



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATEMENT

OVERVIEW

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) requires information from higher education providers relating to their 2013 outcomes and future plans to meet ongoing responsibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student achievement in higher education.

These responsibilities include assessing and reporting on progress towards improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as set out in the goals of the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy](#).

The Indigenous Education Statement is also used to determine providers' eligibility for Indigenous Support Program (ISP) funding. Please refer to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 – Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2008* which details ISP grant conditions. There are three conditions of eligibility for ISP - Table A providers must demonstrate to PM&C that they:

- Have implemented strategies for improving access, participation, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- Have increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the provider's decision-making processes; and
- Have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy.

Providers in receipt of ISP funding are also required to provide PM&C with a report on the expenditure of the grant amount. The expenditure report for 2013 ISP funds is included within this document.

It is recommended that the format for the Indigenous Education Statement is followed to ensure providers report against all relevant criteria. However, this should not limit providers who wish to report on a wider range of matters.

The Indigenous Education Statement is **due by 31 May 2014**.

Please submit electronic documents by email at scholarships@pmc.gov.au

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FORMAT FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATEMENT

While it is recommended that this format is followed to ensure providers report against all relevant criteria, providers are invited to comment on a wider range of matters.

University of Southern Queensland

College for Australian Indigenous Studies (previously named Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges)

SECTION 1 ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY (AEP) GOALS IN 2013 AND PLANS FOR FUTURE YEARS

Please provide evidence of:

- strategies you have implemented which seek to achieve the AEP goals and your assessment of whether these strategies are working;
- constraints on your ability to achieve the AEP goals; and
- plans for future improvement of existing strategies or implementation of new strategies to meet each of the AEP goals relevant to higher education.

The AEP goals (paraphrased) relating to higher education are to:

- 1 Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making.
- 2 Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed, as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions.
- 3 Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher education.
- 4 Achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of all other Australians.
- 5 Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians.
- 6 To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.

1. Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in educational decision-making.

Institutional Decision-Making Processes

Success in Indigenous education is in part dependant on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being involved in educational decision-making. USQ aims to achieve level parity in Indigenous employment (2.5%) by 2016. To date, the following strategies have been implemented to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at USQ:

- The operation of the USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy Committee to oversee and drive developments in this area.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Pilot Program launched in 2012 which provides full-time 12 month fixed-term appointments at a nationally recognised Certificate III level (five positions in 2013).
- The implementation and delivery of a series of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Cultural Awareness sessions during 2013 and 2014 for academic and professional staff at all three USQ campuses.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are formally involved in institutional decision-making processes in the following ways:

- Membership of Academic Board (the University's principal advisory committee to University Council on academic committee) includes an Indigenous academic staff member, elected by the academic staff of the University.
- The Head, College of Australian Indigenous Studies is ex officio member of a number of University committees and boards, including the Social Justice Strategy Board, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy Committee.
- Buallum Jarl-Bah Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Committee has been operating as an effective advisory body to the USQ Fraser Coast campus for many years.
- To increase engagement across all of USQ's campuses, the Vice-Chancellor has, in close consultation with the local communities, invited eight Elders and valued persons from across the lands where USQ campuses are located to form the USQ Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board (EVPAB). The Role of the Board approved at its first meeting on 12 March 2014 was as follows:
 - The EVPAB shall provide high-level strategic advice to the Vice-Chancellor to assist her in positioning the University to pursue reconciliation and the improvement of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the activities of the University. The Elders and Valued Persons Advisory Board (EVPAB) will be the principle source of high level advice to the Vice-Chancellor on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/First Nations Higher Education issues and affairs. The EVPAB will meet with the Vice-Chancellor at least three times per year.

USQ Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

While USQ has actively supported improving higher education and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since its establishment and reported to government on its achievements in these areas for over two decades, the University has previously not had in place a Reconciliation Action Plan. The need to fill this gap was identified as a priority by USQ Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Jan Thomas early in her administration and the University has been developing its RAP since late 2013.

