

**WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY**



INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

2020-2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Western Sydney University
acknowledges the peoples of
the Darug, Tharawal, Eora
and Wiradjuri nations.

We acknowledge that the
teaching, learning and
research undertaken across
our campuses continues
the teaching, learning and
research that has occurred
on these lands for tens of
thousands of years.

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COVER IMAGE
CHRIS EDWARDS
SWIMMY CREEK
MIXED MEDIA ON LATVIAN LINEN
100 CM X 145 CM
2010
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION
IMAGE REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF ARTIST

INTRODUCTION

To be a university that serves and empowers our community as an anchor institution to the region while being recognised as a national leader in Indigenous education, employment and research

Western Sydney University's Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025 establishes how Western will position itself as a national leader in Indigenous higher education.

The University has always been located on Aboriginal land. We value and nurture our relationships with the Indigenous community as an anchor institution that serves Western Sydney. This commitment and pride underpins our core values and beliefs.

The Indigenous Strategy focuses on strategic objectives in seven areas of Indigenous engagement: students; employment; research; learning and teaching; community engagement; leadership; and cultural viability and knowledge. Western is deeply committed to the objectives set out within this strategic document. The University will ensure these objectives are everyone's responsibility, and that staff, students and community will see significant positive outcomes that change their experience of Western.

It is an exciting time to be part of a community that is home to the largest Indigenous population in the country. We will come together to celebrate Indigenous people, to pay tribute to the deep learning that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years, to position Indigenous knowledge as an integral part of our business and, ultimately, to work towards a sustainable future that nurtures emerging generations.



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STRATEGY AND CONSULTATION

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Provide opportunities for Indigenous Australian students to learn and succeed in an environment that promotes Indigenous excellence.

Western is the university of choice for almost 750 Indigenous students. This is a significant contribution to Indigenous education and is comparable to our neighbouring institutions. However, it is well below the rate at which non-Indigenous students access higher education in the region.

In order to attract, retain and graduate more Indigenous students, we need to create a suite of unique resources that empower the Indigenous community to seek a tertiary education in greater numbers and better support that community through their education.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Develop a set of strategies to ensure that the proportion of enrolled domestic Indigenous students reflects population parity.
- 02** Develop a set of strategies to ensure that domestic Indigenous students have the same retention outcomes as non-Indigenous students.
- 03** Ensure all Indigenous students have knowledge about the academic, cultural and pastoral support available to them.
- 04** Ensure there is a clear pathway for Indigenous students to progress through the University at undergraduate and postgraduate study.
- 05** Establish an Indigenous Student Network.
- 06** Encourage Indigenous students to undertake international experiences.
- 07** Build a comprehensive cadetship and internship program with opportunities internal and external to the University.
- 08** Establish an Indigenous Australian pathway program in conjunction with The College.
- 09** Develop a unique program to support and promote high achieving Indigenous students in conjunction with The Academy.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 3% of all enrolled domestic students are Indigenous by 2025**
- 3% of all completing students are Indigenous by 2025**
- Indigenous students engage with outbound opportunities at the same rate as non-Indigenous domestic students. Increase in the number of Indigenous students undertaking cadetships and internships**
- Establishment of new programs for Indigenous students in collaboration with The College and The Academy**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Position Western Sydney University as a place of choice for Indigenous Australians to work in an environment that supports and nurtures their careers.

Indigenous Australians account for 1.3% of all Western staff. Indigenous staff members bring community connections and cultural insights that expand the mission of the University and help it better reflect its community. More strongly representing Indigenous researchers at the University enriches our contribution to the national conversation regarding Indigenous recognition and the respectful dissemination of Indigenous knowledge.

There is a significant opportunity to establish a suite of new positions across the University to increase the number of Indigenous staff.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Develop a set of strategies to ensure that the number of Indigenous staff reflects population parity.
- 02** Encourage all Schools to have at least one professoriate-level Indigenous position.
- 03** Ensure professional development opportunities, mentorship and support for Indigenous staff.
- 04** Establish a suite of Early Career positions across the University with clear, supported and reliable longer-term career pathways.
- 05** Develop a successful Indigenous traineeship program for employment within the University.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Employment population parity of 3% by 2025

Up to 20 new positions created across the University for Indigenous academics

Professional development opportunities created for Indigenous staff

At least five traineeship positions created for professional staff

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Develop the breadth and depth of Indigenous Research with a vision to promote research that empowers Indigenous Australians.

There is significant opportunity to grow our research profile at Western. Over the last five years the University has established a network of researchers working in Indigenous matters and increased collaboration between them through annual symposia. Establishing a robust research development program for our Higher Degree Research students and staff will assist us in capitalising on this work and position us as national leaders.

