

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATEMENT

SECTION 1: OBJECTIVES FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Approach to improve higher education outcomes for Indigenous Australians and how this is being implemented

The University of Melbourne's Strategic Plan Growing *Esteem* affirms the University's commitment to increasing its accessibility and equity. The University of Melbourne is strongly committed to an admissions policy that takes the best students, regardless of financial and other disadvantage.

In relation to improving outcomes for Indigenous students, the University has identified the following objectives.

- To encourage Indigenous students to view university study as a desirable and achievable goal
- To address the barriers imposed by the high ENTER scores of most University of Melbourne courses
- To ensure students with the potential to succeed are not excluded from access to the University through financial disadvantage
- To provide research opportunities for Indigenous postgraduate students
- To instil confidence in the Indigenous community that Indigenous students who come to the University of Melbourne will be appropriately supported academically and culturally.

The University has also developed a Staff Equity and Diversity Framework with the aim of providing a coherent and overarching plan that supports the University's progress towards staff equity and diversity. By providing a broad framework for staff equity, the University recognises that a commitment to equity and diversity in the workplace is fundamental to the development of a teaching, learning and research environment that is informed by the diverse perspectives, backgrounds and experiences of the staff group, and that is able to provide a basis for creating an inclusive, multi-cultural, and globally relevant educational experience.

The University is working to ensure that meeting the needs of Indigenous students and community is embedded in the core business of all administrative and academic units within the University.

The **Centre for Indigenous Education** is responsible for implementation of the University of Melbourne's Indigenous Education Strategy as it relates to the recruitment and support of undergraduate and postgraduate students. It works closely with faculties and graduate schools to ensure that strategic objectives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education are achieved.

The **Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts & Cultural & Development** at the Victorian College of Arts is dedicated to providing a holistic approach to supporting Indigenous students and artists. This national centre is shaped by a seven-year strategic plan and offers student support, mentoring, tutoring, hosts artists-in-residences, cultural activities and celebrations in a friendly and accepting environment. The Wilin Centre aims to nurture and encourage Indigenous artists to achieve their utmost, as well as educate the student and staff body to recognise the diversity of

Australian Indigenous arts and culture.

The **Academy of Sport, Health and Education (ASHE)**, is a partnership between the University and the Indigenous community through the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club. Part of the University of Melbourne's Regional Strategy, it places education participation in a sporting setting, defined and run in conjunction with the community. ASHE encourages Indigenous students to achieve educational potential and vocational outcomes. The ASHE programs focus on individuals and their personal needs by providing individualised education and career planning.

The **Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit** is located at the Centre for Health and Society within the School of Population Health in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control (CEITC) is based within the Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit. Onemda fosters an academic environment that values Aboriginal knowledges and methodologies, and supports ethical practice and Aboriginal self-determination. Onemda has responsibility to develop a national and international profile for research and teaching in Aboriginal health that is underpinned and informed by the principles of Aboriginal community development. Onemda teach into undergraduate programs such as Medicine, Nursing, Social Work, Physiotherapy and Oral Health. They contribute to postgraduate programs such as Master of Public Health and Masters of Social Health. Onemda also teach into professional training programs, such as Psychiatry.

Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne is an exciting interdisciplinary program that offers students an opportunity to learn about the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The program is coordinated by the School of Culture and Communications and taught by staff from a range of schools in the Faculty of Arts. The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, The Melbourne Law School and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education also offer subjects in Australian Indigenous Studies.

How the indigenous perspective is embedded in the institutional strategic plan

The University of Melbourne's Strategic Plan *Growing Esteem* affirms the University's commitment to increasing its accessibility for all students. A key component of this is increasing the access, participation and outcomes for Indigenous students. Among its Learning and Teaching operational priorities is to endeavour to 'Ensure access for the best and brightest students regardless of financial disadvantage'. An action linked to this goal was to ensure that the University attains its target to recruit 30 Indigenous students in 2007.

The University's Strategic Plan *Growing Esteem* can be found at:

<http://growingesteem.unimelb.edu.au/2007universityplan/>

The University's Learning and teaching Plan 2008 includes the objective "to act to ensure that Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students are supported to reach their full potential".

