

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

2026-2030



Acknowledgement of COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Dharawal, Gadigal, Gundungurra and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

Vision STATEMENT

To lead the nation in Indigenous excellence enabling Indigenous students, staff, and communities to thrive. We will embed Indigenous leadership, knowledge, and perspectives at the heart of education and society, through genuine partnerships and truth-telling.



Artwork - 'Those Who Came Before Us' - In 2020 and 2021 over 120 staff and students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, contributed to this painting. This activity was co-facilitated by artist Allan McKenzie, a Wiradjuri-Gamilaroi man from Griffith NSW. 'Those Who Came Before Us' is owned by none, yet owned by all, and is a great example of reconciliation in practice.



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Message from the DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

It is with great pride and cultural responsibility that I introduce the Western Sydney University 2026–2030 Indigenous Strategy.

This strategy reflects our ongoing commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and reaffirms our responsibility to lead with integrity, respect and accountability.

It represents a significant milestone in our commitment to Indigenous leadership, self-determination, and truth-telling within the University and beyond.

Building upon the strong foundations of the 2020–2025 Indigenous Strategy, this next chapter takes a bold and ambitious approach to Indigenous advancement across all areas of the University.

It has been co-designed in partnership with Elders, staff, and students, and it is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Our vision is clear: to shape a university where Indigenous excellence not only thrives, but drives institutional transformation — where every part of our University is enriched by the strength, knowledge, and leadership of the world's oldest living cultures.

This strategy calls on us to think differently, to act with courage, and to embed meaningful and lasting change.

A key highlight of this strategy period will be the opening of our Indigenous Centre of Excellence — a vibrant, purpose-built space that will be a national landmark for Indigenous-led education, research, and cultural leadership.

I invite all members of the Western Sydney University community to walk alongside us — to listen, to learn, and to support Indigenous-led change.

This is more than a strategy; it is a powerful declaration of who we are and who we aspire to be.

Professor Michelle Trudgett
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Indigenous Leadership



Foreword from the CHANCELLOR & VICE-CHANCELLOR

Western Sydney University is proud to present its 2026–2030 Indigenous Strategy — a bold and future-facing commitment to Indigenous success, self-determination, and national leadership in Indigenous excellence.

This Indigenous Strategy directly supports and extends the commitments in our Western 2030 strategy.

This strategy is both a vision and a promise. It represents our University's commitment to placing Indigenous knowledge, leadership and priorities at the centre of the fabric of our university.

We are committed to achieving the tangible goals and stretch targets outlined in the strategy. We stand firmly in support of Indigenous self-determination, and we understand that success in this space must be led by Indigenous people — on their terms, in their voices, and with their authority.

We are proud to work alongside an outstanding Indigenous leadership team — one of the most capable, visionary, and respected in the country.

Their clarity of purpose, cultural authority, and unwavering commitment to community are the foundation on which this strategy is built.

We not only respect their leadership — we back it, unequivocally.

We are personally and professionally committed to ensuring they have the platform, resources, and institutional support required to lead with strength and integrity.

The Indigenous Centre of Excellence continues to be central to this vision. As a hub of Indigenous-led scholarship, innovation, and cultural strength, the Centre exemplifies what is possible when universities walk in true partnership with Indigenous communities. It will continue to drive transformative impact — locally, nationally, and globally.

This strategy sets a clear course: to lead the nation in Indigenous excellence.

We do not take that ambition lightly. It will require courage, accountability, and deep collaboration.

But we believe this is the moment to step forward — not just as a university that includes Indigenous perspectives, but as one that is shaped by Indigenous leadership.

We invite all members of our University community to walk with us on this journey. Together, we will create a future where Indigenous knowledge, culture, and people not only thrive — they lead.

