

Indigenous Student Success Program

2023 Performance Report

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Declaration

In providing this Performance Report, it is acknowledged that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

1. Enrolments (Access)

Heartbeat and Pathways to Dreaming are well-established and important programs in the Future Student Engagement portfolio. These programs significantly raise the awareness levels of the opportunities available through higher education to program participants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. They are longitudinal schools' engagement and aspiration building programs which are inspired by and grounded within the Aboriginal Culture Framework of the Four R's – Respect, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Relationships. Using the concept of "Journey", the programs work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in partner primary and high schools through a structured series of program elements. The programs build knowledge and aspiration over the course of the student's schooling, leading to sustained/increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments at tertiary level and Western Sydney University.

Heartbeat

As established in prior reports, Heartbeat is a program directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary students consisting of in school workshops and on-campus visits.

In 2023, Heartbeat continued face to face program delivery with activities taking place both at partner primary schools and on Western Sydney University campuses. The team delivered 28 in-school workshop sessions with 9 schools and 205 unique program participants in years 3 through 6 across terms 3 and 4. The team also delivered 2 on-campus event days for 234 primary school students in years 5 and 6, and 33 teachers from 18 partner primary schools across Greater Western Sydney.

Pathways to Dreaming

The Pathways to Dreaming program raises the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students in years 7 to 12 across Greater Western Sydney. The program offers students an

Undergraduate ^{iv}						\$14,000	2	2	\$14,000
Post-graduate ^v						\$14,000	2	2	\$14,000
Other									
Total						\$28,000	4	4	\$28,000

2. Progression (outcomes)

Western Sydney University continues to demonstrate a commitment to support students' completion of units. The University has recruited dedicated professional staff across the Schools who are responsible for providing students with individualised support. The School of Social Sciences Indigenous Education Officer provides contact points for students at key stages, such as pre-census, enrolment, and post census, to ensure students are progressing positively. Over 500 individual student contacts were made to School of Social Science Indigenous students through the months of May through December of 2023.

Similarly, the School of Education employs an Indigenous Student Support Officer (ISSO), providing tailored support to commencing Indigenous students. The School provides a welcome and orientation program introducing students to the library, student communication, e-learning resource portal, academic Q & A sessions, campus tours and social activities. During this orientation, arranged guest speakers from the Department of Education and Training discusses scholarship opportunities with students and students undertaking their Masters enjoy catered sessions where they can discuss their studies with academics. Furthermore, the School provides regular welfare check ins via phone, e-mail and text, and the ISSO maintains contact with School academics to best identify students who may not be as engaging as anticipated.

The School of Education also provides a program solely for Indigenous students, the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (1717). Students are enrolled from across Sydney Metro, NSW rural and regional areas and interstate. Students undertaking this program are provided feedback sessions for each residential block. The School's ISSO also organises a number of social events, such as lunches and/or morning/afternoon teas to support engagement across year cohorts. Students are invited to participate in a Yarning Circle and Art Therapy Sessions in collaboration with the Mental Health and Wellbeing team and a facilitated student-led end-of-year graduation dinner event. The ISSO also maintains contact with 1717 students who have taken leave from study. This continued engagement is to ensure students are suitably supported upon re-entry. Furthermore, the ISSO works with the Director, Academic Program (Primary Education) to map out student progression and provides administrative support for those Indigenous students eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to complete their degrees in a timeframe that is suitable to each student.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Business has employed an Indigenous Liaison Coordinator as part of its governance structure. The coordinator is dedicated to providing cultural support, guidance and promotion to staff, students, and academics within the school. Students are also able to access one-on-one support with a dedicated Indigenous Liaison School Academic.

The School of Law has professional staff dedicated to the support of Indigenous students who undertake both pre-census contact with students and hold dedicated lunches where students are introduced to lecturers, tutors and subject coordinators. The school also conducts monthly welfare calls to each of their 29 students. The School of Law additionally provides Indigenous students with all required textbooks, with 41 students being provided textbooks for 105 subjects in the 2023 academic year at a cost of \$17,047. Consistent contact and support is vital in maintaining student connection and provides an opportunity to encourage students to reach their potential through exposure to opportunities and additional support.

