

Indigenous Student Success Program 2022 Performance Report

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1. Enrolments (Access)

Western Sydney University experienced increases in enrolments for Indigenous students demonstrating that the marketing, engagement, and planning in this area continued to gain traction and resonate with potential students. The twelve Schools across the university were encouraged to create an Indigenous Strategy to guide their School's Indigenous work – all strategies can be located by accessing the following link [Indigenous Engagement and Education \(westernsydney.edu.au\)](#). Schools assigned staff to connect with Indigenous students as well as participating in Primary and High Schools through the Heartbeat and Pathway to Dreaming programs. This facilitates a connection with Indigenous students from Primary School through to university enrolment, strengthening the enrolment channel.

Both the Heartbeat program and Pathways to Dreaming program are embedded at Western Sydney University and are core programs in our Future Student Engagement portfolio. The outcomes of each program are outlined below along with changes made to ensure program delivery was maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Details of the programs can be found [here](#).

The **Heartbeat program** is targeted to years 3-6 and consists of an on-campus visit, an in-school presentation, and an online webinar each year. Heartbeat raises students' awareness of their wellbeing, Indigenous health matters and inspires them to consider careers in medicine and health science-related fields. Indigenous culture is also embedded in the program and delivered by Indigenous staff, current students and a range of community and industry partners. To reach students learning remotely in 2021, Heartbeat delivered a mix of face-to-face and online sessions. In 2022, Heartbeat returned to face-to-face program delivery with activities taking place in Primary Schools and on Western Sydney University campuses. Parent information sessions were delivered online via Zoom webinar. The team delivered 32 in-school workshop sessions with 12 schools and 456 participants (430 students and 26 teaching staff). The team also delivered 5 on-campus event days for 523 primary school students and 76 teaching staff from 26 Western Sydney schools.

The **Pathways to Dreaming** program offers Indigenous Secondary students in Western Sydney access to, and increased awareness of, higher education and career opportunities throughout their high school journey, including skills-building workshops and cultural activities. Students are also supported through the transition to higher education or the workforce after high school completion. Students who successfully transition into higher education at Western Sydney University (including The College) are offered continued and ongoing support where required. In 2021, the program activities delivered were: 19 online Yarning sessions with 23 high schools and 489 participants; 7 campus experience days; 22 high schools with 414 participants. This program also transitioned back to more face-to-face delivery platforms in 2022 with 9 Yarning Sessions, 10 campus experience days across 4 campuses, 420 participants from 35 partnering High Schools, plus 365 in-school mentoring sessions with 1526 participants from 32 partner high schools.

The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathways Program** is a 2-day event held three times per year where applicants are assessed in Academic Literacy and Numeracy as well as suitability in their chosen course. The program is available to current school leavers and mature age applicants and is now via online delivery through Open Learning. Offers for this program have gradually decreased and we believe this is due to a 56% increase in the number of Indigenous Australian applicants who received an early offer through the True Rewards program in 2022. Further details about the Pathways Program can be found [here](#).

In collaboration with key external partners, the Future Students team strive to deliver community and partnership events, including:

- In partnership with the Association of Independent Schools staff, the Future Student Engagement team delivered a series of student workshops aligned to the theme **Voice, Self-Determination and Leadership: Building aspirations for my future** in the 2022 Waratah Project Indigenous Leadership conference, for 130 Indigenous High School students from Years 8 – 10 from Independent schools across NSW.
- The NRL School to Work event provided an on-campus experience day for 35 Year 11 Indigenous young people from both regional and rural areas within NSW. The event aligned to the theme **Education and Employment**, providing attendees with information on Higher Education pathways, scholarships, and employment opportunities.
- All outreach programs are sponsored by HEPP funding, and all WSU Schools participate in these initiatives.