This has involved a wide stakeholder consultation process and been informed by the recommendations of the 'Behrendt' Report released in 2012 and the Universities Australia Indigenous Cultural Competency Framework. The USQ RAP development has occurred within the framework provided by Reconciliation Australia and will ensure that USQ is publicly accountable for its progress in supporting reconciliation. Given its long history of supporting Indigenous education, employment and research, USQ has been able to launch its first RAP as a Stretch RAP – with a focus on expanding and embedding tested and proven strategies to

meet realistic targets.

At the time of writing, the USQ RAP is in an advanced stage of development. The draft RAP will be released for a final public consultation process in early July 2014 and is expected to be completed and endorsement sought from Reconciliation Australia by September 2014.

Roles and Responsibilities of Head and Professor, College for Australian Indigenous Studies

The University's central unit for Indigenous education matters is the College for Australian Indigenous Studies which sits within the Academic Division. The College was previously known as the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) which has a long history of supporting USQ's Indigenous strategies.

In late 2013, CAIK underwent a review process, with full consultation across all areas of the University. The outcomes of that review are now being finalised, with formation of CAIS* and all existing CAIK staff being transitioned to the new College. The new College for Australian Indigenous Studies having a four-pronged focus, which includes internal consultancy in all Indigenous matters; providing Indigenous courses and programs; engaging in relevant research; and managing Indigenous student engagement and encouragement. The staff of CAIS consists of a team of academic and professional staff working in and across each of these areas. (*This College title may change longer term.)

CAIS is led by an academic Head (Professor) who is an Indigenous person responsible for the management and leadership of CAIS in fulfilment of the University's strategic and operational objectives, especially in relation to facilitating appropriate educational opportunities, equitable access and suitable student support services for the University's Indigenous students. In particular, the Head is responsible for the quality and performance of the College in consultancy on Indigenous matters and curriculum development, teaching and learning, research, professional activities and community engagement, the viability and quality of academic offerings and associated student experience, and for planning and aligning CAIS resources and staffing with Academic Division and University strategic objectives.

The Head also focuses on ensuring that the College adheres to USQ policies and has consistent interfaces and processes with respect to Indigenous, academic and operational matters, and will pursue optimal collaboration and cooperation with the Faculties and other work areas of USQ. The Head of CAIS works collaboratively with the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, senior staff of the Academic Division, and other University academic and administrative units in achieving agreed outcomes consistent with the University's Vision, Mission and Values, strategic objectives and priorities.

2. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

USQ's commitment to increase the educational, employment, training and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is conveyed through the USQ Enterprise Agreement 2010-2013, the employment strategy and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy Steering Committee.

As an outcome of enterprise bargaining negotiations in 2005, the Vice-Chancellor announced the establishment of a Representative Steering Committee to oversee the development and implementation of an Indigenous Employment Strategy. The Committee includes representatives from University senior management, academic and professional employees, staff within CAIS, the NTEU and Human Resources. The original USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy was approved for implementation by USQ Council in November 2005.

The Employment Strategy was revised in 2011, and again in 2013, to incorporate the status of the 2006 strategies and [USQ's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2010 – 2013 principles](#), and include operational strategies for which the Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator would be responsible. The 2013 update also addressed some content inaccuracies. The revised [Strategy document](#) is located within the USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Policy and Procedure – both documents are publically available at <http://policy.usq.edu.au/documents.php?id=13342PL>.

The Policy document itself was revised in late 2013 to reflect USQ cultural protocols and update committee membership. The Strategy document is continually evolving as USQ continues to align the employment strategy to the *Guiding Principles for developing Indigenous Cultural Competencies in Australian Universities* (Best Practice Framework), the *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (Behrendt Report September 2012), the *National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy* and USQ's Strategic Plan.

USQ's '3-year HR Recruitment Strategy' was endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy Steering Committee in 2013 and approved initiatives are now included in the revised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy. This strategy provides an overview of the career and development initiatives that USQ is aiming to implement over 2013-2015 to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at USQ.