The School of Medicine facilitates senior student mentoring of first and second-year students, and all students enjoy access to Indigenous professors and staff throughout their studies for assistance. Frequent and dedicated contact with students within each School allows for an oversight of student progression and encourages students through an acknowledgement of their continued efforts, while serving as an opportunity to provide further support or link them to non-Indigenous support within the University. Similarly, the School of Science provided broad retention and engagement strategies in 2023 to improve student understanding of programs and assessments. This was accompanied with a focus on identifying at risk students within the first 4 weeks of semester.

As reported in previous years, The School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment continues to support Indigenous Students through the 'Aspire' Program' since 2019. The Aspire Program (AP) provides an opportunity for industry partners to connect with a talented pool of Indigenous students through internships whilst they are undertaking their undergraduate degree. Currently, 35 industry partners are supporting this program. Industry partners participate in the program voluntarily by offering paid internship opportunities from the second semester of the student's degree until their degree completion and provide mentorship and opportunities for global mobility through company branch locations. The first workshop of 2023 had 32 participants in attendance.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Social Sciences, the School of Health Science and School of Science all utilise a dedicated website for their respective Indigenous Students through the University's Learning Management System, vUWS. Students are provided with opportunities to participate in workshops, scholarship information, tutoring opportunities, and conferences. The School of Social Sciences has gone beyond this, establishing a student network within this site where students are able to contact and discuss content with one another, strengthening their sense of community with the School and University.

All Schools work closely with the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education to ensure students are receiving comprehensive student support both within the Schools and directly from dedicated professional staff.

In 2023, Western Sydney University implemented a range of new strategies, activities, and programs across our Schools to further support Indigenous students complete their units and to increase retention. These range from largescale, holistic mechanisms to more minor changes to better adapt to and reflect the Indigenous Strategy.

The School of Health Science conducted an evaluation of Western Sydney University podiatry student clinical competencies using a First Nations clinical assessment tool. There have now been increased levels of competencies in using the tool by clinical educators and students in podiatry placement subjects. The School of Computer Data and Mathematical Sciences introduced a mentoring program with 4 dedicated staff members available to Indigenous Students acting as mentors during their studies. The School of Education introduced a number of social events in 2023, such as lunches or morning/afternoon teas across Bankstown City and Kingswood Campus, a student-led end-of-year graduation dinner event and competitions, games, wellness sessions and a yarnning circle throughout the year.

The School of Science assigns specific academics to students within programs to provide advice throughout a students studies. The school notes that the average GPA of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science, the program with the largest number of Indigenous students within the school, and number of average credit points completed did not differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

In 2023, the School of Social Science continues to undertake a transformative teaching and pastoral experience for Indigenous students, having introduced fortnightly Zoom drop-in sessions for Indigenous students. These were a culturally safe and informal space for students to connect virtually amongst peers and with the Indigenous Education Officer. This engagement provides students a space to discuss their progression, results, and achievements within their subjects, in addition to providing the opportunity to ask for support for the subjects they were completing. The Arts Therapy and Counselling Academic Work Group secured a scholarship opportunity in conjunction with NSW Health - 'Dean's Western Sydney Local Health District Master of Art Therapy Indigenous Scholarship'. The scholarship will cover the tuition fees for the successful applicant to access the program – allowing students to focus primarily on their studies, rather than the cost of postgraduate study fees. The Cyber Security Team were awarded a Google Explore CSR grant to undertake learning activities that will increase the number of students from underrepresented populations choosing higher degree research pathways in computer science, with a number of nominated places specifically allocated for Indigenous students enrolled in the School's cyber security degree programs. The School has also formalised their data capturing approach for purposes of reporting to the Indigenous Strategy. Academic Work Groups (AWG) are now asked to report on how they contribute to the recruitment, retention and opportunities provided to the School's Indigenous student cohort. This self-reflection enables academic teams to engage further in attracting and retaining Indigenous students allows AWG's to consistently align with the Indigenous Strategy.