Western Sydney University Schools

Western Sydney University has twelve Schools that deliver dynamic research and learning/teaching programs. Each School provides valuable contributions to the Pathways to Dreaming sessions, Heartbeat and Pathways Program, with a view of inspiring school students into a variety of courses with career trajectories relevant to interests and support students. Some examples of commitments in School's Indigenous Strategies for 2022 include:

- Employing Indigenous staff to support and connect with students.
- Establish Indigenous Student Networks within the Schools to provide support, mentorship and connection.
- Establishment of new scholarships and internships to financially support Indigenous students.
- The School of Law continues their free textbook scheme to all Indigenous students across all teaching periods. Individualised academic support is provided to students who are facing challenges that impact their studies. Individualised non-academic support is provided to students to help them gain employment in the legal profession. Assistance with appropriate business attire, resume writing, and interview skills is also provided.

The combination of financial support in scholarships and textbooks, skill-ready internship possibilities, and professional and personal support structures, strengthens the reputation of Western Sydney University as a university that provides excellent education and support to Indigenous students in a culturally appropriate environment. The University also has a [Year 12 Student Info Hub](#) to assist Year 12 students to make contact and obtain information in a user friendly platform as needed.

Table 1: Course Load (EFTSL): Domestic vs Indigenous Students, 2018-2022

Course Type	Commencing Status	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Indigenous	Domestic	Indigenous	Domestic	Indigenous	Domestic	Indigenous	Domestic	Indigenous	Domestic
Postgraduate	Commencing	21.9	1342.71	18.6	1299.4	20.1	1313.0	27.5	1166.4	21.0	1106
	Continuing	18.0	1627.9	26.4	1715.4	22.4	1656.3	25.0	1718.9	32.0	1755
	Total	40.0	2,970.7	45.0	3014.8	42.6	2969.3	52.5	2885.4	54.0	2861
Undergraduate	Commencing	183.0	10378.6	174.7	9620.1	179.5	9523.6	197.9	8470.3	199	8427
	Continuing	292.2	16,109.4	295.6	16954.7	297.9	17516.9	293.9	17370.3	307	16070
	Total	475.2	26488.0	470.3	26574.8	477.4	27040.5	491.7	25840.6	506	24497
Non-Award Course	Commencing	0.5	117.6		118.1	0.9	101.8	0.0	61.6	1	76
	Continuing		23.5		31.5		26.9	0	20.6		11
	Total	0.5	141.1		149.6	0.9	128.6	0.0	82.3	1	89
Enabling	Commencing	10.0	533.9	6.5	512.9	3.4	242.0	5.2	220.8	6	201
	Continuing		42.5	0.1	27.1	0.3	15.2	0.1	17.9		3
	Total	10.0	576.4	6.6	540.0	3.7	257.2	5.3	238.7	6	204
Cross-Institutional	Commencing	0.3	5.1		4.8	0.1	4.3	0.3	3.9		2
	Continuing		1.0		0.3		0.8	0	0.3		1
	Total	0.3	6.1		5.0	0.1	5.0	0.3	4.1		3
Grand Total		526.0	30182.3	521.9	30284.2	524.7	30,400.6	549.8	29051.0	566	27,654

Table 2: ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2022 payments

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ^[1]	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ^[1]								
Undergraduate ^[1]	\$151,000	62	\$90,000	18	\$14,000	2	\$255,000	82
Post-graduate ^[1]	\$336,246	14			\$14,000	2	\$350,246	16
Other								
Total	\$487,246	76	\$90,000	18	\$28,000	4	\$605,246	98

Not including any Donor-funded scholarships.

2. Progression (Outcomes)

The Schools made a concerted effort to provide individualised and in some instances culturally reflexive support to students to increase progression rates of Indigenous students in 2022. With the uncertainty of extended COVID-19 lockdowns and isolation requirements, changes in industry workforce size and environments, and people relocating at higher rates, some students deferred their academic studies to adjust to the challenges of the pandemic. The influx of short vocational courses such as undergraduate certificates did not appear to significantly appeal to Indigenous students, however, non-Indigenous students' rates were strong. This, coupled with additional responsibilities to care for family, community members and Elders, placed additional pressures on the Indigenous student cohort.

