

University of Southern Queensland

Indigenous Student Success Program

2021 Performance Report

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UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND



1. Enrolments (Access)

Strategies to improve access to university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

USQ is strongly committed to proactively providing accessible and equitable higher education opportunities to the diverse University student constituency including First Nations students. Specific initiatives for supporting and improving access to educational opportunities for First Nations students are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Initiatives supporting access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

Initiative and Outline of Activity	Funding Source
<p>Indigenous Higher Education Pathway Program (IHEPP)</p> <p>The IHEPP program is offered to First Nations students seeking entry to University through the College for First Nations (CFN). The standard duration of the program, which is available in mixed modes, face-to face and online, is one semester (or up to three semesters if undertaken part-time), with two intakes per year. This culturally relevant pathway program aims to strengthen Indigenous identity and is designed to develop the academic skills needed for successful entry into university study. Courses have an Indigenous focus through the development of writing, general study, and computer skills. While undertaking the program, students are provided with academic, cultural, and social support from CFN staff and fellow students. First Nations students can nominate their proposed future degree at the point of enrolment into IHEPP and are simultaneously enrolled in pre-requisite courses, if required for future enrolment into a degree, in the University's Tertiary Preparation Program. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of IHEPP was reshaped to provide an on-campus two-week Residential School at the start of Semester 1, with the remainder of the program delivered online during Semesters 1 and 2, 2021.</p>	<p>Away from Base (AFB), Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) and Operational Funds</p>
<p>Cultural Connections Online Orientation Program</p> <p>The Cultural Connections Online Orientation Program (Cultural Connections) was designed to target First Nations first year, first semester online students across the University. Identified students are invited to attend a two-day orientation program during the University orientation week, providing students with the tools required to succeed while studying online. The students engage with their Lecturers, Student Relationship Officers, Indigenous Support Staff, CFN staff and their peers. COVID-19 impacted the on-campus delivery of Cultural Connections, however CFN customised the program to enable students to engage with the program online during 2021.</p>	<p>AFB, ISSP and Operational Funds</p>
<p>USQ College Tertiary Preparatory Program</p> <p>USQ College offers the Tertiary Preparatory Program, supporting the enrolment First Nations students into preparatory courses that enable direct entry into undergraduate degrees. USQ College and the CFN work closely to support, retain, and First Nations students from their respective programs, allowing flexibility across the courses to ensure students have the requisite skills needed for degree program entry. Both colleges also offer courses in offline mode for incarcerated students, inclusive of First Nations students in facilities throughout Australia.</p>	<p>Operational Funds</p>
<p>Scholarships</p> <p>All First Nations students are eligible and supported to apply for a wide range of scholarships at USQ, based on criteria relevant to their current study. USQ First Nations scholarships are made available through the ISSP and preserved funding that targets Regional and Remote First Nations students. In 2021, a total of \$190 650.00 was allocated to First Nation student scholarships.</p>	<p>ISSP and Preserved Funding</p>
<p>Deadly Ways Program</p> <p>The Deadly Ways Program is delivered through the USQ Outreach and Engagement team. The program targets First Nations high school students from years 7 to 12 in regional communities. Deadly Ways events are designed to provide Indigenous students with a real-life university experience both on-campus and remotely, including an Indigenous Connections Day for years 7 and 8, Deadly Careers Camp for years 9 and 10 and a Residential Program for years 11 and 12.</p>	<p>Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and Operational Funds</p>

Scholarships, bridging/enabling support, and outreach activities

Outreach activities in 2021 included mass communications (emails and announcements on course Study Desks), direct emails, phone calls, and online workshops in partnership with CFN.

The USQ Scholarship Office identifies key opportunities within University Orientation Week where CFN staff plan and deliver Cultural Connection activities and events to familiarise newly enrolled students with university life experiences, processes, tutoring and scholarship opportunities. Through a collaborative approach, CFN Indigenous support staff assist students with enrolment processes, accessing tutoring, and sourcing documentation relevant to their chosen degree.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions limiting face-to-face interactions, students were supported with opportunities to interact online. An overview of scholarship payments made to First Nations students in 2021 is provided at Table 2 below.

Table 2. Scholarships - breakdown of 2021 payments^{ii iii}

Student Category	Education Costs		Accommodation Costs		Reward		Total ^{iv v}	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ^{vi}	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -	
Undergraduate ^{vii}	\$ 171,950.00	71	\$ 5,500.00	3	\$ -		\$ 177,450.00	
Postgraduate ^{viii}	\$ 13,200.00	4	\$ -		\$ -		\$ 13,200.00	
Other	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -	
Total	\$ 185,150.00	75	\$ 5,500.00	3	\$ -	0	\$ 190,650.00	

The rise and fall of Indigenous Equivalent Full-Time student loads

A summary of Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL) and the student Headcount from 2016 to 2021 for all First Nations students, as well as for students from regional and remote areas, is provided in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student EFTSL by All, Remote and Regional and year

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All	357.5	369.8	378.5	407.8	449.9	462.9
Remote and Regional	219.7	221.4	216.5	226.9	229.7	241.3

The Headcount of all First Nations students from 2016 to 2021 demonstrates steady growth in numbers (Table 4 refers), with a significant increase of 209 students between 2016 to 2021 (691 to 900). The Headcount for remote and regional First Nations students increased by 56 students between 2016 to 2021 (415 to 471) with 23 more enrolments in 2021 than in 2020 (448 to 471).

Table 4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Headcount by All, Regional, Remote and year

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All	691	706	730	808	886	900
Remote and Regional	415	425	412	448	448	471

Strategies and funding sources for enrolment (access)

A range of strategies fully or partially funded by ISSP funds and/or funded by other University resources for identified activities/events required to support enrolment processes for First Nations students, were undertaken in 2021. The strategies are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Funding source for enrolment (access) strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Strategy	Funding Source
Indigenous Higher Education Pathway Program (IHEPP)	AFB, ISSP and Operational Funds
Cultural Connections	AFB, ISSP and Operational Funds
USQ College - Tertiary Preparatory Program (TPP)	Operational Funds
Scholarships	ISSP and Preserved Scholarships
Deadly Ways Program	HEPPP and Operational Funds

2. Progression (access and outcomes)

Strategies to improve success rates and retention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

The guiding principles outlined in the [USQ Student Success and Retention Strategy](#) and the [USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Education Strategy](#) are at the heart of our University community, reflecting the University's commitment to student success being everyone's business, a sense of belonging being essential for all of us, and that the University can and should be a leading university for First Nations education. Specific initiatives and strategies designed to address and improve First Nations student recruitment, retention and success rates are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Activities to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment, retention, and success rates.