The School of Law demonstrated a fantastic reflexive response to student needs during the Voice Referendum in 2023. Having identified students were often called upon by classmates and members of their community to express their view on the Referendum, the School acknowledged that the nature of this public debate could have a negative impact on the wellbeing of students. To address this, senior staff got in touch with each student to provide immediate support where necessary. Students, if comfortable, were also invited to internal forums and external events to participate in discussions. Several Indigenous students reported positive experiences as a result of being given the opportunity to participate actively in public discussions and debates. Furthermore, the School sought the advice of Badanami staff and Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous Education, Professor Susan Page, on the creation of a safe environment for Indigenous students to participate in discussions in the subject 'Law and Public Policy: Referendum 2023 - Engaging in Constitutional Change ('LPP2023')'. During the referendum, The School of Law also ran a design competition centred on the Voice referendum – one of the two winners was an excellent design by Ngunawal woman Jess Oehm. Finally, in 2023 the School of Law redesigned the Kirby Cup High School (Year 10 and 11) Student Competition to focus on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, and invited Indigenous students to be involved in the competition.

The University holistically measures the effectiveness of strategies against key success measures as outlined in the Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025. The strategic actions and success measures within this strategy is further reflected in each of our Schools Indigenous Strategies. To this end, Western Sydney University utilises a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness on student progression. The School of Law utilises student feedback sought on an individual basis by the School leadership team and through the completion rates of Indigenous students, with 3 Indigenous students graduating in 2023. The School of Business similarly measures the effect of strategies through completion, with 7 graduates in 2023. This cohort graduated with an average GPA of 5.36 compared to 4.54 of non-Indigenous peers. The School of Nursing and Midwifery achieved a .6% increase of enrolments since their introduction of the Indigenous Strategy in 2021, through a sustained effort to boost enrolment in accordance with Strategic Objective One,

putting the School on track to reach an enrolment parity of 3.4% by 2025. The School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment has a retention strategy focused on first year students. This strategy reviews student progress such as attendance and completion of assessments in the first 3 to 4 weeks of the Autumn and Spring semesters. Through this retention strategy, the School collaborates with Western Success to follow up on at-risk students. The School of Science utilises vUWS analytics to monitor student engagement with online learning material and the results of students through assessment outcomes and final grades. Intervention is then undertaken to ensure students are progressing positively throughout their studies.

The School of Social Science compiles an annual report that aligns with the School's Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025. This document highlights the progress, achievements, and application of the School's measures to increase enrolments, retention, and student completions. Tracking of final grades received throughout the year of 2023 saw 88% of the results being a passing grade or above. The most received results were Credit (30.5%), Pass (24%) and Distinctions (22%), demonstrating a high level of student success within the School and the positive impact of the student support and engagement received from all staff involved.

The School of Education similarly uses a number of techniques to assess the overall effectiveness of its support strategies for Indigenous students. This includes analysing relevant policy driven data sets such as subject completions, requests for extensions and disruption to studies applications and collecting qualitative feedback from students. All 34 Indigenous students in 2022 returned to study in 2023 and 20 Indigenous students commenced study in 2023, an increase from previous years. All 20 students are returning to study in 2024. Furthermore, for the 1717 Program, student attendance and engagement is also used as indicator of success. The program had 80% student attendance at social events and activities, 75% of students attended scheduled face-to-face and online workshops and 100% of students attended during residential blocks.

Badanami's Tutoring for Success (TFS) program is a critical component in our students' university journey. Post-COVID, students have been able to elect to meet tutors face to face and/or via zoom, allowing for much greater flexibility when it comes to arranging contracts. The TFS Program allows students to improve their academic skills and forge valuable partnerships with their tutor. Many of these partnerships result in beneficial mentoring opportunities in which the student is informally mentored by their tutor. In 2023 the TFS administration became completely automated, meaning we are now able to offer an enhanced service to our students and our tutors, resulting in positive outcomes for all participants.