In March 2011, USQ's Human Resources appointed an Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator, a position which was established in the Staff Equity and Diversity section of Human Resources. In 2013 USQ's restructure saw the position retitled to Human Resource Officer (Indigenous Employment) within Human Resources.

During 2013, the Human Resource Officer (Indigenous Employment) continued to build public awareness of USQ's Employment strategies through networking, communication and collaborative strategies such as promoting USQ activities at various Indigenous employment events in Toowoomba and Brisbane, and attending local Indigenous community meetings.

Strategies for Increasing Numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff

Since the appointment of the Human Resource Officer (Indigenous Employment), USQ has actively progressed a range of strategies for increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians employed at USQ. These have included:

- Implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship program:
 - As a pilot program, five trainees were appointed in May 2012 for a 12 month fixed term appointment to enable them to obtain a formal qualification (Certificate 111). The pilot traineeship program was jointly funded by the then DEEDI (Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) and USQ.
 - The five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees appointed in 2012 graduated in 2013 with Certificate III qualifications.
 - In 2013, following the success of the 2012 pilot, USQ provided strategic funding for the appointment of another five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees. Four trainees were recruited and enrolled in a Certificate III training program in March 2013. During the 12 month program, one trainee resigned due to other opportunities with the remaining three completing their program and graduating in early 2014. Of these three trainees, two are still currently employed at USQ in fixed-term positions within Human Resources and Marketing and Student Attraction.
 - In 2013, USQ also assigned funding for the continuation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Program for a further three years from 2013 to 2015.
 - Late 2013 saw USQ advertise for the recruitment of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees for the 2014 program.

- In 2013, funding was approved to continue the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness program that was implemented in 2012. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness program is aimed at increasing USQ employee (academic and professional) awareness of history, culture, protocols and communication styles to develop individual and organisational culture awareness and inclusive practices. In 2013, two generic training sessions were provided at Toowoomba and Springfield campuses. One On-Country workshop in the Toowoomba region was facilitated for USQ employees.

- The review, development and implementation strategies to promote the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career development and employment strategies (eg HR website updated, promotional brochures and pamphlets developed, attendance at employment Expos, community meetings, USQ news articles and executive invites to launch events).

- Implementation of the USQ funded pilot Student Internship Program in 2013 with the recruitment of two undergraduate students on short term casual contracts. The Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health and Student Services – USQ Health Service successfully employed the student interns who gained valuable work experience.

- Implementation of the three year HR Recruitment Strategy for 2013 - 2015 that outlines the key operational strategies and indicative timing.

- In September 2013 a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working party was formed to develop a RAP for USQ. The Human Resource Officer (Indigenous Employment) was formally invited by the Vice-Chancellor to assist with the development of the Stretch RAP. The RAP working party team members met regularly and each member was allocated an area to review current initiatives and best practice ie employment, education, research.

Further Information is located on the [USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment website.](#)

Number of Indigenous-specific positions

There are currently 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions at USQ. Details are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific positions

Faculty/Division	Occupation	Level
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Head	Executive Package
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Associate Director	Academic Level C
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Lecturer (Indigenous Studies)	Academic Level B
Faculty of Health, Nursing and Midwifery	Lecturer (Indigenous Nursing)	Academic Level B
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Indigenous Research Fellow	Academic Level A
Students and Communities	Indigenous Marketing Officer	HEW 7
Students and Communities	Widening Participation (Indigenous Community Engagement) Officer	HEW 7
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Student Relationship Officer/s (3 positions)	HEW 5
Human Resources	Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator	HEW 5
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Student Relationship Officer (2 positions)	HEW 4
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	Indigenous Student Advocate	HEW 4
Academic Services	Administration Officer	HEW 4
Students and Communities	Administration Officer	HEW 4
Human Resources	Business/Business Administration Trainee/s (5 positions)	Trainee