Western Sydney University is deeply committed to providing our students with the best chance to succeed in their choice of academic program. Our retention strategies incorporate a broad range of areas across the University.

Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education

In 2022, Badanami continued using our hybrid-style support model consisting of both face-to-face and online/remote interactions. A key focus area in 2022 was to provide Indigenous students a more tailored and personalised support service. Through this approach, Badanami was able to provide Western's Indigenous students just under 7,500 individualised and personalised interactions throughout the year. These interactions included over 860 in person interactions, 4450 personalised emails, 1700 phone calls and 650 text messages. Personalised and individual interactions have allowed Badanami to build better relationships with our students and allows a more comprehensive and holistic approach to support our students. Attached to this support model is a reporting matrix that allows staff to monitor trends, challenges and activation levels of the different Badanami centres across Western's campuses. 2022 also saw the return of on campus events with an objective to increase student engagement. In addition to attending events such as Indigenous student versus Western staff soccer match, Welcome Back to Campus events and Reconciliation Week events, Badanami organised and hosted a number of NAIDOC Week and cultural workshops including basket weaving and an Indigenous film night.

SUPPORT FROM THE SCHOOLS

All Schools continue to support Indigenous students with all School's implementing a School Indigenous Strategy, all of which align with the University's *Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025*. Each School Strategy begins with a firm commitment to Indigenous students noting target enrolment/completion rates and appropriate strategies to support these targets. The School's Strategies can be found [here](#).

Some specific examples include:

- Increased numbers of Indigenous academics to educate and deliver on renewed Indigenous content and enhance Indigenous Graduate Attribute.
- Presentations and events specific to Indigenous content by Indigenous staff and externals.
- Opportunities in, and dissemination of, research with and by Indigenous People.
- In partnership with community, students have had the ability to participate in placements, events and activities to obtain experience and exposure.
- Schools have an active Indigenous Committee to address Indigenous concerns at a localised level and in conjunction with students.
- Opportunities for interacting and learning from Indigenous role models.
- Morning ‘Yarning Sessions’ to check in and motivate each other.
- Ongoing renewal of curriculum through inclusion of Indigenous content and voice, embedding this into Programs; and
- Approval of a First Nations People Access to Justice Law Clinic, to be staffed by a Solicitor funded for two years by the Commonwealth Government National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF). This clinic will be located at the Western Sydney University’s Parramatta City Campus (IPSQ) from 2022. The clinical subject has been developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

TUTORING FOR SUCCESS

In 2022, Tutoring for Success (TFS) continued to be one of the most important support programs that Indigenous students at Western have access to. To improve the student and tutor experience within the program, a number of changes were implemented with the focus of streamlining and digitising processes such as student application form, tutoring hour verification and other administrative requirements. 2022 saw almost 9000 hours of tuition support being provided via the TFS program, providing vital academic and mentoring support to Western’s Indigenous students. We plan to continue to reform the TFS in 2023, to improve the student experience and administrative efficiencies.

Table 3: Tutorial assistance provided in 2022

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ¹	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ¹	Total hours of assistance ¹	Expenditure ¹ (\$)
Enabling	0	0	0	\$0
Undergraduate	124	2453	6883	\$384,207
Postgraduate	2	23	28	\$1,631
Other	0	0	0	-
Total	126	2465	8,978	\$385,838

3. Completions (outcomes)

Embedded strategies to improve award course completion include scholarships, internships and information sessions, as well as paid employment as Student Ambassadors and *Jobs on Campus* initiatives. The number of scholarships with paid working experience has increased and provide students with a holistic education and increased stability whilst studying.

Unique to Western Sydney University, The Academy is for students who want to learn, grow, and transform as leaders and changemakers. The Academy provides extension-level academic development, community-engaged service-learning opportunities, international and national experiences, mentoring with industry leaders, and professional and personal development workshops within an interdisciplinary environment.