Across the University in 2023, Schools continued to invest in the cultural competency of staff and students through the Indigenisation and decolonisation of curriculum. The School of Nursing and Midwifery introduced standalone subjects to the Bachelors of Midwifery and Bachelor of Nursing regarding Aboriginal health, wellness and culture. The subjects provide an opportunity for student self-reflection and to explore any bias and unconscious bias they may have. Aboriginal content is also embedded throughout the three-year programs.

The School of Psychology employed an external Indigenous Australian Education Consultant to inform curriculum content and delivery considerations, and delivered School-wide professional training regarding Indigenous Australian cultural awareness for all staff.

The School of Social Science introduced a range of Indigenous content throughout their programs. The School provides guest lectures covering Indigenous content and/or hosted by an Aboriginal professors, such as Professor Ray Norris' discussion on Aboriginal Astrology in the Scientific Literacy module. Content has been introduced across five courses, written by Indigenous academics. Workshops for students on '*The professional conduct of genetics research on the Indigenous community*' by Dr Nathan Absalom and '*Indigenous perceptions of animals*' by Dr Sebastian Holmes were held in 2023. Furthermore, Dr Michelle Mak contributed to *Research on Native Australian bushtucker species, Solanum centrale Bush tomato, Desert raisin* and a Cultural Astronomy working group - *Aboriginal rock art in the Sydney Basin, and their possible connections to cultural astronomy* – featured Professor Miroslav Filipovic.

The School of Computer, Data and Mathematics continues to introduce awareness of Indigenous knowledge into its programs through the core subject HUMN1013 – Contextualising Indigenous Australia.

In the process of decolonising curriculum, the School of Law recognises that in the study of law it is particularly critical to challenge the assumptions on which the entire legal architecture of Australia is built. Over the past 3 years, the School has engaged in a curriculum-wide review of all law programs to ensure that the material taught, and teaching methods, support the academic, social, cultural and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous students. The School has reviewed all programs and subjects to ensure that Indigenous perspectives and knowledges are embedded and interwoven throughout all Westerns law programs. The Director of Academic Programs and Deputy Dean provides continual advice and input to staff on incorporating appropriate materials, including Indigenous scholarships, into course reading lists. In 2023, the School held a Research Seminar on "Indigenous Peoples with disability and their relationship with the criminal justice system" by Associate Professor Michael A Schwartz and Dr Brent Elder. The School also invited a Visiting Academic, Dr Grahame La Macchia from Griffith University, to spend a period of Spring Semester to participate in research activities, teaching and to discuss Indigenous research opportunities and pedagogy with academic staff. Furthermore, the Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching, Professor Susan Page, presented to academic staff on "Safe Classrooms: Conceptions, challenges and creation".

The School of Social Sciences maps Indigenous content delivery at a program and subject level, providing an overview of programs that are meeting the Indigenous Graduate Attribute. This has also enabled the team to identify which programs need review and content to be implemented into their subjects. Through undergraduate and postgraduate subject mapping, the School has identified 62 core subjects that deliver Indigenous content. This is through the effort of subject coordinators reviewing subject content to be more inclusive. It is noted that feedback on existing Indigenous content within subjects is also reviewed and reflected on to ensure the School is working towards a strengths-based approach in content delivery. The inclusion of strengths-based Indigenous content enables the Indigenous student cohort to feel represented within their program, to feel valued and positively represented. This also works to promote stronger competence for non-Indigenous students to work effectively with Indigenous communities in their future career paths. Another significant action by the School to invest in the cultural competency and inclusion of meaningful Indigenous content into programs, included having Professor Susan Page, Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching, present at a School meeting. This platform enabled staff to recognise the importance of inclusive content, and the necessity to create a learning journey through the Indigenous content provided in subjects and across programs.

