral commitment;
- support members through encouragement;
- provide public visibility and example; and
- advocate on behalf of the sector for appropriate changes to Government policies and programs.

The relevant actions under the strategy (reflecting these principles) are to:

- regularly include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander observers at Plenary meetings of Vice-Chancellors;
- hold roundtables between the Universities Australia Board of Directors and the Indigenous Academy and leadership to discuss progress and relevant sectoral policy matters;
- maintain formal ongoing dialogue with NATSIHEC and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university leaders;
- develop, through the four Deputy Vice-Chancellor committees, agreed sector-wide initiatives which will be implemented in common across all member universities;
- include Indigenous higher education issues in all relevant submissions UA makes, and advocacy work it undertakes;
- increase the profile of Indigenous higher education in public events such as the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference;
- continue to advocate for greater Government investment in specific Indigenous higher education initiatives, and for related outreach and participation programs;
- develop a platform or mechanism to identify and share good practice by 2018; and
- obtain annual feedback from universities on their progress towards meeting the commitments they have made in this strategy, and publicly releasing annual reports.

UA BOARD AND PLENARY MEETINGS

UA and NATSIHEC have held annual joint Board meetings for the past three years.

These joint meetings – held at the start of each year – ensure leadership oversight of progress made under the UA Indigenous strategy. It also identifies key areas of focus for the year and deepens relationships between key Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership figures across the sector.

The meeting also empowers the UA Board and Lead VC Indigenous to act as ambassadors of the UA Indigenous strategy and related priorities throughout the year amongst their colleagues.

In February 2019, the NATSIHEC executive was invited to present to the UA Plenary as part of a discussion on progress under the UA strategy. This session set the scene for future discussions across the sector during 2019, specifically on Indigenous leadership in higher education.

The UA Plenary originally appointed two Indigenous Pro Vice-Chancellor observers for two years to attend two Plenary meetings per year. The observer role is intended to give current Indigenous leaders exposure to sector policy discussion at the highest level. This exposure may assist with advancement into other senior university roles in future. Early in 2019, on the advice of NATSIHEC, the UA Board also agreed to include the NATSIHEC President as an observer to these Plenaries.

In 2019, UA formally amended the terms of reference for Indigenous observers at VC plenaries to foster greater engagement amongst observers and VCs. These changes recognised that the observers can provide VCs with useful perspectives on a range of university matters.

The UA Directorate also maintains an ongoing dialogue with NATSIHEC representatives, National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Education on a range of key Indigenous higher education matters. For example, the UA Directorate:

- regularly attends all NATSIHEC meetings to discuss progress under the UA strategy and other issues relevant to Indigenous higher education. The UA Directorate is also in regular contact with the NATSIHEC Executive;
- engages in bi-annual meetings with National Indigenous Australians Agency to discuss the ISSP and other issues relevant to Indigenous higher education.

The UA Directorate values this positive relationship with all key stakeholders.

DVC COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

The four main DVC portfolio committees each have a responsibility to advance certain objectives of the strategy in their area of expertise. These are:

- DVC Academic – develop agreed sector-wide principles for ensuring that all university course accreditation processes formally involve Indigenous consultation and input;
- DVC Corporate – development of employment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, focusing on how to involve and promote staff who may not have progressed through traditional academic pathways;
- DVC Research – development of ways to increase the numbers of, and support for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher degree by research students; and
- DVC International – development of a sectoral strategy to increase international mobility and exchanges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Progress to date for the four DVC committees against their longer-term strategies has been mixed.

DVC ACADEMIC

In 2019, the DVC Academic committee completed its first major initiative under the UA strategy. It published the *Good Practice Principles for Course accreditation and Review of Indigenous Curriculum*. The Guidelines are a non-prescriptive resource intended to help Australian universities ensure their course accreditation processes:

- encourage courses to be accessible to and relevant for Indigenous Australians;
- help graduates develop an appreciation and sensitivity of Indigenous knowledges that can be applied in professional practice; and

- promote a more culturally inclusive and engaging society that values the histories, traditions, knowledges and experiences of Indigenous Australians.

The DVC-A Standing Group on Indigenous Higher Education (standing group) led the development of these principles. The drafting process involved extensive discussions on the purpose, usability and content of the principles over several DVC A committee meetings from late 2017 to mid-2019.