In 2022, The Academy undertook an extensive review of its offering and subsequent engagement levels impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, The Academy has made key transformations to relaunch and revitalise its offering and membership structure from 2023. From 2023, The Academy will continue to deliver an amplified student experience with a reduced number of members. Member levels will decrease from 4000 to 300. This approach will allow for the development of strong relationships with members, between members and for the delivery of bespoke tailored opportunities. In addition, The Academy has established new partnerships and is collaborating with industry and community organisations to offer unique experiences such as mentoring, paid internships, round table discussions and more.

The Academy will see six Indigenous students commence the new membership. In 2023 a strategy targeting Indigenous students representing 10% of The Academy will be implemented.

By supporting students or providing opportunities financially, emotionally, and culturally, students have a better chance of completion through the additional value of their experience. Careful, systematic admissions processes that identify students prepared for successful completion of their qualifications is monitored by the Pathways Program Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership. The committee regularly reviews admission criteria for students entering the University via Pathways programs. Indigenous student retention and success is also monitored through regular and routine reporting and analysis at university-level through the Senate Education Committee (a standing committee of Academic Senate).

4. Regional and remote students

The University continues to offer an online delivery platform with programs available to regional and remote students. We have a small regional and remote student cohort with the majority of Indigenous students residing within the Greater Western Sydney region. Western has established programs in the Lithgow areas working with Lithgow High School, De La Salle College (Lithgow) and Portland Central School through the Maldan Ngurr Ngurra Lithgow Transformation Hub. Delivery was face to face via Pathways to Dreaming program with 30 Indigenous students from 3 high schools and 6 teaching staff participating in 2022.

Note: there are no specific ISSP Scholarships for remote and regional Indigenous Students. These are captured in the broader scholarships made available to all Indigenous students.

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2021 Payments								
B. 2022 Offers ¹								
C. Percentage ¹ (C=B/A*100)								
2022 Payments							0	0

Table 5: Western Sydney University Indigenous Student Headcount by Residency

Permanent Home	2019	2020	2021	2022
GWS	560	569	609	608
Inner Sydney	30	34	46	55
Outer Sydney	13	11	21	23
Central Coast	14	13	16	12
Remainder of NSW (excl Sydney)	97	96	105	105
Interstate & Other	18	21	23	24
Total Non Greater Western Sydney (GWS)	172	175	211	219
Grand Total	732	744	820	827

Eligibility criteria

5.1 Indigenous Education Strategy

The key strategy driving the Indigenous education commitments at Western Sydney University is our [Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025](#). The Strategy aspires ‘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.’ The University also has an [Indigenous Australian Education Policy](#) that compliments the Indigenous education strategy.

We are extremely pleased with the Indigenous student headcount in 2022, producing our strongest Indigenous student numbers to date.

Table 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Headcount, 2013-22

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	488	544	597	636	665	732	732	744	809	834
Total Students (Domestic Students Only)	37,607	39,210	40,315	39,638	38,855	41,352	41,331	41,332	40,962	39,028
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (%)	1.30%	1.39%	1.48%	1.60%	1.71%	1.77%	1.77%	1.80%	1.98%	2.14%

5.2 Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The University's Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025, highlights the Indigenous priorities and directions for Western Sydney University, including measures and targets to evaluate progress and success. Strategic Objective Two within the WSU Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025 specifically relates to Indigenous Employment at Western Sydney University. The Strategic Actions include:

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

In terms of meeting the Strategic Actions as outlined above, WSU have achieved the following:

The Ignite Indigenous Traineeship program was launched in early 2022 via the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership (ODVCIL) at Western Sydney University (WSU). The exciting employment opportunity provides a platform for Indigenous peoples of Greater Western Sydney to participate in on-the-job training alongside vocational education and training (VET) in a large higher education organisation. In 2022 WSU successfully recruited 11 Indigenous trainees to undertake the Ignite Program.