The School of Health Sciences similarly aimed to Indigenise curriculum in 2023, with first year post-graduate students in the subject Social Determinants of Health being presented to by Elder Professor Aunty Kerry Doyle and Dr Paul Saunders in a prerecorded lecture. Within the subject there is a horizontal theme of social determinants of health in relation to Indigenous peoples across postgraduate coursework subjects. These include professional task assessments on addressing Closing the Gaps priorities. The foundational unit PUBH2005 Culture, Diversity, and Health is now a required module for all students focused on Indigenous health with compulsory pass providing staff and students profession-specific education. Furthermore, the Indigenous module for the Allied Health Clinical Educator's WesternX site was completed in 2023, acting as a support for clinical educators in supervising Indigenous students when on clinical placement, which occurs in all our clinical/allied health undergraduate degrees. The School similarly sought guidance from Professor Susan Page in the implementation of these activities.

When investing in the cultural competency of staff, the University encourages the celebration of teaching excellence across Schools, providing an opportunity to share insight into best practice and strategy. The School of Social Sciences runs an annual Indigenous Learning and Teaching Showcase with the 2023 theme 'From Histories, to the Voice and Beyond: Intricate Conversations in the Classroom'. This topic enabled non-Indigenous presenters to reflect on their methods of navigating Indigenous content in their subjects and holding safe spaces in teaching environments by reflecting on the process. Similarly, the School of Health Sciences established their own Indigenous Learning and Teaching Service Awards for academic staff who integrate respectful, responsive, and culturally safe activities and initiatives into teaching with two winning recipients in 2023. The School of Health Sciences also had dual winners of the Indigenous teaching awards with teams from Occupational Therapy and Health and Physical Education their dedicated projects to support Indigenous students.

The School of Social Sciences academic staff were invited and actively encouraged to attend a Cultural Safety Training session. The aim of the session "Introduction to Cultural Safety" included learning how to create culturally safe, committed and responsive workplaces to be able to work and engage with Indigenous communities. The School's Associate Dean (Indigenous Education) also made significant contributions to the overall Universities approach to educating staff and students in 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum. This included submitting contributions of relevant resources to the libraries Study Guide, as well as participation in an All Staff Webinar on this topic. This reflects the School's contribution to educating and resourcing staff and students within the whole University on current Indigenous affairs.

The School of Medicine held three Indigenous workshops open to staff throughout the year, focusing on weaving, research and Indigenous cultural immersion respectively. The School of Education's ISSO officer actively participated in a range of workshops and events, fostering a deeper connection with the Indigenous community both internally and externally. These contributions support Western Sydney University Indigenous engagement and education strategies and allows for collaborative engagement with Indigenous partnerships to bolster Indigenous student success.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery Indigenous Liaison academics presented on cultural safety, different ways of learning, appropriate terminology, and the importance of a strengths-based approach to content and case studies at a School forum. The School also held an Aboriginal Art and Wellbeing Workshop for staff and students with 15 attendees.

The School of Education conducted Yarn Up Lunch sessions with the Primary Education Dean of Academic Program and key academic Staff. The School measures the impact of investment in cultural competency through attendance, engagement and feedback.

Western Sydney University employs several comprehensive strategies beyond the scope of ISSP funding to support Indigenous student progression. The Student Assistance Fund provides welfare services to students experiencing financial hardship or low income as a result of personal circumstances or an unforeseen event. The Student Services Hub provides general support for student enquiries regarding enrolment, fees, exams, and lodging eForms. The Student Legal Services provides a free legal advice and referral service. Western Sydney University's counselling services offer students a team of qualified social workers and psychologists which is free and confidential. In addition, the Student Welfare Services team offers further support, including advocacy, financial assistance and support specific to student carers. The University provides a Chaplaincy service to attend to the spiritual wellbeing of students and the broader University community with chaplains available from many spiritual traditions.