One of the University's stated graduate attributes includes the statement: 'Our graduates will be expected to respect Indigenous knowledge, cultures and values'.

(<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/about/attributes.html>).

SECTION 2: ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY (AEP) GOALS IN 2007 AND PLANS FOR FUTURE YEARS

- (i) *Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making*

Representation by Indigenous people in educational decision-making includes:

- Mr Paul Briggs, a senior Indigenous man from the Goulburn Valley, who is a member of the **University Council**.
- Professor Marcia Langton, Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies, and Professor Ian Anderson, Director of the Centre for Health and Society, who are members of **Academic Board**.
- The **Indigenous Studies Sub-Committee** of Academic Board that fosters the development of, monitors delivery of and oversees student satisfaction with Indigenous studies programs within the University. This group is made up of senior Indigenous academics, teaching staff from within the programs, the Director, CIE, the Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching, Learning and Equity and a student representative.
- The Director of the Centre for Indigenous Education, Dr Barry Judd is a member of the University's **Student Equity and Diversity Committee** and the **Student Support Committee**.
- The **Indigenous Scholarships and Awards Committee** involves Indigenous staff in making recommendations for the allocation of the large number of Indigenous scholarships, awards and bursaries available through the University.
- The **Melbourne University Student Union** has an Indigenous student representative.

In addition to these internal arrangements, Indigenous staff at the University hold positions on state and national bodies which involve them in educational decision-making.

- Professor Marcia Langton is a member of the **AVCC Committee on Indigenous Higher Education**, the **North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance**, the **Minerals Council of Australia** and the **Cape York Institute**.
- Professor Ian Anderson is a member of the **Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics** for the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the **Australian Indigenous Doctors Association**, the **Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors' Congress**, is the Research Director of the **Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health**, and during 2006 completed his term as a member of the **National Health and Medical Research Council**.

- (ii) *Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed in education and training*

The University of Melbourne maintains an **Indigenous Employment Strategy** that sets out to:

- Make the University an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians and
- Implement, monitor and review strategies to support the participation and career progression of Indigenous people in academic and general staff positions across all areas of the University

The Indigenous Employment Strategy is available at:

<http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/strategic/equity-diversity/indigenous>

Indigenous staff numbers have been increasing steadily over time, from 11 in 2000 to 41 identified in 2008.

The University has set a target of recruiting an additional 15 Indigenous people by 2009.

The University of Melbourne's Indigenous Employment Coordinator in 2007 implemented the following strategies:

- Developed an Indigenous Employment Strategy framework, implementation plan and communications strategy
- Improved recruitment practices by ensuring that culturally appropriate advice is accessible and increased awareness of staff of Indigenous issues through training initiatives.
- Finalised the STEP traineeship program.

Received discretion from Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to exempt up to 30 positions (within prescribed limits)

The **evidence** the above strategies were successful include:

- An increase of Indigenous Staff from 35 to 41.
- Increase in the number of Indigenous Employment Programs e.g. Step Program, Melbourne Experience Program, and Traineeships.
- Indigenous Staff efforts were recognised by the Indigenous community by winning the Training Organisations and the Individual Indigenous community Wurreker Awards.
- Increase in the number of academic staff receiving promotions.

Plans for future improvement to new or existing strategies to meet each of the AEP goals.

- Increase the awareness of The University's Indigenous Employment Strategy through improved communications;
- Working with faculties and departments to developing Indigenous Workforce plans;
- Improving recruitment systems and processes to ensure Indigenous Australians are considered;
- Development of Indigenous Recruitment Policies; and
- Development of capacity building programs

(iii) *Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to education and training services*

The University of Melbourne actively promotes the recruitment of Indigenous students through a range of programs including:

- The Access Melbourne program commits 20% of the University's Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) undergraduate intake to equity places, with places reserved for Indigenous students.