Current Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within USQ currently is provided in the Tables below:

Table 2 – Continuing and Fixed term positions

Faculty/Division	Total Employees	Academic	Professional
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	10	3	7
Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts	3	2	1
Faculty of Health, Engineering and Sciences	2	2	
Academic Services Division	1		1
Human Resources	3		3
Students and Communities Division	8		8
Sustainable Business Management and Improvement	1		1
Totals:	28	7	21

Table 3 – Traineeships (full time fixed-term)

USQ currently employs five (5) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees, dispersed across the below campus locations. Three trainees are studying the Certificate III in Business, and two are studying the Certificate III in Business Administration.

Faculty/Division	Total Employees	Academic	Professional
Fraser Coast	2		2
Toowoomba	2		2
Stanthorpe	1		1
Totals:	5		5

Table 4 – Casual positions

Faculty/Division	Total Employees	Academic	Professional
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	1	1	
Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts	1	1	
Fraser Coast Campus	3	3	
Academic Services	1		1
Corporate Projects	5		5
Students and Communities Division	2		2
Totals:	13	5	8

3. Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher education.

Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*

	2012	2013
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	228	218
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	8752	9024

Programs to improve access and Outreach activities

Program Name	Target Audience	Outline of Program	Outcome
Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who did not matriculate and mature age people who have been absent from the education system for many years	IHEPP is a 12 month mixed mode delivery "foundation" program with three compulsory Residential Schools each semester. Supplementary DIISRTE Away From Base funding provides for expenses associated with students' attendance and participation at the on-campus Residential Schools. The Program is administered and delivered by CAIK. Students engage in academic writing skills, maths, and study skills courses at pre-enrolment enabling level. Successful completion of four IHEPP courses normally permits the student to enrol in an undergraduate program of choice at USQ (enrolment in Engineering and some Sciences programs require additional assessments to be completed).	CAIS enrolls approximately 30-40 students each semester in the Program. For a variety of reasons associated with student choice, the completion rate is historically low. Conversely, there is a high progression rate into undergraduate study for those students who successfully complete the Program.
Open Access College's Tertiary Preparation Program	Young people and adults who require a bridging pathway into higher study	USQ's Open Access College offers a fully by-distance Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP). This is undertaken by some Indigenous students who are unable to attend the on-campus component of IHEPP. TPP also conducts a significant offenders-in-custody program that enables access to study by Indigenous offenders in custody.	Alternative bridging pathway based exclusively on distance study.

Program Name	Target Audience	Outline of Program	Outcome
USQ Indigenous Connections	Young Indigenous people in rural and remote communities in southern Queensland	The Indigenous Connections Project, developed by USQ, is aimed at assisting young Indigenous people in rural and remote communities in southern Queensland to have greater knowledge and understanding of opportunities available to them at universities. The Project also aims to encourage, support and motivate young Indigenous people to take up and sustain tertiary study. The project is targeted at Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working to improve education outcomes for Indigenous young people in regional communities in southern Queensland	Greater awareness and knowledge of opportunities available in higher study and careers.
Deadly Motivators	Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are working to improve education outcomes for young Indigenous people in regional, rural and remote communities in southern Queensland including Cunnamulla, Charleville, Roma, St George and Goondiwindi.	This program is conducted as part of the Indigenous Connections events and is targeted at Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are working to improve education outcomes for young Indigenous people in regional, rural and remote communities in southern Queensland. The program provides school staff with information relevant to working with Indigenous students, their families and communities to enable them to increase their ability to motivate and encourage Indigenous young people to take up and maintain university study.	Empowered champions for promoting Indigenous aspirations in education.
Campus Student Experience Days (USQ Fraser Coast)	Year 10 Indigenous students from the Fraser Coast region.	The Fraser Coast campus conducts an Indigenous Student Experience Day that aims to give Year 10 Indigenous students from the local region a positive and fulfilling university experience that raises their aspirations to complete their high school education and consider further and higher education thereafter.	School students engage with current USQ students, experience a tutorial and lecture, and receive information on careers and University services.