Internship programs are a notable example of the University's commitment to the provision of practical, career-oriented opportunities for Indigenous students. The IGNITE Indigenous Traineeship at Western Sydney University offered three positions in 2023. Providing a blend of academic learning with real-world experience, all three trainees successfully completed the traineeship and transitioned to employment or further studies. The Indigenous Engineering Aspire Program provided students in the field of Technology and Engineering an opportunity to connect with industry partners, mentoring and workplace training with six students qualifying for the Aspire Program in 2023 and three students graduating and finding positions from the program during this time. Further employment opportunities are provided through the Jobs on Campus initiative, offering a platform for students to seek employment that is flexible with their schedules and providing degree-relevant work experience. Furthermore, the University's commitment to highlighting student success and strengthening cultural engagement is demonstrated through the quarterly release of the Yarning Circle.

The University's systematic approach to admission and the monitoring of Indigenous student success is facilitated by The Pathways Program committee, chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership. Playing a pivotal role in this process, the committee regularly reviews the admission criteria for students entering the University through the Pathways program. Furthermore, the intake, retention and success of Indigenous students is monitored by standard routine reporting and analysis, particularly through the Senate Education Committee.

As previously noted, Western Sydney University administers our TFS program to ensure our students are provided with the best chance to succeed during their academic journeys. The table below highlights the level of assistance given across 2023.

Table 2 - Tutorial assistance provided in 2023

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ^{vi}	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ^{vii}	Total hours of assistance ^{viii}	Expenditure ^{ix} (\$)
Enabling	4	30	53hrs	\$2,655
Undergraduate	165	2473	5,360hrs	\$260,013
Post-graduate	5	42	56hrs	\$2,860
Other	0	0	0	\$0
Total	174	2,545	5,469hrs	\$265,528

3. Completions (outcomes)

Many of the strategies utilised for the purpose of ensuring successful student progression are employed for the purpose of improving course completions amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The School of Nursing and Midwifery Indigenous Liaison Officer provides support and appropriate referrals to students during their studies and works closely with Badanami Student Success Officers to provide comprehensive support for students.

The School of Psychology established a number of Scholarships to improve course completion, including:

- The Dean's Indigenous Master of Professional Psychology Scholarship
- The Indigenous Australians Master of Clinical Psychology Scholarship
- The Indigenous Australians Psychology Honours Scholarship
- Three Indigenous Australians Psychology Undergraduate Scholarships

The School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences mentoring program provides ongoing support during student's course and provides guidance on career progression post-studies, while providing support to students throughout their program.

The School of Medicine students in their penultimate and final year meet with the Indigenous Professor weekly when on placement, and students on placement are visited once a semester.

The School of Health Sciences established an Indigenous Student Network, hosting 3 events in 2023 led by Indigenous staff members in conjunction with the Indigenous Engagement Officer. These events, in conjunction with vUWS and online platforms ensures students are provided a culturally safe environment to build a sense of community where students are supported and best positioned to complete their degree. Furthermore, professional staff work with Badanami who provide mentoring and tutoring at various centers across the University. The School also highlights the achievements of successful degree attainment in its employment of 3 Indigenous academics across 3 programs and 4 Indigenous professional staff.

The School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment's Aspire Program alumni are invited to provide talks and participate in workshops for the Aspire program, acting as role models for other students and increasing the visibility and success of the program.

The School of Social Sciences places high priority on program completions, with 29 students completing their program in 2023, comprising of 36% of the Indigenous cohort. This is an increase from 2022 which had 20 students completions. Within the School, there are multiple roles that are focused on the retention and completion rate of Indigenous students, who all play a vital role in best supporting students to reach program completion. This includes the Indigenous Education Officer, Associate Dean (Indigenous Education), the Student Transition, Retention and Success (STaRS) coordinator, the Equity and Diversity coordinator and the Directors of Academic Programs for each discipline – which is wholly supported by the Dean. The School of Social Sciences also places significant focus on student retention. Retention was regularly discussed and strategised at the School's quarterly Indigenous Advisory Committee meetings and the Indigenous Education portfolio regular team meetings. Any students identified as at risk (i.e. fail grades and not re-enrolling in subsequent teaching sessions) were followed up to provide support.