- Staff from the CIE work closely with the admissions staff of each faculty to successfully advocate on behalf of prospective Indigenous students for entry into undergraduate courses where students do not have prerequisite ENTER scores.
- The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (FMDHS) has specific equitable access for ATSI students via selection, support and scholarship programs, they include;
 - Selection principles – Statute and Regulations of the University of Melbourne – 11.3 Principles of Selection for Entry to Courses, 5.5 specifically refers to increasing participation of Indigenous students
 - Appointment of a Faculty Indigenous Liaison Officer, a position funded jointly with the FMDHS and CIE
 - Access Melbourne Scholarships, CIE Scholarships Program and Faculty Scholarships.
 - FMDHS Strategy and initiates document is in production, in conjunction with Onmeda and the Faculty Advancement Office, which will outline programs over the next 3-5 years.
- The University also provides Indigenous community members with fully funded access to an undergraduate unit as a trial through the Community Access Program.
- The Wilin Centre at the Victorian College of the Arts actively promotes undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities for practising artists through its extensive community based networks.
- The CIE began development of a major promotion and recruitment program during 2007 which is now nearing completion.
- The CIE is currently in the early stages of negotiation with Trinity College to develop a residential model transition program for Indigenous students.
- Indigenous students have access to a large range of scholarships, awards and bursaries listed at <http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/cie/scholarships/index.html>

(iv) *Ensure participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education and training*

The University of Melbourne works to ensure high levels of participation and retention for Indigenous students through a number of programs including:

- Mentoring programs for Indigenous students from both staff members and other students
- A targeted program which aims to increase numbers of Indigenous students in medicine, dentistry and health sciences through outreach programs, mentoring and scholarships
- The CIE maintains a culturally safe place for students to meet and study in a central location on the Parkville campus. Facilities include tutorial rooms, library, conference room, student lounge, undergraduate and postgraduate computer laboratories and access to a welcoming and supportive Indigenous staff.
- CIE facilities were upgraded to further facilitate an effective working environment for students, including facilities targeted for postgraduate students.

- An annual Indigenous Researchers' summer school is held to bring together researchers and postgraduate students from across the country for a series of master classes. The summer school graduated its 100 alumnus in 2007/8
- Both the CIE and the Wilin Centre host regular social programs that encourage Indigenous students, staff and community members to build relationships.
- In 2007, there were 215 Indigenous students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs within the University of Melbourne.

(v) *Ensure equitable and appropriate achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*

The University of Melbourne has a long history of successful Indigenous graduates and continues to improve in this area through:

- Ongoing tutorial assistance for students through the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Program.
- Across 2007 the Centre for Indigenous Education has developed a photographic display showcasing Melbourne University Indigenous alumni.
- Indigenous graduates were celebrated with a function attended by the Provost and senior Indigenous staff
- The Academy of Sport, Health and Education (ASHE) at Shepparton continues to support and offer pathways to the young Indigenous community within Shepparton.

(vi) *Promote, maintain and support the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, cultures and languages to all Indigenous and non-Indigenous students*

The Foundation Chair of the Australian Indigenous Studies program is Professor Marcia Langton whose appointment to the program created the opportunity to bring together diverse teaching and research on indigenous topics within a coordinated interdisciplinary program. At the undergraduate level, the program offers a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Australian Indigenous Studies. As part of the Melbourne Model to be introduced in 2008, an Australian Indigenous Studies subject will be offered as one of a number of 'University Breadth' subjects available to all students across the University. It is expected that this will increase the number of undergraduate students who will develop knowledge and skills in this area.

The University is also currently developing a new Honours program in Australian Indigenous Studies, and Masters by Coursework in Australian Indigenous Studies for commencement in 2009. These will supplement the existing Research Masters and Doctorates in Australian Indigenous Studies.

The University is committed to develop an extended BA program for Indigenous students at University of Melbourne. The course, a partnership with Trinity College will address one of the key barriers to access for Indigenous students, the high ENTER scores of the University. The proposed course is a residential based program offering 20 nationally selected students to undertake their studies, studying a combination of foundation and first year units within the BA course. Students will then receive RPL and offered a full-time place within the BA course upon completion. The Centre for Indigenous Education and Trinity College are progressing this course for commencement in 2009.

SECTION 5 CONTACT INFORMATION

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SECTION 5 PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT

The 2007 statement will be available on the University' website at

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/cie/>