Following in-principle support from the DVC A Committee to the principles in this document at the June 2019 meeting, members agreed to discuss the principles and implementation with their respective institutional senior Indigenous officer. The standing group considered all feedback provided following this consultation process, and adjustments to the principles that were consistent with the broad intention agreed by the DVC A Committee.

UA thanks all those concerned for their contributions to the development of the guidelines, particularly Professor Jill Downie, Professor Susan Page and Professor Jill Milroy for their work over many years.

DVC CORPORATE

The DVC Corporate committee established a working group (WG) to develop initiatives to improve Indigenous staff employment in the sector following its September 2017 meeting.

The WG proposal—*Indigenous Workforce: Proposed Actions with National Impact*— was circulated following the March 2019 committee meeting for DVCs consideration and discussion at the September 2019 meeting.

As part of the proposal, all DVCs were asked to provide some key points on what an **Indigenous employer of choice** looks like within a higher education setting. 19 universities have provided their inputs to the request, which can be categorised into three broad themes:

1. Strong leadership and advocacy from the Vice-Chancellor and senior executive team;
2. Strong framework in Indigenous staff recruitment, retention and career progression; and
3. Genuine cultural awareness within university community.

Following the September 2019 meeting, the WG proposed the following actions to be considered by the wider DVC committee:

- Expand the remit of the Indigenous Employment Strategy to incorporate the higher education sector's capacity to influence employment outcomes in the community by supporting Indigenous owned or staffed businesses, through universities' procurement activities
- UA in collaboration with universities develop and fund the production of materials that supports the promotion of universities as employers of choice for Indigenous staff and the respective pathways to gaining employment. This could be extended to an organised national campaign
- Universities commit to improve Indigenous cultural competency to similar standard for all senior executives across the sector
- Create an accessible central repository of Indigenous employment and/or procurement success stories or strategies.

DVC RESEARCH

The committee has focussed on sharing best-practice and the successful translation of strategies into actions at the institution level. Facilitated by Professor Peter Anderson, the group held a workshop of the recommendations of the NATSIHEC Accelerating Indigenous Higher Education 2018 report, covering topics including:

- University-wide frameworks
- Executive leadership
- Cultural programs
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledges into curriculum
- Fields of Research and Socio-economic Objectives (ANZSRC codes)
- Indigenous research strategies
- HDR capacity building
- Community involvement.

Issues surrounding the ANZSRC were further developed as a result of the review into the classification systems that started in 2019.

2020 presents an opportunity to discuss future priorities.

DVC INTERNATIONAL

The Deputy Vice Chancellor International (DVC I) committee continues to work collectively to identify the best way in which the Committee can support the UA strategy. The committee is working to identify accurate data regarding Indigenous student participation in outward bound student mobility programs and has initiated discussions to identify the specific needs and challenges for Indigenous students to study abroad.

The DVC I committee provided a forum for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to receive feedback on ways in which the New Colombo Plan (NCP) can be nuanced so that future iterations of the program incentivise greater participation in the NCP scheme by Indigenous students. UA will work with various stakeholders to encourage the Australian Government to increase the level of support available to help lift international mobility and exchanges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Whether this be through the creation of an Indigenous strand of the New Colombo Plan award, or via the expansion of the list of host countries to facilitate the engagement of Indigenous students with Indigenous communities in Latin America, North America or New Zealand.

Our counterpart organisations in New Zealand and Canada have demonstrated a shared desire to increase international mobility and exchange opportunities for Indigenous students, and to pursue any opportunities that support collaboration and mobility between our regions is greatly encouraged.

Moving into 2020, it is anticipated that a key element of the DVC I committee's work will be focussed on identifying ways in which the committee can support relevant action items in the NATSIHEC International Strategy.

JOINT UA AND NATSIHEC COMMUNICATIONS VIDEOS

- UA and NATSIHEC agreed in 2019 to develop joint communications initiative to encourage more Indigenous people to apply to university. The intention is to complement Indigenous student recruitment work by individual universities – with a clear ‘call to action’ for people to apply to university.
- The project stemmed from the short-term drop in Indigenous applications for university in 2018. This was a key point of discussion amongst UA and NATSIHEC at its joint annual board meeting in 2019. It was agreed that a strong proactive approach was prudent.
- The campaign was also devised with a clear eye on the growth in Australia’s Indigenous youth population. We will need to continue to grow the number of applications from young Indigenous prospective students to hold on to the gains made in recent years to help close the gap in education.
- A series of high-quality videos were filmed in late 2019, highlighting the personal stories of Indigenous graduates and how they have used their university education to benefit their wider communities.
- The videos will be launched early in 2020.

PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

It has been a busy period of Government reviews in the post-school education system. In 2019, UA provided numerous formal submissions to reviews and consultation processes. Some of the key whole-of-sector reviews covered:

- The performance-based funding model;
- The National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy;
- The reallocation of Commonwealth supported places for enabling, sub-Bachelor and postgraduate courses;
- The review of Provider Category Standards;
- The review of the Australian Qualifications Framework;
- The ANZRC review;
- Foreign interference;
- The ACOLA project;
- The Senate Inquiry into the adequacy of Newstart and related payments;
- The review of TEQSA’s risk assessment framework;
- The review of nurse education; and
- The redistribution of Commonwealth-supported medical places.

In these major reviews, UA’s advocacy has included a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, research, academic pipeline and impact on communities.

In its submission to the PBF discussion paper, UA urged Government to continue to expand access to higher education among groups that have been under-represented at university (including people from low SES backgrounds, Indigenous Australians and regional students).

UA also highlighted that a performance funding system should not penalise universities whose student cohorts have some of the greatest challenges to enrol and succeed at university. It was important that the model not include perverse incentives, including the potential for a drop in Indigenous enrolments.

In the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Review, UA cautioned against further changes to HEPPP funding frameworks. UA cited the importance of HEPP funding to, among other things, allow universities to deliver innovative strategies to enhance participation, retention and graduation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. UA called for the existing framework to remain to ensure that availability of funding is not diluted, and to ensure continued support for Indigenous students.

In the Enhancing Research Outcomes from Australia's Regional, Rural and Remote Universities (ACOLA) review, UA's submission included a dedicated section on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research. UA recommended further consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and universities on initiatives to increase the academic pipeline and research opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

UA also canvassed options and considerations to improve Rural Allied Health Quality, Access and Distribution for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Some of these included greater funding through the Rural Health Multidisciplinary program for additional University Departments of Rural Health, increasing Austudy, ABSTUDY and relocation costs and increasing collaboration between Commonwealth departments to share good practice.

The Review into Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications was one of the key policy issues in 2019. UA worked closely with NATSIHEC and the DVC Research committee to inform its submission, which canvassed the different options and views for moving to either a 2- or 4-digit Field of Research code for [what is the actual name of the category? Ask Liz/Krisztian].

The UA Directorate continue to actively consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in ongoing sector-wide policy and funding issues.

UA'S PUBLIC ADVOCACY ON INDIGENOUS ADVANCEMENT

UA has a strong commitment to deliver engaging and practical sessions at all its public forums. 2019 saw increased engagement from UA with stakeholders across the sector to highlight the UA Strategy and discuss how all stakeholders can take responsibility to make further advances.

HIGHER ED CONFERENCE

The UA Higher Education Conference is an annual conference delivered by the sector for the sector and is the signature event on the Australian higher education calendar. Participants include Vice-Chancellors, Chancellors, senior university representatives, Government representatives, industry representatives, members of the research community, international education specialists, and media.

- In 2019, the conference program included a dedicated session focusing on progress under the UA Indigenous strategy and best practice identified through the first annual report. The panel included:
 - Professor Susan Page (UTS)
 - Professor Peter Anderson and Professor Carol Dickenson (QUT)
 - Dr Leanne Holt (Macquarie)

UA MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The annual Universities Australia Marketing Communications and Development Conference (UAMCD) was held in September 2019. UA received terrific feedback from delegates working in university communications, marketing, alumni relations and philanthropy about the inspiring plenary session by Brigette Sancho and Shannan Dodson from UTS. They presented on how UTS had built Indigenous participation, success, relationships, leadership and deep engagement through a strategic vision rolled out across the university. It was inspiring – and delegates said what they loved most was seeing in such clear detail – with very practical tips and examples – how the university had operationalised this commitment, with many insights and readily adaptable ideas shared generously with the audience. The program also featured a masterclass in storytelling by, for, with and to Indigenous people – led by Professor Larissa Behrendt, Shannan Dodson and Yatu Widders-Hunt.

NATIONAL HE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT COORDINATORS FORUM

The National Higher Education Indigenous Employment Coordinators Forum is an annual event for Indigenous employment coordinators and interested stakeholders. Broadly, the network aims to facilitate increased participation, retention and progression of Indigenous staff within the university sector. It is an opportunity to share lessons and strategies to achieving these outcomes.