The School of Education has similarly implemented a number of strategies, with the School's ISSO and relevant Director of Academic Programs collaboratively planning and delivering support for Indigenous students through a combination of existing School based mechanisms to identify those at risk and the use of appropriate intervention and support, at School and University level. The maintenance of contact and relationship building with students who are struggling or inconsistent in their engagement in their respective programs allows for tailored support to ensure students are completing their degrees. The School also provides support for all Indigenous students undertaking Initial Teacher Education programs who require a re-sit of the externally administered Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE). LANTITE requirements are crucial part of final course completion for any student enrolled in an Initial Teacher Education course. Strategies such as workshops, advising and tutorials in literacy and numeracy have been provided to improve student success with LANTITE and subsequent course completion.

4. Regional and remote students

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students^[i]

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2022 Payments	\$6,000	3			\$13,750	2	\$19,750	5
B. 2023 Offers ^[ii]	\$8,000	4					\$8,000	4
C. Percentage ^[iii] (C=B/A*100)								
2023 Payments	\$8,000	4			\$8,125	4	\$16,125	8

5. Eligibility criteria

6.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

Western Sydney University continues to make significant strides in implementing Indigenous education strategy, namely the [2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy](#) and the [2023-2032 Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy](#), each highlighting the University's continued commitment to Indigenous education.

In 2023, the university had 769 Indigenous students accounting for 2.08% of all students. This is an increase of .28% since the implementation of the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy. In 2023, 332 Indigenous students commenced, accounting for 2.30% of commencing students and an increase of .34% since the implementation of the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy.

Both the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy and 2023-2032 Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy promotes the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges in curriculum and teaching practices through the integration of Indigenous perspectives. This is perhaps best exemplified in the implementation of individualised strategy having been written and incorporated in each of the University's 12 schools and in the University library which are list below:

- [School of Business Indigenous Strategy](#)

- [School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Education Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Health Sciences Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Humanities and Communication Arts Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Law Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Medicine Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Nursing and Midwifery Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Psychology Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Science Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [School of Social Sciences Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) Cluster Indigenous Strategy](#)
- [Western Sydney University Library Indigenous Strategy](#)

These strategies reinforce Western Sydney University as a leader in Indigenous education and ongoing commitment to the incorporation of Indigenous cultures and knowledge in teaching and curricula as outlined in this report.

6.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The long term ([Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy 2023-2032](#)) and short term ([Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025](#)) strategies of the University recognises the importance of creating employment opportunities for the Indigenous communities of Australia to get their foot in the door at a large, diverse organisation. The Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy 2023-2033 commits to delivering professional pathways for new and existing staff to enable Indigenous staff to build meaningful careers and achieve their goals. In conjunction with this, Indigenous Strategy Objective 2 focuses on Indigenous Employment with a commitment to five strategic actions. The strategic sections 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.

Since the implementation of the Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025, Sydney University has achieved the following:

- In 2022, The Ignite Indigenous Traineeship program was launched by the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership (DDVCIL) at Western Sydney University. The program is open to all Indigenous Australians and provides entry-level opportunities with on-the-job training alongside vocational education and training (VET).

As outlined in Table 1, the program has seen eleven students complete the traineeship program, with six more on offer for 2024.