Program Name	Target Audience	Outline of Program	Outcome
Indigenous Marketing Officer	Indigenous students in schools in USQ's catchments	<p>USQ conducts an extensive schools outreach program through Marketing and Student Attraction in the Students and Communities and Communities Division. The section has a dedicated Indigenous Marketing Officer position to conduct specific programs targeting Indigenous school students in our catchment regions.</p> <p>CAIS, together with the Indigenous Marketing Officer, has developed a range of outreach initiatives and activities aimed at three target groups: years 9-12 school age Indigenous students; school leavers and mature age Indigenous men and women. These include: Uni-Tasters; School visits; Marketing Events; Careers Days and Expos. These activities are supported by specifically developed materials.</p>	Continued close cooperation with the local communities in pursuing improved educational outcomes.
Identified Indigenous Schools program	Pre-service teaching students	The USQ School of Teacher Education and Early Childhood collaborates with the Senior Recruitment Officer (Education Queensland) for Identified Indigenous Schools to secure placements in the Torres Strait, North Queensland and Indigenous communities.	Placement of pre-service teaching students in remote Indigenous communities.
Community Engagement	Local communities.	CAIS has a continuing commitment to and involvement in, the Indigenous communities of the region.	Continued close cooperation with the local communities in pursuing improved educational outcomes.

Scholarships details

Scholarship Details	Government / Private / University	Number Allocated	Cost	Number Awarded	Comments
Arrow Energy Indigenous Prize in Education (Yrs 9 & 10)	Private	2013 - 4	\$500 each	2013 - 2	New for 2013
Arrow Energy Indigenous Prize in Engineering (Yrs 9 & 10)	Private	2013 - 8	\$500 each	2013 - 3	New for 2013
Arrow Energy Indigenous Bursary in Engineering (Yrs 11 & 12)	Private	2013 - 4	\$1,000 each	2013 - 3	New for 2013
Arrow Energy Indigenous Bursary in Education (Yrs 11 & 12)	Private	2013 - 2	\$1,000 each	2013 - 2	New for 2013
Arrow Energy Indigenous Scholarship in Engineering*	Private	2013 - 2	\$20,000 each	2013 - 2	New for 2013
Arrow Energy Indigenous Scholarship in Education*	Private	2013 - 1	\$20,000 each	2013 - 1	New for 2013
Bursary for Indigenous Psychology Students	USQ funded	2013 - 1	\$750 each	2013 - 1	
USQ Indigenous Student Scholarship	USQ funded	2013 - 3	\$6,000 each	2013 - 3	
Indigenous Access Scholarship	Commonwealth	2013 - 40	2013 - \$4659 each (\$181,701 allocated)	2013 - 39	
Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship	Commonwealth	2013 - 26	2013 - \$1,234.50/semester (\$35,800.50 spent in 2013)	2013 - 18 new students, 29 individual payments	
Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship	Commonwealth	2013 - 8	2013 - \$2,469.50/semester (\$24,695 spent in 2013)	2013 - 5 new students, 10 individual payments	
Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship	Commonwealth	2013 - 39	2013 - \$1234.50/semester (\$39,504 spent in 2013)	2013 - 27 new students, 32 individual payments	
Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship	Commonwealth	2013 - 3	2013 - Nil	2013 - Nil	No eligible students enrolled in 2013

*NOTE: attached to the USQ Scholarships was employment of an Indigenous Mentor (\$20,000 value) to assist recipients of the scholarships through university.

** NOTE: \$76,000 of the Arrow Energy Partnership was allocated to support of 25 students per year in 2013 and 2014 to attend DARE program. All up, the USQ/Arrow Energy Partnership contributed towards \$180,000 of support towards our Indigenous students over the years 2013 and 2014.