Initiatives and Strategies	Funding Source
<p>College for First Nations (CFN)</p> <p>CFN supports First Nations students by providing culturally safe spaces across all campuses through appropriate resources, computer laboratories, kitchenettes, and common areas. CFN facilitates linkages between students and other resources (on-campus and online) through academic support mechanisms such as the Scholarships Office, Library Services, Learning Advisors, and study planning.</p> <p>CFN established the Indigenous Student Support and Success team in 2018 to facilitate connections with and provide dedicated support to First Nations students. The support team reviews, and monitors data captured through university systems, student enquiries, and the culturally designed after hours academic support mechanism known as 'Ask Aunty'. The 'Ask Aunty' online student support portal is available to First Nations students and provides access to a range of resources and support services available across the University as well as personalised student and academic support from CFN. The portal also allows students to chat with the CFN team (Academic staff and/or Indigenous Student Support and Success Officers), enabling students to receive immediate assistance for matters relating to their study. Students are supported by the Indigenous Student Success and Support Officers with student related matters from enrolment processes through to continued study.</p> <p>The Indigenous Student Support and Success team communicates regularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students both face-to-face and online through a variety of platforms including CFN's 'Ask Aunty', 'Message Stick' and 'Yarning Circles' initiatives. The 'Ask Aunty' website and CFN's Facebook page promote the use of the Student Relationship Officer (SRO) avatar 'SRO Rosie' in addition to face-to-face, phone and email communication.</p>	ISSP and Operational Funds

<p>Indigenous Student Performance Taskforce</p> <p>The Indigenous Student Performance Taskforce (ISPT) was established in January 2018 to better understand First Nations student performance, with a focus on the analysis of success rates and retention. A sub-group of the Taskforce, referred to as ‘The Graduating Indigenous Leaders Commitment’ (GILC) was formed specifically to target and provide additional assistance to the success and retention of First Nations students. GILC is described below.</p> <p>The Graduating Indigenous Leaders Commitment Project (GILC), which is based on the establishment of relationship building within a culturally inclusive environment, has been operating over the last three years. Several new initiatives to support First Nations student success were piloted to promote a strengths-based approach towards engagement and empowerment for educational progression. The ‘Commitment’ incorporates:</p> <p>USQ Indigenous Education Strategy – The USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s Education Strategy aligns the University with sector commitment and standards, assuring accountable and transparent key performance indicators to support successful educational outcomes for First Nations students and the correlation between this overarching strategy (with a student and learning focus) and University governance and human resource instruments.</p> <p>Organisational connection – this encompasses three levels of referral networks internal and external to the structure as well as online resources as follows:</p> <p>Level 1 – Relationship Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and outreach to First Nations students in need of additional assistance • Communication strategy for all First Nations students • Focus - first year, first semester. <p>Level 2 –Support to Success Program (within targeted Schools)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus – students-at-risk and/or with lower Grade Point Averages (GPAs) • Whole of University approach • Models the highly successful School of Nursing and Midwifery ‘Helping Hands; program (detailed below) to support First Nations Students towards academic success in all Schools. <p>Level 3 – Online Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused academic assistance to online students (either online or outreach to physical locations) • ‘Ask Aunty’ website - Moodle-based with informational resources such as adapted referencing guides from the library and other culturally appropriate guidance; online First Nations community; first stop for culturally appropriate resources; and linkages to mainstream services. 	<p>ISSP and HEPPP</p>
<p>Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)</p> <p>The ITAS scheme provides targeted tutorial assistance for First Nations students of up to two hours per course per week. Where students indicate that urgent support is required, the Head of CFN can approve that additional hour be added to their ITAS agreement. As a result of COVID-19, face-to-face interactions between tutors and students were limited with online delivery recommended.</p>	<p>ISSP Funds</p>

<p>Helping Hands Support to Success Program</p> <p>This initiative is a First Nations student support model aimed at recruiting, retaining, and graduating First Nations nursing and midwifery students. The model was developed by Aboriginal nursing academics to provide the necessary cultural and academic support to successfully navigate the university environment. The program is inclusive of First Nations students enrolled in nursing at the Geraldton Universities Centre, Western Australia where the USQ Bachelor of Nursing is delivered in partnership with USQ. USQ’s Helping Hands is a national leading initiative, graduating the most First Nations nurses in the country. Pivotal to this success is a dedicated team of Aboriginal nurse academics within the School of Nursing and Midwifery who advise, design, and teach curriculum across the nursing program including a mandatory course titled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.</p>	<p>Operational Funds</p>
<p>Indigenous Studies Courses</p> <p>CFN offers 10 Introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia (ISE) courses in Indigenous Studies, which are available to all students (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students) as Major/Minor studies within the Bachelor level programs in Arts, Education and Human Services. These courses are critical to retention, allowing students to learn through curriculum that reflects First Nations identity and engages in culturally appropriate knowledges and learning strategies.</p> <p>Graduate attributes support students to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-informed individuals with discipline-specific expertise and industry knowledge relevant to their profession or area of study • Critical, creative, thinkers who can integrate and apply knowledge and relevant skills, including research and digital literacy skills, to analyses and evaluate ideas, concepts, theories, and problems, and offer insights, innovative approaches, and solutions • Effective communicators and collaborators who actively and respectfully lead, listen, reflect, discuss, and negotiate to work productively with a range of individuals and groups, including professional teams • Ethical, engaged professionals and citizens who engage in, non-discriminatory, safe practices and consider the local, global, social, economic, legal, and environmental influences on, and impact of, their attitudes and actions • Employable, enterprising professionals who are confident, self-directed, know how they learn, and are resourceful, resilient, and adaptable to change • Culturally capable individuals who are self-aware and sensitive to First Nations knowledges and perspectives, equitable and respectful of diversity and multiculturalism, and can apply these capabilities in their professional practice. 	<p>Operational Funds</p>
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Association</p> <p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Association comprises undergraduate and postgraduate student members across all campuses. During 2021, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Association was inactive due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Self-Funded and Operational Funds</p>
<p>Murri Meet-Up</p> <p>Murri Meet-up is a peer mentoring program aimed at assisting first year students to become familiar with the University environment. Mentoring is undertaken by academically proficient third year and fourth year students who are trained to be student peer leaders.</p>	<p>Operational Funds</p>

The rise and fall of success and progression rates

The retention rate of First Nations students in 2020 slightly decreased by 0.87% compared to 2019. An overview of retention rates from 2015 to 2020 are detailed in Table 7 below. Due to USQ systems the 2021 retention rate will not be available till 2022.

