



University of Southern Queensland

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Career Development and Employment
Strategy**

September 2006

Introduction

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is fully committed to the key objectives of increasing the educational, employment, training and career development opportunities for all Indigenous Australians employed at the University.

In accordance with this commitment, USQ is implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy which will:

- increase, encourage and develop effective Indigenous Australian employment and participation at all levels of work activity and in all organisational areas of the University towards agreed targets which reflect the levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the general community;
- aim to maximise Indigenous Australian employee development and career opportunities in order to increase Indigenous Australian knowledge, job skills, job satisfaction, job security, income support, economic empowerment, independence and self-sufficiency; and
- facilitate and encourage the direct involvement of Indigenous employees in determining their own employment and career goals, strategies and ambitions, in accordance with their own aspirations.

The success of the Strategy requires that its objectives and strategies are incorporated in the University's strategic planning, equity and employment practices. Achieving these objectives will depend on the continuing commitment of resources and on the development and implementation of the strategy in a supportive workplace environment.

Scope

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy applies to an individual who is a descendant of an Indigenous inhabitant of Australia, identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is recognised as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by members of the community in which they live. The terms Indigenous Australian, Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander are used interchangeably throughout this document.

Background

As an outcome of enterprise bargaining negotiations in 2005, the Vice-Chancellor announced a number of initiatives which included the establishment of a Representative Steering Committee to oversee the development and implementation of an Indigenous Employment Strategy. The composition of the Committee will include representatives from University senior management, the local Indigenous Australian community, academic and general employees, staff within the Kumbari/Ngurpai Lag Higher Education Centre and the Buallum Jarl-Bah Education Centre, Unions, Human Resources and the Community Education Advisory Committee for each campus.

The Committee will consult widely with all key stakeholders including the unions, Indigenous Australians, academic and general employees and their nominated representatives, and with relevant Indigenous community representatives.

The University's commitment to the development of the Employment Strategy, its objectives and principles are contained in the *University of Southern Queensland Certified Agreement 2005 – 2008* and the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual.

Guiding Principles

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy is guided by the following principles.

- It is acknowledged that Indigenous Australians, as clearly identifiable and distinct Australian groups, usually occupy the lowest social, economic, occupational and educational status as compared to other Australians, according to the accepted socio-economic indicators.
- It is recognised that Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are two distinct cultural groups within Australia, within the definition of Indigenous Australian and within the diversity of the cultures of Indigenous Australians as a whole.
- The diverse Indigenous Australian cultures, identity, heritage, languages, lores, and social and spiritual systems practiced by Indigenous Australians is respected and recognised. Indigenous Australian knowledge is recognised as a significant contribution to all other bodies of knowledge and acknowledge the scholarship and expertise that Indigenous Australian employees bring to the University. As far as practicable, the University will actively assist in and encourage the promotion of Indigenous Australian cultures, identity, heritage, languages, lores, and social and spiritual systems.
- The University is committed to ensuring that Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are supported by University policies and procedures aimed at eliminating racism in the workplace, and making the University more culturally responsive and responsible.
- It is acknowledged and accepted that the active participation of Indigenous Australians in cultural, community and related activities is likely to enhance the effectiveness of Indigenous Australians as employees and therefore provision for participation in ceremonial, community and cultural activities is of direct benefit to the University.
- The University is committed to the encouragement of the use of Identified positions and where appropriate will advertise "identified¹ and or/specified positions²" in accordance with legislation.
- The strategy will include as an objective to increase the levels of Indigenous Australian employment and participation at the University at all levels of work activity and in all organisational units of the University towards appropriate targets. A specific focus of the Strategy will be to increase Indigenous Australian employment in areas of the University other than the Indigenous support units.
- The University is committed to identifying, encouraging and assisting USQ Indigenous students and graduates, through initiatives such as mentoring, leadership

¹ Identified positions are those positions where being an Indigenous Australian is a genuine qualification.

² Specified positions are those positions for which preference will be given to Indigenous Australian candidates.

development and capacity building of self concept, in their transition from USQ graduate to USQ employee.

- The University will commit appropriate resourcing, including targeted funding, to ensure the effective implementation of this Strategy.

Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Objective 1 –

To promote, market and implement the Employment Strategy.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Measure
Appointment of an Indigenous Employment Strategy Officer to coordinate the implementation of the strategy.	Human Resources	Early 2007	Recruitment of an Indigenous Employment Strategy Officer.
Development of a USQ dedicated website to promote the Employment Strategy to employees and the wider community.	Web Development Team Human Resources	Early 2007	Level of knowledge of the Employment Strategy both internal and external to USQ.
Liaise with the internal and external Indigenous community and Indigenous networks, recruitment agencies and training organisations to promote the strategy.	Indigenous Affairs Committee Human Resources	October 2006 Ongoing	Level of knowledge of the Employment Strategy both internal and external to USQ.
Develop and implement marketing and promotional material to attract Indigenous employees and students.	Human Resources	Early - Mid 2007 Review End 2007	Level of knowledge of the Employment Strategy both internal and external to USQ.
Explore opportunities to market the Employment Strategy throughout secondary schools.	Human Resources	Early 2007	Level of knowledge of the Employment Strategy both internal and external to USQ.