Professor Jennifer Westacott AC
Chancellor

Distinguished Professor George Williams AO
Vice-Chancellor and President



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS

Promote a sense of belonging and inclusion for Indigenous students through creative practices, nurturing partnerships, and leadership opportunities, while enhancing academic programs to empower Indigenous retention and student success.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Empower a culturally safe workplace environment which encourages Indigenous Australians to pursue meaningful career opportunities and promote professional growth, enabling long-term success.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Foster a research culture that empowers Indigenous researchers; and delivers meaningful outcomes for Indigenous communities, grounded in ethics and strong community impact.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Magnify Indigenous learning and teaching through enhanced curriculum, pedagogical practice and scholarship.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Establish and sustain respectful, collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities and people through structured, inclusive engagement that supports mutual priorities and long-term relationship-building.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGES

Recognise, respect, and promote the diversity and strength of Indigenous cultural knowledges as foundational to identity, learning, caring for Country and community wellbeing.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Centre and support Indigenous leadership and governance by upholding self-determination, cultural authority, and decision-making across all levels of the University.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8

TRUTH-TELLING

Commit to institutional truth-telling about the ongoing impacts of colonisation and associated injustices, by amplifying Indigenous narratives, creating a more accurate account of Australia's history to recognise the strength and contribution of Indigenous peoples.



BIG IDEAS

A SHIFT TO SCALE IN INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

Grow Indigenous student enrolments to over 1,000, embedding access and success across all disciplines and levels of study.

A SHIFT TO WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP

Build a vibrant Indigenous workforce with at least 120 ongoing and fixed-term academic and professional staff, strengthening leadership, visibility, and cultural authority across the University.

A SHIFT TO INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS

Achieve a minimum 78% retention rate for Indigenous students through culturally grounded, student-centred support and inclusive learning environments.

A SHIFT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AS CORE BUSINESS

Lead the sector in embedding Indigenous self-determination within governance, decision-making, and institutional culture—moving beyond inclusion to genuine power-sharing.

A SHIFT TO EXCELLENCE AND GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Establish a nationally and internationally recognised Indigenous Centre of Excellence that drives research, innovation, and community engagement with and for Indigenous peoples.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS

Promote a sense of belonging and inclusion for Indigenous students through creative practices, nurturing partnerships, and leadership opportunities, while enhancing academic programs to empower Indigenous retention and student success.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Establish an Indigenous student mentoring program to strengthen peer connections and foster leadership development.
- 02 Implement an Indigenous Student Retention Strategy to amplify Indigenous student success.
- 03 Increase Indigenous student enrolment numbers to reflect national population parity.
- 04 Increase the number of Indigenous students enrolled in postgraduate coursework and research programs.
- 05 Increase leadership opportunities for Indigenous students; including cadetships, internships and broader industry engagement.
- 06 Develop a comprehensive suite of resources to enhance Indigenous students' awareness of the opportunities and services offered by Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education.
- 07 Design and implement targeted programs that improve success rates for newly enrolled Indigenous students including digital accessibility and inclusion.
- 08 Develop a set of strategies to address the accommodation needs of Indigenous students.
- 09 Establish a designated space for Indigenous students in each campus library.
- 10 Create a Badanami Futures Fund to be used for the advancement of Indigenous students.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 3.2% of all enrolled domestic students are Indigenous.
- 3.2% of all domestic higher degree research students are Indigenous.
- Increase the Indigenous student retention rate to 78% (from 66%).