Table 7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention rate

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Retention Rate	58.02%	56.45%	54.93%	60.09%	61.29%	60.42%	No Data% Until 2022

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success rate decreased in 2021 by 3.01% compared to 2020. The strategies highlighted above have assisted in the improvement of student success rates in previous years. The decrease in 2021 requires investigation and analysis to ensure University wide support programs are measured and being maintained effectively and meeting the student needs. See table 8 below.

Table 8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success rate

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Success Rate	56.86%	57.77%	58.72%	60.04%	62.86%	61.85%	58.84%

Tutorial assistance provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (2021 breakdown)

As indicated in Table 9 below, 177 First Nations students were assisted with tutorial support in 2021 at a total cost of \$581,552.60.

Table 9. Tutorial Assistance Provided in 2021

Level of study	Number of students assisted.	Total hours of assistance	Expenditure (\$)
Enabling	29	1191.83	\$65,293.90
Undergraduate	141	9101.72	\$500,130.50
Postgraduate	7	293.24	\$16,128.20
Other			
Total	177	10586.79	\$581,552.60

Indigenous Support Unit and other activities

CFN, the University's Indigenous Support Unit, is located across all three campuses. In addition to providing support for Indigenous students, CFN aims to:

- promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and assist communities to develop their economic and cultural independence
- act as an advocate for First Nations students when meeting educational, social, economic, and cultural difficulties in a tertiary institution
- undertake research and consultancy projects that will address education and other issues that affect First Nations peoples at all levels.

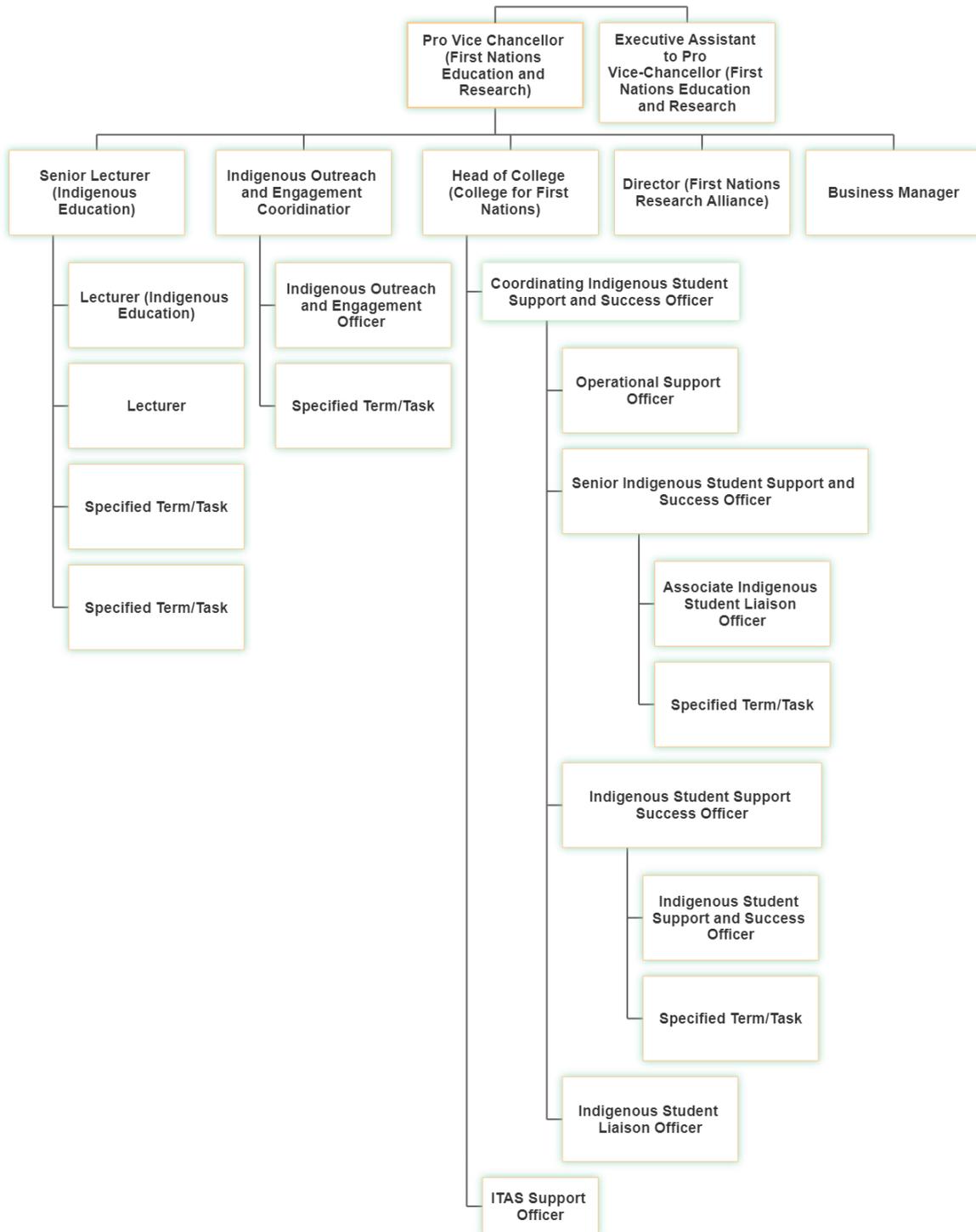
The Head of the CFN is a senior academic appointment that has line-management responsibility for academic staff within CFN and takes a leading role in First Nations strategic development within the University. For example, the Head (or nominee) is an ex-officio member of the University's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and the Indigenous Research Strategy Committee and is a member of the ISSP Committee.

During 2021, the key responsibilities of the Head of CFN position included:

- the provision of leadership and management to the College through strategic and organisational planning.
- ensuring performance and resource management, and facilitating the identification, approval, and deployment of initiatives both consistent with and contributing to the achievement of university objectives and priorities
- ensuring the quality assurance and enhancement of processes for the Indigenous content of academic courses and the teaching for which CFN is responsible
- leading CFN's contribution to the quality of the programs associated with Indigenous learning and teaching
- supporting activities and programs aimed at improving Indigenous student attraction, student retention rates and graduate outcomes, and
- performance in consultancy on Indigenous matters and curriculum development, teaching, research, professional service, and community engagement.

An overview of the interim CFN’s Organisational structure (pending recruitment of new positions in 2022) is provided at Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Overview of CFN Organisational Structure



In addition to acquiring a more prominent and larger space at the Toowoomba campus in 2021, new spaces were secured at the Ipswich and Springfield campuses, which allows the College to provide improved services and supportive culturally safe spaces for study, consultation, and community engagement. These have been very well received by students. In response to COVID-19, the CFN created and posted care packs to all First Nations students in Semesters 1 and 2, 2021.