In terms of meeting the Indigenous Workforce Target of 3 per cent, in 2022, 2.69 per cent of WSU Workforce were Indigenous. Indigenous staffing year-on-year comparison shows an increase in total Indigenous staffing numbers in 2022 from 100 to 117. *Table 1* shows an increase in Indigenous staff over for the past twelve months, noting a 17% increase between 2021 and 2022:

*The WSU Indigenous Strategy can be found:
[WSU Indigenous Strategy](#)*

In addition to the WSU Indigenous Strategy, WSU also have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Policy. The WSU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Policy can be found:

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Policy / Document / Policy DDS \(westernsydney.edu.au\)](#)

Table 8: 2022 Indigenous workforce

Indigenous Staff Headcount 2021-2022

	2021	2022
<i>Indigenous Academics - Permanent</i>	13	13
<i>Indigenous Academics - Fixed Term</i>	2	4
<i>Indigenous Professional Staff - Permanent</i>	26	27
<i>Indigenous Professional Staff - Fixed Term</i>	13	27
<i>Indigenous Casuals</i>	46	46
	100	117

Levels of Indigenous Academic Staff Employed 2022

	2022
<i>Academic Level A (Associate Lecturer)</i>	3
<i>Academic Level B (Lecturer)</i>	5
<i>Academic Level C (Senior Lecturer)</i>	2
<i>Academic Level D (Associate Professor)</i>	1
<i>Academic Level E (Professor)</i>	4
	15

5.3 Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Western Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The Indigenous Governance Mechanism (IGM) is chaired by Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership (DVCIL) who is a member of the Western Sydney University Senior Executive Group. The IGM consists of four Indigenous members: the DVCIL (Chair), the Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching, the Director of Indigenous Research, and the Director of Badanami Centres of Indigenous Education. The IGM aligns their practice with Terms of Reference, which comply with National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) guidelines.

The IGM met five times in 2022. Along with the four IGM members, each meeting also included members from the Division of Finance and Resources to ensure ISSP funds were allocated in accordance with the NIAA ISSP Handbook (issued May 2020). The IGM has responsibility to advise, recommend and monitor use of ISSP grant funding.

Broader Indigenous Leadership at Western

Western is deeply committed to ensuring Indigenous People are involved in decision making processes across the University. This is ensured through several different channels which include:

- Indigenous representation on the Board of Trustees: James Christian PSM commenced his term on the Board of Trustees in early 2022;
- An Elders Advisory Committee meets quarterly. Members are briefed on all Indigenous activity across the University and provide cultural advice and approval as required. Three meetings were held in 2022.
- Eleven schools across the University produced school-based Indigenous Strategies in line with the University's *Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025*. These local strategies are committed to Indigenous leadership and can be found [here](#); and
- The Indigenous Professoriate Group consists of five senior Indigenous academics. They met every 6 weeks and hosted two Professoriate Lecturers across the University in 2022 to educate and inspire students and staff.
- The School of Medicine and the School of Social Sciences have an Associate Dean Indigenous Education located within their Executive structure.
- There are four Indigenous staff members and one Indigenous student who are members of the Academic Senate. Notably, the Executive Committee for Academic Senate comprises of eight staff members – three of whom are Indigenous.

It is also important to note that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Michelle Trudgett held a number of national sector leadership roles in 2022 including the Chair of the New South Wales Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Committee and the Deputy Chair of the Universities Australia Indigenous Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellor Committee.

5.3.1 Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

I am confident that the activities reported in this document are aligned with ISSP Guidelines and consistent with our University-wide approach to Indigenous Australians. We continued to collaborate with our partners internally and externally to provide current and prospective Indigenous students with the resources needed to excel during their time studying with us. Our leadership and engagement programs will continue to expand to support our students. I look forward to continuing to shape and implement the next stages of our *WSU 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy* that will further empower Western Sydney University to become the University of choice for Indigenous Australians.

Professor Michelle Trudgett
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership
Western Sydney University