*Sourced from Tableau Indigenous Student Data





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Empower a culturally safe workplace environment which encourages Indigenous Australians to pursue meaningful career opportunities and promote professional growth, enabling long-term success.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Double the number of Indigenous staff with Doctoral qualifications.
- 02 Increase the number of Indigenous academic and professional staff.
- 03 Develop strategies to support career progression of Indigenous staff.
- 04 Establish a Director of Indigenous Employment.
- 05 Implement a policy to recognise the additional cultural/colonial load of Indigenous staff.
- 06 Provide more ongoing roles to increase the job security of Indigenous staff.
- 07 Expand the Wumarra Indigenous Mentorship initiative to enhance Indigenous staff career trajectories.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 3.8% of all ongoing and fixed-term staff will be Indigenous.
- Increase the number of Indigenous academics from 27 to 45.
- Increase the overall percentage of ongoing positions from 70% to 85%.
- Director of Indigenous Employment appointed.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Foster a research culture that empowers Indigenous researchers; and delivers meaningful outcomes for Indigenous communities, grounded in ethics and strong community impact.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Establish an Indigenous Research Institute in the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.
- 02 Create clear pathways into Higher Degree Research.
- 03 Implement an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme.
- 04 Coordinate a mentorship program for early and mid-career Indigenous researchers.
- 05 Offer internal and external opportunities for Indigenous Studies research training for Indigenous and non-Indigenous HDR candidates and staff; including respecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- 06 Increase Indigenous Research outputs through internal and external grant applications, publications and awards.
- 07 Advance excellent, ethically grounded, culturally respectful research for Indigenous communities.
- 08 Develop international research partnership opportunities with First Nations peoples around the world.
- 09 Establish a register of Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics who can supervise Indigenous research.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- At least 5 internal and external grant applications submitted each year by Indigenous academics.
- Secure 2 international research partnerships.
- Double Indigenous staff with doctoral qualifications from 12 to 24.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Magnify Indigenous learning and teaching through enhanced curriculum, pedagogical practice and scholarship.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Establish an Indigenous Learning and Teaching Network.
- 02 Implement an Indigenous Learning and Teaching Evaluation Framework.
- 03 Enhance learning and teaching professional development for Indigenous Staff.
- 04 Appoint a Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching at professoriate level.
- 05 Establish an annual Indigenous Learning and Teaching Showcase.
- 06 Implement a process to support Indigenous staff to apply for national teaching excellence awards.
- 07 Build on Indigenous Graduate Attribute development through embedding Indigenous perspectives in curriculum.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 2 Indigenous staff undertake formal Learning and Teaching professional development activities each year.
- At least 3 Indigenous Learning and Teaching presentations at the annual showcase.
- Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching appointed.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Establish and sustain respectful, collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities and people through structured, inclusive engagement that supports mutual priorities and long-term relationship-building.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Celebrate the diversity of identities and cultures for Indigenous students, staff and communities including LGBTQIASB+ people, gender diversity and people of all abilities.
- 02 Implement a regular Indigenous Career Expo to engage industry partners.
- 03 Hold an annual Indigenous Film Festival in the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.
- 04 Host Indigenous Markets at the Indigenous Centre of Excellence to support Indigenous entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- 05 Leverage existing University partnerships to increase Indigenous connections and opportunities.
- 06 Establish an Indigenous Business Hub.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 1 Indigenous Career Expo held per year.
- 1 Indigenous Film Festival held per year.
- 1 Indigenous Markets held per year.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGES

Recognise, respect, and promote the diversity and strength of Indigenous cultural knowledges as foundational to identity, learning, caring for Country and community wellbeing.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Promote caring for Country through university approaches to the physical environment, and research and sustainability.
- 02 Showcase Indigenous art exhibitions in the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.
- 03 Deliver Indigenous performances in the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.
- 04 Engage Elders to co-deliver an Indigenous Cultural Learning Program for Indigenous students and staff.
- 05 Promote the revitalisation of Indigenous language through a series of language workshops.
- 06 Increase the number of Elder in Residence positions.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- At least 2 Indigenous art exhibitions held each year.
- At least 2 Indigenous language workshops held each year.
- At least 2 Elder in Residence positions appointed in the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7 INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Centre and support Indigenous leadership and governance by upholding self-determination, cultural authority, and decision-making across all levels of the University.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01 Establish an Associate Dean Indigenous position in each Faculty.
- 02 Increase the number of senior leadership roles held by Indigenous People.
- 03 Appoint an Indigenous Council to govern the Indigenous Centre of Excellence.
- 04 Develop a framework for Indigenous philanthropy recognising self-determination and sovereignty.
- 05 Detail how self-determination can be embedded within the university context.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 3 Associate Deans Indigenous appointed.
- Increase the number of senior leadership roles held by Indigenous People from 6 to 12.
- The Indigenous Council is appointed.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8 **TRUTH-TELLING**

Commit to institutional truth-telling about the ongoing impacts of colonisation and associated injustice, by amplifying Indigenous narratives, creating a more accurate account of Australia's history to recognise the strength and contribution of Indigenous peoples.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 01** Ensure Western buildings have signage and websites that reflect Indigenous stories and truth.
- 02** Establish an annual truth-telling event.
- 03** Develop a dedicated Library Guide for truth-telling materials, including a digital repository.
- 04** Create a Racism Register to record and respond to acts of racism against Indigenous people within the University.
- 05** Implement a publicly available University Truth-telling Statement to acknowledge the impacts of ongoing colonialism.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

- 1 truth telling event held annually.
- The Truth-telling library guide is made available to staff and students.
- The University Truth-telling statement is prominently shown on the University website.

Contact information

Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership

DVCIL@westernsydney.edu.au

Western Sydney University
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia

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