Cultural competency strategies

The University is committed to increasing the cultural competency of its workforce through the provision of face-to-face and online training modules. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of USQ's face-to-face 'Cultural Awareness: Hidden Histories' training, facilitated by First Nations employees as skilled internal educators. In 2019 to 2021, 104 employees from a broad cross-section of the University completed online cultural competency training offered by the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia and 23 course participants in the micro-credentials 'Supervising First Nations Higher degree research' in 2021. In support of USQ developing their own cultural competency training, in accordance with procurement procedures, the University put out a tender for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations to develop a 'USQ Cultural Capability Program', with the successful agency, *MurriMatters*, engaged to provide a proposed structure and outline for the USQ Cultural Capability Program between September and December 2021. The University also purchased a training package mid 2021 from SBS Australia with a focus on inclusion upskilling across key diversity areas. The Indigenous module within this package informed part of the future 'USQ Building Cultural Capability Program'.

Strategies and funding sources for progression (access and outcomes)

As outlined in Table 10 below, a range of strategies to support the progression (access and outcomes) of First Nations students were undertaken. These strategies are fully and partially funded by ISSP and by other university resources.

Table 10. Funding source for Progression (access and outcomes) strategies

Strategy	Funding Source
CFN	ISSP and Operational Funds
Indigenous Student Support and Success Team	ISSP and Operational Funds
Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	ISSP Funds
Helping Hands Support and Success Program	Operational Funds
Indigenous Studies courses	Operational Funds
Murri Meet-Up	Operational Funds
Indigenous Student Performance Taskforce	ISSP and HEPPP
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Association	Self-funded and Operational Funds

3. Completions (Outcomes)

Strategies to improve award course completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- The University captures in the student record on enrolment, students who self-identify as First Nations. This information is available and visible to support services in their interaction with students and for reporting purposes and enables targeted outreach and support to this cohort of students.
- Successful completions occur with academic, cultural, and emotional support offered by the various services within the University. These services include support at point of enrolment and formulation of study plans First Nations students so that: expectations are clear and transparent; links are established for disability support services if required; students are informed and supported preparing scholarship applications; and individual academic assistance is provided through engaging tutors and aligning with students to assist with assignments and assessments

- While University data highlighted an increase in success rates since the inception of GILC in 2018 to 2020, demonstrating an increase in completions, a fall of 3.01% in 2021 success rates (see Table 8 above) requires investigation and analysis to ensure University wide support programs and measures are being maintained effectively and meeting student needs.

The rise or fall of completions

The program completion rates of First Nations undergraduate students have been increasing from 29 in 2015 to 72 student completions in 2021. There were 21 postgraduate completions and 3 Research Students completions in 2021, as shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander program completions by year

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Grand Total
Undergraduate Students	29	57	47	48	54	73	72	380
Postgraduate Students	20	24	10	9	18	18	21	120
Research Students	0	2	0	0	1	1	3	7
TOTAL	49	83	57	57	73	92	96	507

The graduating cohort of 507 student First Nations students from 2015 to 2021, was the largest number of graduands. Certificates and Indigenous stoles were awarded to all students.

Strategies connecting graduates with employment (both within and outside of the institution)

As outlined in Table 12, the University has implemented a range of strategies that specifically link First Nations graduates with employment opportunities both within and external to the University.

Table 12. Activities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with employment.

Activity	Outline of activity	Funding Source
USQ Student Ambassador Program	USQ Student Ambassadors are a team of passionate students who aim to inspire future students to consider tertiary study. The program enhances graduate employability by gaining critical thinking, presentations and leadership skills and allows students to expand their professional networks with fellow university students, industry professionals and communities.	Operational Funds
Careers and Employability Services	Student transition at each stage of the student learning journey is supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career counselling • Career education • Industry partnerships • Employability Services • Work experience, industry mentoring, and internships/cadetships. 	Operational Funds and HEPPP
Career Trackers	In 2020, USQ continued the partnership with Career Trackers, a national non-profit organisation that creates internship opportunities for First Nations university students. In 2021, there were seven students registered with Career Trackers comprising two new students, three continuing students and two graduating students. USQ has eight recorded Alumni who have previously engaged with the Career Trackers Program. The students were enrolled in a range of programs: Aviation, Business & Commerce, Engineering, Spatial Science, IT and Communications & Media.	Private Enterprise

Strategies and funding sources for completions (outcomes)

A range of strategies fully and partially funded by ISSP funds and/or funded by other University resources for activities/events to support completions (outcomes) for First Nations students were undertaken as outlined below in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Strategies and funding sources supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completions

Strategy	Funding Source
Scholarships	ISSP and Preserved Scholarships
Indigenous Higher Education Pathway Program (IHEPP)	AFB, ISSP and Operational Funds
Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	ISSP Funds
Helping Hands Support and Success Program	Operational Funds
Indigenous Student Support and Success Team	ISSP Funds
Murri Meet-Up	Operational Funds
USQ Student Ambassador Program	Operational Funds
Career and Employability Services (University Wide)	Operational Funds and HEPPP
Career Trackers	Private Enterprise

Strategies to assist graduates and monitor student outcomes after graduation

The University is committed to graduating First Nations students who can become leaders in their communities and enabling all students to participate as culturally competent individuals in contemporary Australian society. The Graduate Attributes Policy includes a cultural graduate attribute where there is explicit reference and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and cultural competencies, namely, “Culturally capable individuals, who are self-aware and sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives, equitable and respectful of diversity and multiculturalism, and can apply these capabilities in their professional practice”.

The USQ Careers and Employability team is responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and aims to empower students to make informed career choices that optimise their life opportunities, through the provision of current, relevant, and professional career and employment services. The team has a strong focus on connecting students with industry and hosts the Industry Experience Program. The program enables students to engage in work experience in their discipline and develop their professional networks. An online mentoring platform has been specifically designed to connect students with industry, irrespective of geographical location and a suite of self-access resources designed to help students develop resumes, prepare for interviews, establish LinkedIn accounts, understand options for gaining work experience, and develop their professional networks is also available. Each resource includes the ability for students to receive one-to-one feedback and support from USQ Careers and Employability staff.

The planned establishment of a First Nations student alumni group was temporarily halted due to COVID-19. Discussions regarding the formation of this group will recommence in 2022.

4. Regional and Remote Students

Strategies and activities to support and improve access to university study

Table 14 below describes the implemented strategies and activities that supported regional and remote students with access to university study.