UA presented the keynote address on the UA strategy – discussing commitments, progress and future priorities. In a subsequent session, UA facilitated discussion among attendees on what more could be done between this network and formal UA networks to advance shared objectives.

AHEIA CONFERENCE

UA also presented to attendees of the 2019 Universities HR Benchmarking Conference. The conference focused on current HR leadership and organisational development trends and challenges facing the Higher Education sector and driving long-term employee performance and engagement.

The UA strategy – including background, actions, progress and good practice examples – was presented to a Plenary audience. The presentation as well received and sparked ongoing discussions between UA and HR managers throughout 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INDIGENOUS POLICY FORUM

The Indigenous Education Policy team in the Australian Government Department of Education and Training hosts a series of forums which provide an opportunity for departmental staff to learn from Indigenous policy experts and eminent academics. The forums provide valuable insights and assist staff involved in shaping future policies and programs to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have the best possible educational and life outcomes.

In 2019, UA gave a presentation on improving Indigenous participation in higher education – including the ambitions of and progress under UA's Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020. Dr Leanne Holt, NATSIHEC President, joined UA on the panel.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' CONFERENCE

UA also presented a joint session the National Indigenous Students' Conference in September 2019.

The session was jointly presented by UA and NATSIHEC. It covered actions under the UA Indigenous strategy and discussion on how to build further pathways for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into the academy.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CAREER TRACKERS

CareerTrackers is a national non-profit with the goal of creating pathways and support systems for Indigenous young adults to attend and graduate from university, with high marks, industry experience and bright professional futures.

In 2019, UA became an official CareerTrackers partner, which will see interns undertake paid work experience with the organisation throughout their studies. Our first CareerTrackers intern commenced with UA in November 2019, working in UA's strategic communications team.

ANNUAL SURVEY AND REPORTING

This report is the second public report on progress under the UA Strategy, following the release of the first report in February 2019.

The reporting cycles for this annual data collection have been developed mindful of peak university workload periods and the availability of full year student and staff data for the previous reporting year.

It is envisaged a third report will be released in February 2021 - along with the next iteration of the UA strategy.

UA thanks all involved for the detailed work that goes into the survey collection.

SECTION SUMMARY: UA ACTIVITIES

- In 2019, UA made minor amendments to the existing arrangements for Indigenous observers at VC Plenaries to ensure attendees and VCs maximise the experience and engagement for observers and VCs. Further, the number of observers was increased from two to three – with the third observer being the NATSIHEC President from time-to-time.
- UA has to date facilitated three annual joint Board meetings between the UA Board and NATSIHEC Executive to discuss progress of the UA Strategy and other important Indigenous higher education policy issues. UA has also invited NATSIHEC representatives to discuss priorities with all VCs as part of its plenary meetings.
- The UA Directorate also maintains regular and positive engagement with NATSIHEC representatives, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Education on a range of key Indigenous higher education matters. For example, UA has a standing item at all three annual NATSIHEC meetings to discuss priorities.
- In 2019, the DVC Academic committee completed its first portfolio initiative with the publication of the *DVC A Good Practice Principles for Course Accreditation and Review of Indigenous Curriculum*. Progress of the three other DVC committees has been somewhat limited to date.
- In 2019, UA made numerous submissions to reviews and consultation processes. UA called for Indigenous considerations or initiatives as part of these system wide reviews, including in the design of PBF model, the review of Regional, Rural & Remote Education, the ANZSRC review, ACOLA project and several health-related reviews.
- In 2019, UA increased its engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders by publicising and presenting the UA strategy at six key events.
- UA continues to advocate for greater Government investment in Indigenous higher education initiatives – and will look for opportunities for joint advocacy with NATSIHEC in the future. In 2019, UA and NATSIHEC developed a short series of videos to encourage Indigenous people to apply to university. The initiative highlights the transformative power of higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates. The videos will be launched in 2020 and is designed to encourage applications from Indigenous students.
- The proposal for a good practice sharing mechanism put forward in the first annual report continues to progress. Part of this includes enhancements that have been made to UA's website to house key information, reports, guidelines and links to good practice. In 2020, UA will be developing a new website to store good practice information in a more accessible and user-friendly fashion.
- 2019 saw the establishment of a more streamlined process for UA members to submit annual survey material, and that the material collected strikes the right balance of useful without being overly burdensome. All members submitted surveys to UA, which were individually analysed to inform this report.