The following activities are undertaken to promote Scholarships at USQ to both current and prospective students:

- Scholarship campaign button – this is placed on the USQ Home page approximately 4 weeks prior to each closing date;
- Announcements are made on UConnect – USQ's student login screen, approximately 6 weeks prior to the closing dates;
- Direct emails to students. The first email is a general email to students 4 weeks prior to closing date. The second email is directed to those students in targeted students for specific scholarship categories;
- Promotion through each Faculty;
- Promotion through USQ Residential Colleges;
- Posters are pinned up around the campuses.

4. Achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of all other Australians.

The Total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Enrolments

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Enrolments for for 2012 and 2013 is as follows:

	2012	2013
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	471	483
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	20,934	21,660

Strategies to Address Participation

Strategy Name	Outline of Strategy	Constraints	Outcome
College for Australian Indigenous Studies	CAIS is dedicated to encouraging and assisting the further education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and CAIS provides programs that are designed to promote Indigenous culture, and assist community members to achieve higher levels of education. CAIS has a continuing commitment to, and involvement in, the Indigenous community of the region. This is achieved by the College's participation in community-based events, such as NAIDOC Week CAIS also aims to involve community members, especially community Elders, when the College and USQ are hosting significant events such as student graduations. The College maintains an active role through participation in community-based initiatives wherever possible.	Staff from CAIS are involved in the strategies detailed below. However, in the past there has been some constraints on this participation owing to the University's organisational structures. With the restructure in 2013 of the Academic Division, in which CAIS is located, and the review of CAIS in late 2013 and 2014, the involvement of CAIS staff in the strategies used by the University to address participation has increased significantly.	Communication between CAIS and other areas of the Academic Division and the University has shown significant improvement, and this will help in the development of further strategies to address participation.

Strategy Name	Outline of Strategy	Constraints	Outcome
Helping Hands	<p>Helping Hands is an intense, Indigenised student support model which aims to orientate, retain and graduate Indigenous students. This model has been developed by Indigenous academics for Indigenous university students, to provide them with the necessary cultural and academic support, in order for them to be successful in navigating the university environment.</p>	<p>One key constraint of Helping Hands is that it is currently limited to only those Indigenous students studying Nursing. To address this, a project is currently underway within the University's Academic Division to roll-out the Helping Hands program across all discipline areas which have an Indigenous cohort within both faculties of the University.</p>	<p>Since it was implemented in 2007, Helping Hands has contributed to a large growth in enrolments and graduations, with the annual graduation rate over the period 2007-2011 being nearly six times that for the previous 17 years.</p>
The Indigenous Curriculum Content (ICC) project	<p>The purpose of the Indigenous Curriculum Content Project is to work with staff across the university to facilitate the embedding of Indigenous content and perspectives across the USQ curricula. This project is part of the University's broader initiative to enhance the Indigenous Cultural Competency of staff and graduates. The major goals of the project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and enhance embedding of Indigenous perspectives into curricula. • Provide strategic and systematic professional development that advocates for Indigenous perspectives and supports academic staff as they embed such perspectives in their programs, courses and learning activities 	<p>The resources allocated to the process have been limited to a single staff member to date. However, USQ will soon be launching a Reconciliation Action Plan that will help to extend the reach of the process by providing additional support frameworks and endorsement for staff involvement and the extension of financial resourcing.</p>	<p>The project has made significant progress on its overall aims in 2013. To date, staff in one new program (Urban and Regional Planning) and in two broader, school based program review processes (Creative Arts and Education) have engaged with reviewing program structure and content and significantly increasing the use of Indigenous content and perspectives in selected courses. The Schools of Teacher Education and Early Childhood and Linguistics, Adult and Special Education are taking this a step further, to consider how they could use Indigenous pedagogical approaches in program structures, more broadly. Several specific Professional Development events have also occurred. Academic and professional staff have been involved in culture/history immersion events via 'On Country' trips in the Toowoomba region, with a view to enhancing general staff Indigenous cultural competency. Additionally, workshops in Indigenous pedagogy were held to provide support for staff in the learning and teaching domain.</p>