Table 14. Strategies to improve access to university for regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Strategy	Funding Source
Scholarships	ISSP and Preserved Scholarships
Indigenous Higher Education Pathway Program (IHEPP)	AFB, ISSP and Operational Funds
Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	ISSP Funds
Deadly Ways Program	HEPPP Funds
Helping Hands Support and Success Program	Operational Funds
Indigenous Student Support and Success Team	ISSP Funds
Murri Meet-Up	Operational Funds
USQ Student Ambassador Program	Operational Funds
Career and Employability Services (University Wide)	Operational Funds and HEPPP
Career Trackers	Private Enterprise

Table 15. Scholarships – Breakdown of regional and remote payments^{ix x}

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ^{xi}	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2020 Payments	\$ 172,133.00	63	\$ 15,268.00	5	\$ -	0	\$ 187,401.00	68
B. 2021 Offers ^{xii}	\$ 102,200.00	45	\$ 5,500.00	3	\$ -	0	\$ 107,700.00	48
C. Percentage ^{xiii} (C=B/A*100)							57%	71%
2021 Payments	\$ 100,800.00	44	\$ 5,500.00	4	\$ -	0	\$ 106,300.00	48

Remote and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EFTSL

A summary of EFTSL and student Headcount from 2016 to 2021 for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as for students from regional and remote areas, was provided in Tables 3 and 4. Table 16 below details the percentage of remote and regional EFTSL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student EFTSL, noting a decline of 9.38% from 2016 to 2021 (61.45% to 52.12%).

Table 16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander remote and regional EFTSL

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All	357.5	369.8	378.5	407.8	449.9	462.9
Remote and Regional	219.7	221.4	216.5	226.9	229.7	241.3
% Remote and Regional EFTSL of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EFTSL	61.45%	59.87%	57.20%	55.64%	51.06%	52.12%

5. Working with Vulnerable People Requirement

The University has completed and submitted the working with vulnerable people assessment as per the ISSP guidelines. All staff involved in ISSP activities have undertaken the appropriate training and follows the USQ compliance process when working with vulnerable people (Table 17 below refers).

Table 17. Working with vulnerable people requirement

Requirement	Yes/No
Has the provider completed a risk assessment?	Yes
Have staff involved in ISSP activity received training?	Yes
Does the provider have a compliance process in place?	Yes

6. Working Eligibility Requirements

Indigenous Education Strategy

The University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Education Strategy frames and aligns existing University strategies and policies that support First Nations education in the following key areas:

- Cultural Competence
- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Innovation
- Leadership
- People and Relationships.

The USQ ISSP Committee has responsibility for decision making and monitoring the implementation of this strategy as required by the Australian Government. It comprises qualified individuals inclusive of First Nations peoples, University leadership and other appropriate representatives who act as stewards for this strategy and is led and informed by contributions from First Nations peoples.

CFN supports the education of USQ's First Nations Community. The CFN website (<https://www.usq.edu.au/ciser>)* contains further information on the support services available First Nations students. (*this website will be re-named in 2022 to align with the change in name of the USQ College of Indigenous Studies, Education and Research to the College for First Nations).

Reconciliation Action Plan

USQ's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan ('RAP') was formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in January 2020. The RAP contains 16 actions related to the areas of: Relationships; Respect; Opportunities; and Governance. The new RAP builds on USQ's first RAP: 'Walking Together: USQ Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017' and continues to be coordinated by a USQ RAP Working Group with representation from across the organisation. Progress on the RAP in 2021 was significantly affected by COVID-19 with the pandemic impacting the ability to meet some deliverables within the timelines set out in the RAP. This has resulted from restrictions to arrest the spread of COVID-19 and from work effort focused on the University's response to the pandemic and subsequent changes in learning and teaching models, as well as service delivery. Reconciliation Australia reached out to all RAP organisations, recognising the challenges in the current environment, and has given flexibility to timelines and deliverables in existing RAPs. The RAP Working Group continues to work through the implications. Regardless of all the challenges experienced in 2021, there have been various achievements at USQ in support of its reconciliation vision.

An overview of key achievements towards deliverables in the RAP throughout 2021:

- The RAP Working Group wrote to the Vice-Chancellor advocating for an identified Indigenous leadership position at USQ and in September 2021, Professor Tony Dreise was appointed as the inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research).
- The University recognised key dates of significance in the First Nations calendar through virtual activities
- Peaked interest in cultural competency training, particularly within the University's two faculties
- Dedicated Indigenous career programs for employees
- Ongoing relationship building activities with key external First Nations stakeholders
- The University fulfilled its reporting obligation to Reconciliation Australia by completing the annual RAP Impact Questionnaire.

Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The USQ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy 2018-2020](#) was completed in 2020, however the Strategy continued at a whole of university-level throughout the course of 2021, and reports against targets and milestones on a quarterly basis. This ensures that the University is accountable to the initial purpose, design, and overall approach of the previous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy.

The intention of USQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy 2018-2020 was to grow and retain a talented and sustainable cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic, research, professional and senior

employees through a multi-faceted and coordinated approach and to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to 3% of the total workforce. Further, the University implemented several key deliverables in alignment with the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2021 and the five key goals of the USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy as outlined below.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy outlines five key goals. Broadly, these goals can be aligned under key talent management framework elements of the USQ Workforce and Talent Management Plan as outlined below.

ATTRACT and RETAIN

Goal 1: Enrich USQ's employer of choice status to attract top Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent across all career streams.

Goal 2: Develop, expand and enhance employment and career pathway opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that embrace a contemporary 'grow your own' approach.

ENGAGE and SUPPORT

Goal 3: Enhance and elevate cultural sensitivity, safety, and inclusion to enable genuine engagement and contribute to effective cross-cultural working relationships, wellbeing, and positive behaviours in the University community.

DEVELOP and ADVANCE

Goal 4: Leverage the USQ People Capability Framework as a platform for implementing innovative professional development and contemporary career development strategies and activities for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

PLAN and ALIGN

Goal 5: Build institutional accountability, transparency and commitment to ensure action, reporting and monitoring of progress, outcomes and recognition of achievements in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and career development.