The University has a strategic commitment to “partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in research that is inclusive and reflects their priorities”. Our Indigenous research, undertaken by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, should be co-created with the communities it will impact, and should focus on work that will empower those communities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Establish a Director of Indigenous Research position.
- 02** Establish an Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme.
- 03** Provide competitive scholarships to attract more Indigenous Higher Degree Research students and retain them through better supervisor training.
- 04** Establish an Indigenous Research Award in the University Research Awards.
- 05** Develop an Indigenous Research Network with support for events to promote and enhance research.
- 06** Develop a research mentorship program for Indigenous Early Career Researchers.
- 07** Embed strategic initiatives to support the development of external research funding.
- 08** Establish a First Nations Indigenous Research Exchange Program for Higher Degree Research students and staff.
- 09** Investigate the viability of new professional doctoral courses that have an Indigenous focus.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Director of Indigenous Research appointed

Appointment of two Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellows

Increased number of Indigenous HDR students

Competitive scholarships for Indigenous Higher Degree Research students established

Program of Indigenous research fora and symposia established

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Ensure all students develop understanding and knowledge about Indigenous Australians through the Graduate Attribute.

Western is deeply committed to developing staff and student knowledge about Indigenous Australians. The University has developed an Indigenous Graduate Attribute and there is an opportunity to expand the roll-out, monitoring and reporting of this important body of work.

We will ensure that all our academic staff have opportunities to enhance their Indigenous knowledge and to respectfully incorporate this into their research and teaching. We will be recognised for innovative leadership within staff and student training.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Establish diverse learning spaces that support Indigenous ways of learning and are accessible to a diverse range of stakeholders, including community.
- 02** Introduce an Indigenous Learning and Teaching Award in the University Learning and Teaching Awards.
- 03** Appoint a Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching at professoriate level.
- 04** Establish positions to assist the Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching in the implementation of the Indigenous Graduate Attribute.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Outdoor learning spaces and yarning circles created across Western's campuses

All students have the opportunity to engage with, and learn from, Indigenous Knowledges

All Academics have the opportunity to develop their understanding of Indigenous Knowledges and apply it to their teaching practise

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FIVE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Promote Western Sydney University as a place that works with and for the Indigenous Australian community.

Western prides itself on its strong links with the Indigenous community. Our Elders on Campus provide frank advice on the direction of the University's Indigenous activities; our research impacts Indigenous communities across Australia; and our Indigenous graduates contribute enormously to their communities.

We must further develop the relationship with our 750 Indigenous Alumni, encouraging them to have lifelong relationships with the University. Western will review our extensive procurement policy to partner with Indigenous businesses into the future. We will be recognised as an institution that supports Indigenous enterprises with a vision for a sustainable future.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Develop a comprehensive Indigenous Procurement Policy to support Indigenous business.
- 02** Establish an Indigenous Alumni Network.
- 03** Establish an Indigenous Graduate Walkway to acknowledge Indigenous alumni.
- 04** Establish new communication channels to provide regular information to Indigenous staff, students, alumni and community members.
- 05** Establish an Annual Gala Dinner to celebrate Indigenous students and staff, and non-Indigenous staff, who are making positive contributions to Indigenous education.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Increased procurement of goods and services from Indigenous businesses

Active engagement with Indigenous Alumni

Indigenous community engagement activities expanded and normalised as business as usual

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SIX

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Provide leadership opportunities for Indigenous Australians across staff, students and community throughout Western Sydney University.

In order to grow Western's current and future leaders it is imperative that we develop a suite of opportunities to advance the careers of Indigenous Australians. The University should be an exemplar of leadership development for Indigenous people, providing career planning, mentoring, and articulated pathways to leadership roles.

Indigenous staff must have a voice in the governance of the University to help guide the institution to meet its own aspirations. As a University for the region, our Indigenous community should see their views represented in the decisions and activities undertaken by the institution.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Establish an advisory committee to coordinate Indigenous strategic initiatives across the University.
- 02** Establish Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) positions to provide direction and guidance to each Cluster.
- 03** Ensure that there is Indigenous representation in all senior committees at the University.
- 04** Establish an Indigenous academic staff group with opportunities for regular networking.
- 05** Establish an Indigenous professional staff group with opportunities for regular networking.
- 06** Provide leadership opportunities for Indigenous academic and professional staff across the University.

- 07** Provide opportunities for Indigenous students to undertake leadership roles within the University.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Increased representation of Indigenous staff on senior University committees

Increased student participation in leadership activities and roles

Indigenous staff networks across professional and academic roles report high levels of engagement

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SEVEN

CULTURAL VIABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE

Build Indigenous cultural viability and knowledge across Western Sydney University.

Western's campuses span a number of Indigenous nations and contain a multitude of Indigenous experiences. But there is minimal representation of Indigenous country or history on campus. For Indigenous staff and students to feel they belong at Western, and to demonstrate that belonging to non-Indigenous students and staff, it is crucial that we acknowledge Indigenous history on our campuses.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Establish a landmark building that celebrates Indigenous people, history, culture and knowledge.
- 02** Incorporate Indigenous language throughout all campuses.
- 03** Incorporate visual Acknowledgement of Country identifiers on each campus through signage and art.
- 04** Create an 'Introduction to Indigenous Western Sydney' online module for all staff and students to build knowledge and cultural competency.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

New building established for Indigenous Education purposes

Indigenous country and language is represented on all Western's campuses

At least a quarter of existing staff and students, and all new staff, undertake an 'Introduction to Indigenous Western Sydney' online module by 2025.

Contact information

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