Strategy Name	Outline of Strategy	Constraints	Outcome
Indigenous Research Strategy	The DVC (Research & Innovation) has led a process to develop USQ's first formally articulated Indigenous Research Strategy as a basis for providing greater clarity around the strategies in place to support both Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers at the University.	At the time of writing, an advanced draft of the Strategy has been circulated to stakeholders for consultation, and feedback is in the process of being collated with a view to finalising the document for approval.	This first iteration of the USQ Indigenous Research Strategy will be in place until the end of 2015, at which time it will be refreshed in order to align its planning period with the University's next three year strategic planning cycle from 2016-19.
Personalised learning strategies at USQ	USQ's Indigenous students also benefit from mainstream strategies including USQ's extensive support network of Student Relationship Officers (SROs); the encouragement of Interaction with teaching staff and students enrolled in the same course; as well as access to discussion boards within the Student Learning Management System (USQ StudyDesk), USQ's Student Personalised Academic Road to Success (SPARS), and USQ's full range of personalised learning strategies.		

5. Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians.

Total Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Completions – Bachelor Level and above

	2012	2013
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree)	8	8
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree)	552	578
Total Domestic students: (Higher Degree)	560	586
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Other postgraduate)	11	8
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Other postgraduate)	541	612
Total Domestic students: (Other postgraduate)	552	620
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Bachelor degree)	32	20
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Bachelor degree)	1,435	1,437
Total Domestic students: (Bachelor degree)	1,467	1457

Support Mechanisms

Support Mechanisms	Description	Constraints	Outcome
CAIK Indigenous Student Support Fund	Allocation of funds for emergency purposes (funeral travel, rent assistance, food) and financial hardship.		Over \$15,000 allocated from CAIK's Operating Budget
Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme	A DIISRTE program providing supplementary funding to the IEU for tutorial assistance to enrolled undergraduate students	Low take up rate. Cannot be used for enabling level programs	
Helping Hands	As noted in the previous section, this program provides a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to supporting the Indigenous students in Nursing.	Currently limited to Nursing students, but a project is underway to roll-out across all disciplines where Indigenous students are enrolled.	As noted previously, outcomes of this program are exceptionally positive.

Role of Indigenous Education/Support Unit

The College for Australian Indigenous Studies sits within the Academic Division. The College was previously known as the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) which has a long history of supporting USQ's Indigenous strategies. The mission and focus of CAIS are still being finalised, but will centre around:

Consultancy

CAIS will serve as USQ's internal consultant for Indigenous matters. This will entail a strong commitment from USQ that CAIS would be an essential part of all Indigenous-relevant matters.

Education and Curriculum

This area of focus will ensure USQ offers courses and programs with an Indigenous focus that meet applicable demands. Education curriculum and program teaching would be central to this, involving a key role in ensuring that USQ programs contain appropriate and relevant Indigenous content and are inclusive of the experiences of Indigenous Australians.

Research Engagement

This will involve:

- engagement in contemporary research relevant to Indigenous matters and issues;
- building the research profile of the unit;
- the provision of opportunities for productive research partnerships and research into issues of importance to Indigenous peoples and communities;
- fostering the creation of a positive and supportive research culture for postgraduate and higher degree students; and
- increasing the research skills and capabilities of Indigenous researchers.

Student Engagement and Encouragement

Activities in this area will focus around the development, implementation and management of an Indigenous Student Engagement and Encouragement (ISEE) network. It is proposed that this network will consist of the current CAIS professional staff based on all three campuses as well as online, and provide a consistent USQ-wide approach to the current diversity of Indigenous student support and outreach and engagement roles. Prime responsibilities of the ISEE network will be to administer the ITAS, IHEPPP and any other such schemes, and to engage with the mainstream operational support, academic program support, student support and outreach and engagement activities of USQ to ensure appropriate cultural awareness across all staff members and to provide specialist assistance needed for specific Indigenous reasons.