Progress against targets and milestones outlines in the strategy

In 2021, USQ did not reach the intended target of 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce - peaking at 2.55% in Quarter 4. However, this figure represented a 0.11% increase from the previous year, and although this target remains unmet, the University has excelled in other areas of the Workforce Strategy. For example, in relation to Goals 1 & 2, USQ implemented several initiatives including:

- The recruitment and subsequent appointment of an executive level Indigenous Pro-Vice Chancellor, including the establishment of the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research), and the appointment an Executive Assistant and Business Manager in 2021
- The recruitment of a First Nations Engagement Officer within the Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales (SQNNSW) Drought Hub
- Two identified positions of First Nations Associate Evaluation Officers appointed in the Academic Quality Unit
- The development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Guideline, which all stakeholders across the University utilise to support the development and recruitment of First Nations staff
- USQ and the People Portfolio (formerly HR) continue to provide financial support for two USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Scholarships for students to build an academic career pipeline through postgraduate studies and into a potential research or academic career.

In accordance with Goal 3, USQ is also committed to developing a culturally safe work and study environment free of racism and discrimination in all forms by implementing strategic measures to increase cultural capabilities across all areas. The University had previously embedded the Graduate Attribute 6 into the Graduate Attribute Policy to ensure that all USQ students who participate in coursework programs are 'culturally capable individuals' upon completion of their studies. With the aim of developing a culturally capable workforce in addition to this measure, the People Portfolio has also established a Cultural Capabilities Program in 2021 which features a mandatory learning module, which is to be completed by all current staff within 6 months of the launch of the Program and must be completed by all incoming staff within 6 months of their

commencement.

In addition to this learning module, a second module titled “Understanding the Importance of First Nations Cultural Capabilities” has been made available to leaders, managers, and supervisors to support the ongoing cultural awareness and sensitivity towards First Nations staff. This has been particularly important in promoting a high level of cultural safety within the workplace and ensures that leadership staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to discuss sensitive topics and matters in culturally appropriate ways such as Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country, Kinship in the workplace, Sorry Business, and First Nations staff affordances such as Cultural and Ceremonial Leave.

Further adjunct learning opportunities have also been made available to staff such as the Centre for Cultural Competencies Australia’s (CCCA) online course which saw five enrolments and three completions in 2021 including one executive staff member. The total enrolment for this course is 159 participants with 107 completions. Moreover, the UTS Microcredential in ‘Supervising Indigenous Higher Degree Research’ was offered by People Portfolio, which attracted 24 participants in total including 9 Level B/C staff and 9 Level D/E staff.

To support the implementation of Goal 4, the People Portfolio worked collaboratively with the Capability Development Team to pilot an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coaching Program to support the ongoing professional development and career advancement strategies and activities for USQ First Nations staff. The program attracted the interest of six First Nations professional employees within USQ, who each worked with external coaches to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, along with establishing a clear plan for career development and progression. In review of the program, through consultation with participants, the feedback obtained by People Portfolio and the Manager (Capability Development) was overwhelmingly positive and participants endorsed the continuation of the program in 2022.

The year 2021 also saw the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female employee successful under the ‘Academic Time Buy Program’ to progress completion of their Doctoral qualification, commenced their period of time release in July, and submitted their draft thesis in November 2021. Unfortunately, no applications for academic promotion were received throughout the year.

In the context of Goal 5, and in alignment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy accountability requirements, the Senior Advisor (First Nations Workforce Strategy) and the USQ Digital Capabilities Team developed an infographic highlighting the achievements for 2018-2019. In relation to furthering the accountabilities for reporting Indigenous Workforce data, USQ introduced a new performance measure ‘contributing to the sustainable development of our communities’.

The Key Result Indicator relates to ‘Increasing workforce diversity’, with a specific Key Performance Indicator of ‘Increase proportion of Australian Indigenous staff’ being included. This provides the 3% employment target (and progress) with a clear line of sight to the strategic outcomes envisioned by the new USQ Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Results are also reported regularly to the USQ Council. Finally, a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Profile site has been created in the USQ Business Intelligence Centre. This site is available to all University employees, and forms the basis of all reporting to Committees, including the Workforce Strategy Committee and the Staff Consultative Committee.

Employment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in a Senior Executive Position

The intention of USQ’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy is to grow and retain a talented and sustainable cohort of First Nations academic, research, professional and senior employees through a multi-faceted and coordinated approach. One of the performance measures under the Strategy’s Attract and Retain Goals is the Employment of at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in a senior executive role, which aligns with section 12 b(iii) of the ISSP Guidelines.

During the latter part of 2021, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in collaboration with the Chief People Officer (People Portfolio), undertook extensive consultation with First Nations employees regarding the recruitment of a senior Indigenous leader at USQ and a culturally appropriate recruitment process. An external search firm was engaged to lead the search for the appointment of a Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research), commencing late April 2021.

In September 2021, Professor Tony Dreise was appointed as the inaugural USQ Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research). Professor Dreise has now assumed responsibility for university-wide leadership in Australian Indigenous strategy, policy, leadership, community, culture, education, and engagement and provides strategic advice and policy and planning leadership on First Nations matters to the University community. Professor Dreise reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

Following appointment, Professor Dreise assumed the position of Acting Head of CFN while recruitment proceeds for a new Head of College. Recruitment to this position and a further position to support the University's Indigenous Research Strategy is currently underway. Additionally, leadership in First Nations matters at the University includes an Indigenous Governance Mechanism, an Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board, and an Elder in Residence as detailed below:

- **Indigenous Governance Mechanism:** The ISSP Committee, described in more detail under 6.3 below, focuses specifically on matters related to the internal management of the ISSP grant program
- **Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board:** Provides high-level strategic advice to the Vice-Chancellor to assist the Vice-Chancellor in positioning the University to pursue Reconciliation and the improvement of outcomes for First Nations peoples through the activities of the University
- **Elder in Residence:** Provides specialist cultural support and high-level advice to First Nations students and staff, promoting and fostering connections between the University and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. The incumbent is a key advisor to the Vice-Chancellor, University Executive, elders, students, staff, and key stakeholders in the community, on matters concerning First Peoples at each of USQ's campuses and provides an important conduit between university management and the Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board.

Plans to progress towards an Indigenous workforce target of 3%

In 2021, USQ employed 10 First Nations Senior Academics (B-E) with 6 Level B First Nations staff, 1 at Level C, 2 at Level E, and 1 executive First Nations staff member. In accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy, as it enters its renewal phase in 2022, the key target is to develop a 'Grow Your Own' approach to fostering Indigenous academic advancement and progression, which seeks to ensure that existing First Nations academic staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and expertise to advance their careers.

Importantly, in this context there are also ongoing efforts to drive recruitment by attracting current and forthcoming First Nations leadership in academic fields, and continuous strategic nation-wide attempts at promoting USQ as an *employer of choice* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In addition to this recruitment and promotion, the University will undertake a rigorous process in 2022 to promote more identified positions within mainstream schools and centres, including the new school of agriculture within USQ, and in parallel, will restructure and rebrand the College for Indigenous Studies Education and Research (CISER) to the College for First Nations.