Table 1 - Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program Year-on-Year Data

	2022	2023
Number of Positions	11	3
Number of Completions	8	3
Trainees secured employment at WSU	8	1
- Ongoing	1	0
- Fixed Term	6	0
- Casual	1	1

- In 2023, in line with our strategy commitments, two new academic roles were established, namely:
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Education
 - Research Assistant
- As a part of the existing academic decasualisation program Western Sydney University allocated 4.5 Indigenous positions to the scheme to provide entry level opportunities to Indigenous staff in the academic space.
- Implemented an Indigenous Professional Staff Mentoring program focused on supporting career aspirations for Indigenous staff at Western. The Division of the DVCIL launched this program in conjunction with the Western Sydney Universities Organisational Development Team.
- In 2023, Indigenous Staff Wellbeing Days were implemented by the Division of the DVCIL with support from Western Sydney University's Equity Safety and Wellbeing Team. The wellbeing sessions are held four times a year across various campuses to support our Indigenous Staff in a culturally safe environment.
- Guided and participated in the development of individual Indigenous strategies within the 12 Schools at Western Sydney University.

Concerning the Indigenous Workforce Target of 3%, in 2023, 2.52% of Western Sydney University workforce were Indigenous. Table two shows an increase in Indigenous staff over the past twelve months, noting a 6% increase between 2022 and 2023 and that the rate of Indigenous employment is increasing at a faster pace than non-Indigenous employment which increased 5% in the same period.

Table Two – Year-on-Year Staffing Comparison Data

Year	Indigenous Staff	Non-Indigenous Staff	% Percentage of Indigenous Staff
2018	44	2,754	1.60%
2019	43	2,924	1.47%
2020	45	2,849	1.58%
2021	44	2,581	1.70%
2022	66	2,630	2.51%
2023	70	2,776	2.52%

6.3. 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 senior Indigenous members: the DVCIL (Chair) – Professor Michelle Trudgett, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education – held by Professor Susan Page, the Director of Indigenous Research – held by Professor Gawaian Bodkin Andrews, and the Director of Badanami Centres of Indigenous Education – held by Fiona Towney. The Indigenous members of the committee have experience with university budget processes and have extensive experience with the ISSP Guidelines. The IGM has Terms of Reference, which comply with National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) guidelines, and which outline the membership, committee remit.

The IGM met four times in 2023. As well as the four Indigenous IGM members, each meeting also included members who are senior staff 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 and authority to advise, recommend and monitor use of ISSP grant funding. There were no unexpected issues in 2023.

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 multiple different channels which include:

- Indigenous representation on the Board of Trustees – currently held by James Christian.
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership is a member of the Senior Executive Group
- An Elders Advisory Committee meets quarterly. Members are briefed on all Indigenous activity across the University and provide cultural advice and approval as required. Four meetings were held in 2023.
- The creation of a Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education position – making Western the second institution in the nation to have both a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor positions within an Indigenous portfolio.
- There are four Indigenous staff members and one Indigenous student who are members of the Academic Senate – comprising 8% of Academic Senate membership. Notably, the Executive Committee for Academic Senate comprises of eight staff members – three of whom are Indigenous – comprising 38% of Academic Senate Executive membership.
- Senior Indigenous staff serve on university level research and teaching and learning committees.
- There are now thirteen school and cluster produced Indigenous Strategies in line with the University's *Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025*. These local strategies are committed to Indigenous leadership.
- There is an Indigenous Professoriate Group consisting of up to seven senior Indigenous academics in 2023. The group meets every 6 weeks and hosted two Professoriate Lecturers across the University in 2023, to educate and inspire students and staff.
- The School of Medicine, School of Humanities and Communication Arts, and the School of Social Sciences have an Associate Dean Indigenous Education located within their Executive structure.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Michelle Trudgett held a number of national sector leadership roles in 2023 including Chair of the Universities Australia Indigenous Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellor Committee. Together with Professor Susan Page, they also held an ARC grant which focused on developing Indigenous early career researchers – with outputs providing significant benefits to the sector.

6.3.1. 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* and our *2023-2032 Indigenous Futures Decadal 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 and Vice-President

Western Sydney University

Additional information for completing the template

ⁱ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2023. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2023 should 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 This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

ⁱⁱⁱ Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

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

^v Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

^{vi} Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

^{vii} Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

^{viii} Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

^{ix} Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

^[i] Only record amounts which required payment during the 2023 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. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.

^[ii] Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2023 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2023 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2022 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).

^[iii] This data confirms the university's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.