6. To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures.

Indigenous Perspectives in the Curriculum

CAIS currently offers five undergraduate courses – Indigenous Cultural Studies; Indigenous Cultural Identity; Indigenous Knowledge and Australian Heritage; On Country Learning: Indigenous Knowledge through Butchulla Culture; and Indigenous Australian Cultures and Communities - that can be taken as electives by students in both Faculties. CAIS also delivers EDC2200 Indigenous Perspectives (<http://www.usq.edu.au/course/synopses/2014/EDC2200.html>); a core course for all pre-service teaching students.

USQ's School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery has had an Indigenous nursing academic lecturing position within the nursing program on a continuing basis for over a decade. In addition to lecturing, this position encompasses a support role to provide academic and cultural support for Indigenous nursing students enrolled in the nursing programs. The lecturing component of this position is to teach an Indigenous Health & Cross Cultural Care Course for all undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program at USQ.

The School of Teacher Education and Early Childhood collaborates with the Senior Recruitment Officer (Education Queensland) to support pre-service teachers to secure placements at Identified Indigenous Schools in the Torres Strait, North Queensland and Indigenous communities. These opportunities require a commitment for seeking employment in Indigenous communities as this placement process involves expensive airfares and the availability of accommodation.

Addressing Cultural Competency

As part of the development of the USQ Reconciliation Plan, the University has pursued the development of a formal set of Indigenous Cultural Protocols based on accepted and agreed practice. The Protocols aim to ensure that USQ acts appropriately in relation to acknowledging and respecting the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians of this land. Again, this development has involved a wide consultation process and at the time of writing is in an advanced draft stage.

Once finalised and approved, the Indigenous Cultural Protocols will be made widely available online and via a hard copy booklet, will be embedded into USQ policy and procedures and so subject to regular review and refreshment, and will constitute the first element of the broader development of a USQ cultural competency framework that is aligned with Universities Australia's Indigenous Cultural Competency Framework.

Involvement with Indigenous Community

The School of Arts and Communication supports CAIK in the conduct of an Indigenous Art Exhibition every two years to promote Indigenous cultures and support Indigenous youth taking pride in their rich cultural heritage. Programs are held at USQ Toowoomba every two years.

Building on the precedent set by the long established Olga Miller Memorial Garden at USQ Fraser Coast, the establishment of the Gumbi Gumbi Cultural Gardens in 2013 at USQ Toowoomba has boosted USQ's capacity to effectively engage with local Indigenous communities. The Gumbi Gumbi Cultural Gardens were designed in close partnership with respected Historical Elders from Toowoomba and Elders of the Jarowair People, Traditional Owners of the land on which the USQ Toowoomba campus resides.

The Gardens cover approximately 2.2 hectares of land adjacent to the main entrance at USQ Toowoomba. They include a number of small and large teaching and gathering spaces infused into the overall character of the development. The Gardens highlight local culture through more than 100 plantings of species used traditionally for food and medicinal purposes, as well as a yarning circle, fire pit, grinding stones, an astro-archaeological area

and featured artwork by local artists. A free app is available for download that offers a guided tour of the Gardens.

The Olga Miller Memorial Gardens, the Gumbi Gumbi Cultural Gardens and other related developments – including the introduction of Indigenous elements into the landscaping at USQ Springfield campus currently underway - form one part of the University's commitment to developing a better understanding of local Indigenous heritage, and acknowledging the culture and contribution they have and continue to make to these lands.

College for Australian Indigenous Studies

The staff of CAIS consists of a team of academic and professional staff who are actively involved in all of the projects listed above. Academic staff from CAIS are involved in teaching five Indigenous studies courses which are offered to students from both of the University's faculties. CAIS staff have also had significant involvement in the development of USQ's Indigenous Cultural Protocols, and will have ongoing input into the take-up of these across the University. There are strong and deep links between CAIS and the local Indigenous communities at USQ Toowoomba, Fraser Coast and Springfield, which promotes and supports respect and understanding of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