In this context, the University will seek to advertise several identified positions in mainstream academic settings to embed perspectives in key areas of the curriculum, along with two outstanding key leadership positions in the First Nations business portfolio: i) Head of College for First Nations, and ii) Director, First Nations Research Alliance.

These positions are expected to be advertised and filled by Q4, 2022. In addition to these positions, USQ will also advertise several supporting roles in the College for First Nations and the First Nations Research Alliance, with a small number of identified teaching and research officer roles expected to be advertised and filled in mid-to-late 2022.

These efforts to promote, attract, recruit and retain Indigenous leadership into the University is an ongoing process will be strengthened by a new USQ First Nations Workforce Strategy to be developed and led by the Senior Advisor (First Nations Workforce) during 2022. This will involve a robust consultation process with USQ First Nations staff and stakeholders who will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the previous Strategy. This feedback will partly inform the new Strategy, along with key documents such as the *Blueprint for First Nations Education and Research and Engagement* - currently under development by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research) - and the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2021-2025. With consultations due to commence in May 2022, and the first draft submitted for approval in late 2022, we anticipate that the new First Nations Workforce Strategy 2023-2025 to be launched in early-to-mid 2023.

More information on First Nations employment at USQ can be found on the [First Nations employment website](#)

An overview of the Indigenous workforce data for 2021 by level/position, appointment, and contract type, is provided in Table 18.

Table 18. Indigenous workforce data (2021 breakdown)

Level/position	Permanent		Casual/contract/fixed-term	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
Executive	1			
Level E	2			
Level C	1			
Level B	6			
Level A	2			
Level 10		1		
Level 8		2		
Level 7		6		
Level 6		8		
Level 5		9		
Level 4		3		
Casuals			14	8
Total	41		22	

Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The University has an appropriately constituted ISSP Committee. The ISSP Committee focuses specifically on matters related to the internal management of the ISSP grant program. This complements the high-level strategic consultancy on First Nations matters provided by the Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board (chaired by the Elder in Residence) to the Vice-Chancellor. The ISSP Committee membership is constituted by a majority of First Nations people and includes several University senior executives and First Nations employee and student representatives.

Before the commencement of Professor Dreise in late September 2021, the 2021 ISSP Committee membership comprised:

- Dr Raelene Ward, Associate Professor, CFN, ISSP Committee Chair
- Professor Josh Pienaar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students)
- Professor Shirley O'Neill, Interim Head, CFN
- Dr Christie White, Executive Director (Student Success and Wellbeing), Student Success and Wellbeing
- Mrs Trudi Davidson, Director (People and Workforce Strategy), Human Resources
- Ms Tonia Chalk, Lecturer (Education), School of Education
- Mrs Vicki Horner, Lecturer (Indigenous Support), School of Nursing and Midwifery
- Mrs Anne-Marie Oosthuizen, Manager (Financial Reports and Budgets), Financial Services
- Miss Rebecca Klein, Coordinating Operational Support Officer, CFN, ISSP Committee Officer
- President, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Association. Position vacant.

USQ continues to implement strategies ensuring that First Nations peoples are involved in decision-making at all levels, through active representation on university committees and working groups. During 2021, First Nations peoples were represented on the following Boards and Committees:

- Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board
- Academic Board and its sub-committees:
 - Academic Program Committee
 - Education Quality Committee
 - Research Committee
 - Academic Appeals Committee
- Faculty of Business, Education, Law, and Arts (BELA) Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Faculty of Health Engineering and Sciences (HES) Diversity and Inclusion Academic Committee
- Academic Division Teaching and Learning Committee
- Academic Division Research Committee
- Indigenous Research Strategy Committee
- Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Workforce Strategy Committee
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network (Rotational Chair)
- Indigenous Student Success Committee (ISSP).

Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The ISSP Committee Chair and other members of the ISSP Committee have contributed to, and had shared oversight, of this report.

ⁱ Only payments made during 2021 can be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

ⁱⁱ Record the number of students (head count) not EFTSL.

ⁱⁱⁱ Include both preserved and new ISSP scholarships.

^{iv} This figure in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

^v The total may not be the sum of the previous columns as some students may receive several scholarships.

^{vi} Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

^{vii} Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

^{viii} Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

^{ix} Only record amounts which would/did require payment during the 2020 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year.

^x Note the data in this table is a subsection of the all-student scholarship data provided in Table 1.

^{xi} This figure in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

^{xii} Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2021 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2021 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2021 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships and preserved scholarships).

^{xiii} This data confirms the provider's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.

Indigenous Student Success Program 2021 Financial Acquittal

Organisation University of Southern Queensland

1. Financials – income and expenditure

Table 1a ISSP income available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)¹

Item	(\$)
A. ISSP Grant	
ISSP Grant 2021 (flexible component)	\$2 102 098
ISSP Grant 2021 for preserved scholarships	
Subtotal ISSP Grant 2021	\$2 102 098
B. Other ISSP Related Income	
Rollover of ISSP funds from 2020 (and earlier years)	
Interest earned/royalties from ISSP funding ²	\$1 936
<i>If no interest has been earned briefly state why</i>	
Sale of ISSP assets	
Subtotal other ISSP related income	\$1 936
Grand total for 2021	\$2 104 034

Table 1b Other funding available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)³

Item	(\$)
A. Other non-ISSP funds⁴	
Other funding provided under HESA ⁵	\$6 236 880
Other Commonwealth Government funding	\$1 990
ATO cash flow boost voluntarily allocated by you to this activity	
Funds derived from external sources ⁶	\$33 000
Total of other non-ISSP funds for 2021	\$7 246 284

Table 1c Expenditure on support for Indigenous students during 2021 (excluding GST)⁷

Item ⁸	Actual ISSP (\$) ⁹	Estimate other funds (\$) ¹⁰	TOTAL (\$) ¹¹
Preserved scholarships	-		
Scholarships from flexible ISSP funding	\$190 650	\$142 731	\$333 381
Teaching and learning		\$5 925 808	\$5 925 808
Salaries for staff working on ISSP activities (<i>excluding JobKeeper payments</i>) ¹²	\$1 091 034	\$1 036 731	\$2 127 765
Administration for staff working on ISSP activities	\$111 676	\$141 015	\$252 691
Tutorial Assistance, Pastoral Care, Outreach activities, cultural competency strategies etc (non-salary components)	\$676 646	-	\$676 646
Travel – domestic (airfares, accommodation & meals)	\$21 107	-	\$21 107
Travel – international (airfares) ¹³	-	-	-
Travel – international (accommodation and meals)	-	-	-
Conference fees and related costs ¹⁴	\$12 920	-	\$12 920
ISSP Asset purchases made during 2021 ¹⁵	-	-	-
Other (including <i>other ATO cash flow boost expenditure not included in above figures</i>)	-	-	-
A. Total Expenditure 2021	\$2 104 034	\$7 246 285	\$9 350 319
B. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funds approved for rollover into 2022 grant year¹⁶	-		
C. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – flexible component	-		
D. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – preserved scholarships	-		
2021 ISSP funding committed (A + B + C +D)¹⁷	\$2 104 034		