Objective 2 -

To increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to 2.5% (36 FTE) of University employees by 2010. This increase is to be reflected across all academic and general employee classifications and work activities in all operational areas. In increasing employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees consideration will be given to balancing gender representation.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Performance Measure
Effectively promote employment opportunities that enhance the recruitment of Indigenous people to academic (teaching and research) and general staff positions across the University.	Category 4 delegates and above ³ Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Ongoing	Employment data on recruitment rates for Indigenous Australian employees. Participation rates of Indigenous Australian employees as a % of total workforce.
Explore partnerships with government, community and employment agencies to increase applicant pool.	Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Late 2007 Ongoing	Employment data on recruitment rates for Indigenous Australian employees.
Review the University's existing Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures and any other relevant Human Resources Policies and amend where necessary.	Human Resources	Mid 2007	
Develop a range of targeted recruitment programs that actively explore and encourage the use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarships and Bursaries for students Cadetships through the National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NCIP) Traineeships 	Category 4 delegates and above Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Mid 2007 Ongoing	Employment data on participation rates.
Representative Steering Committee to determine yearly performance indicators and targets. The Committee will review progress against these early	Steering Committee	Late 2006	

³ Category 4 delegates and above are defined in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual located at <http://www.usq.edu.au/hr/polproc/parta/a2.htm>

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Performance Measure
indicators and targets, as well as setting them.			
Encourage and support the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at the University through the initiatives under Objective Three.	Human Resources Category 4 delegates and above Indigenous Affairs Committee	Ongoing	Employment data on the retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Review employee recruitment application forms to ensure that data on Indigenous employment is encapsulated.	Human Resources	Mid 2007	Employment data on recruitment rates for Indigenous Australian employees.
Provide employees responsible for recruitment processes with information and guidance in relation to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous people.	Human Resources	Mid 2007 Ongoing	Level of knowledge of the recruitment process.
Ensure that Recruitment Panels are provided with information and training when considering appointing Indigenous Australians to University wide positions.	Human Resources	Mid 2007 Ongoing	Level of knowledge of the recruitment process, including cultural awareness education in recruitment training.
Increase the representation of Indigenous Australians on selection panels by establishing and utilising a register of suitably trained and qualified Indigenous Australian people.	Category 4 delegates and above Human Resources	Late 2007 Ongoing	Employment data on Panel representation.
Utilise workforce planning information to assist in skill development.	Category 4 delegates and above Human Resources	Late 2007 Ongoing	Faculty and Departmental Workforce Plans and Equal Opportunity Strategies incorporating commitments reflecting the Indigenous Employment Strategy.

Objective 3 -

Maximise retention, development and career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and encourage and assist those existing employees to participate in career and professional development activities.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Performance Measure
Provide an environment that understands, supports and promotes Indigenous Australia culture.	Category 4 delegates and above	Ongoing	Identify the level of knowledge of Indigenous cultures at all levels of the University.
Ensure induction processes meet the needs of Indigenous Australians.	Human Resources	Mid 2007 Ongoing	
Review existing Exit Survey questionnaire and amend where necessary. Encourage exiting employees to complete the survey.	Human Resources Category 4 delegates and above Supervisors	Early 2007	Employment data on USQ retention rates. Retention rates of Indigenous Australians as a % of total workforce.
Investigate the development of a formalised mentoring program for Indigenous Australians.	Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Mid 2007	
Review all existing relevant University Policies and Procedures and amend where necessary (eg. Academic Promotion, Academic Development Leave, Professional Development Leave).	Human Resources in consultation with the Staff Consultative Committee	Late 2006	Appropriate policies and procedures.
Establish an Indigenous employee support network that meets regularly for development and networking purposes.	Indigenous Affairs Committee	Mid 2007	Employment data on career progression.
Explore the development of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship Program.	Category 4 delegates and above Human Resources	Early 2008	
Investigate the development of an Indigenous Research program.	Category 4 delegates and above Human Resources	Early 2008	

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframes	Performance Measure
Ensure that Indigenous Australians are encouraged and given support to apply for employee development programs (ie. Study Assistance, Academic Promotion), and are supported in undertaking professional development activities.	Category 4 delegates and above Supervisors	Ongoing Review annually	Participation rates of Indigenous Australians in training and development. Employment data on career development, turnover and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Develop and deliver cross-cultural awareness and competence training for supervisors and employees.	Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Mid 2007	Employment data on participation rates in training.
Review the University's performance management system (BUILD) and amend as necessary.	Human Resources	Early 2007	
Ensure that Indigenous employees are influential in shaping their own careers by participating in the BUILD process.	Category 4 delegates and above Supervisors	Ongoing	Employment data on career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Develop training and development initiatives and programs which will assist Indigenous employees in career development.	Human Resources Indigenous Affairs Committee	Mid 2007	Employment data on training and career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Explore internal transfer and secondment opportunities for Indigenous Australians, with specific emphasis on academic positions.	Human Resources	Mid 2008	Employment data on career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Continue to promote flexible work practices to ensure work/life balance.	Supervisors Human Resources	Ongoing	Review Work/Life Balance score in USQ Climate Survey.

Outcomes and Evaluation

A formal evaluation of the progress in implementing the Employment Strategy will be conducted in consultation with the key stakeholders no later than July 2008. The evaluation will then be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor to ensure that there is continuing support for the Strategy.

The Steering Committee, in conjunction with the Indigenous Affairs Committee and Human Resources, will monitor the development of the Strategy during implementation and review progress towards objectives on a regular basis.

Ongoing consultation will continue with academic and general employees and the wider community.

25 September 2006