For NIAA information only

JobKeeper payment/s received and expended on this activity (value \$)

N/A

2. Rollovers

Table 2 Rollovers ⁸

	Rolled over (\$) (A)	Expended/committed ⁹ (\$) (B)	Excess to be returned to the NIAA ¹⁰ (\$) (C) (C = A – B)
2019 funds rolled over into 2021			
2019 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable)			
2020 funds rolled over into 2021			
2020 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable)			
2021 funds approved for roll over into 2022			

Please provide details of rollovers outlined in Table 2:

- The grants approved and the expenditure of 2019 ISSP funds rolled over into 2021.
- The grants approved and the expenditure of 2020 ISSP funds rolled over to 2021

[Please delete this box if no roll-over was approved]

3. Goods and Services Tax

Table 3 Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January – 31 December 2021¹¹

1. GST received by you in 2021 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Program funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> ¹²	\$
2. GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below)	\$
Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$
Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /
	Amount remitted: \$
	Date remitted: / /

4. ISSP Assets

Table 4a ISSP Assets inventory¹³

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable Value ¹⁴	ISSP contribution ¹⁵
N/A		
N/A		

Table 4b ISSP Assets - purchases during 2021 ¹⁶

Asset Description/ category	Purchase Value	ISSP contribution
N/A		
N/A		

Table 4c ISSP Assets - disposals during 2021

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable value	Disposals/ Sale Price ¹⁷	ISSP component ¹⁸	Disposals Age ¹⁹
N/A				
N/A				

5. Endorsement of the Financial Acquittal²⁰

2021 Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by:

Name:	Mr Athol Kerridge
Title:	Chief Financial Officer

Phone:	(07) 4631 2980	Email:	CFO@usq.edu.au
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Signed:		Date:	28/04/2022
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INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM 2021 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2021 Performance Report and 2021 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Program.

I certify that:

- (i) the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and
- (ii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution’s use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes: and
- (iii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2021 under the Indigenous Student Success Program: and
- (iv) Indigenous Student Success Program funds, and any interest earned, or royalties/income derived from these funds, was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

I understand that:

- (i) the Minister or the Minister’s delegate may seek further information to support this certification; and
- (ii) the information contain in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and
- (iii) in the event that I have not remitted GST paid under the Agreement to the Australian Taxation Office, that it is my obligation to remit those amounts, as required under the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*; and
- (iv) it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Certification recommended by the university’s Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name:	Professor Tony Dreise
Title:	Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research)

Signed:		Date:	28/04/2022
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Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate^{xxi}:

Name:	Professor Geraldine Mackenzie
Title:	Vice-Chancellor

Signed:		Date:	28/04/2022
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Certification

Additional information for completing the template

¹ The financial tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2021 as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. The information in tables 1a, 1b and 1c helps NIAA recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. Please feel free to add additional "item" lines as required.

¹ Interest earned on ISSP is considered to be ISSP funding and must be used in accordance with the ISSP Guidelines.

¹ Please estimate the funds available if exact amounts are not known.

¹ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university's arrangements.

¹ Please include funding provided under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program.

¹ Examples of other funding are philanthropic donations, other student payments, business income etc.

¹ Where applicable, figures provided in this table must be consistent with the figures provided in the institution's 2021 Performance Report.

¹ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university's arrangements.

¹ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1a, not including the funding rolled over from previous years (this is detailed in Table 2).

¹ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1b.

¹ Sum ISSP expenditure and other funds expenditure.

¹ If the staff member works on non-ISSP specific activities, only record the pro-rata amount that reflects the amount of time the staff member worked on ISSP-specific activities. Include expenditure on salaries for staff that provide tutorial assistance. May include pro-rata expenditure on salaries for staff time spent monitoring and recording tutoring and student withdrawals.

¹ Note that only airfares for international travel for students can be funded under ISSP.

¹ Costs may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, presentation fees, equipment costs etc.

¹ Assets are defined in the *Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017* and are items that have an individual value of \$5,000 or more.

¹ This should match the figure in Table 2.

¹ This figure should equal the Grand total in Table 1a

¹ All rollovers have to be agreed with the NIAA and listed in a relevant determination, check with NIAA if you are unsure of your roll over information.

¹ For 2019 funds rolled into 2021 and 2020 funds rolled in to 2021, the amounts included here should be the amount expended in 2021.

¹ This is the amount of the rollover not expended. NIAA will issue an invoice for any amounts listed in this column.

¹ If GST is not paid to you, do not complete the table in section 3. If GST is paid to you, the amount of GST funding included in each payment is set out in a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) issued to you at the time of the payment. State whether these amounts have been remitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or committed for payment to the ATO.

¹ This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).

¹ Record all active assets acquired using ISSP funding. Active assets are those that have not been sold or disposed of.

¹ Adjustable value means the cost of an asset less its decline in value determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office Guide to Depreciating Assets 2014.

¹ The ISSP contribution should be recorded in the same ratio to the ISSP funds used to purchase the item (this includes any sale of an older asset trade in of old assets purchased with ISSP funding).

¹ Include any assets purchased during 2021 using ISSP funding that are valued over \$5,000, any assets in this category should have been agreed with the NIAA prior to the item being purchased.

¹ Where an item has been stolen or destroyed, the words 'stolen' or 'destroyed' should be listed in the sale price column.

¹ The ISSP component should be the proportion of the sale price in the same ratio as the proportion of ISSP funding that contributed to the purchase of the asset.

¹ Where groups of assets are disposed of, an average age can be provided.

¹ Appropriate endorsement/authorisation is required to ensure compliance with the ISSP Guidelines and the 2022 Outcome Letter. If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this endorsement must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation's internal audit function (e.g., an internal auditor). If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation's auditor should sign this authorisation.

¹ For the purposes of this certification, an equivalent delegate is either the Acting Vice Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Provost, or a relevant senior executive who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor

Organisation
**University of Southern
Queensland (USQ)**

Contact Person
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*Pro Vice-Chancellor
First Nations Education and Research*

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