



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019 - 2021

Introduction

The University of Notre Dame Australia (Notre Dame) recognises the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian culture and history and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this land.

As a University community, we pay our respect to their Elders past and present. Understanding and acknowledging historic factors such as colonisation and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's wellbeing informs the development of this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. In supporting the education and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Notre Dame seeks to ensure that potential, current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members benefit from the same opportunities, expectations and standards as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whilst maintaining their strong, vibrant culture (9.1.1 Indigenous Employment, *The University of Notre Dame Australia Staff Enterprise Agreement 2015 – 2017*).

The *University of Notre Dame Australia Strategic Plan: 2018-2021* focuses on Four Key Strategic Goals:

1. Being Authentically Catholic
2. Pursuing Excellence in Academic Endeavours
3. Enhancing Community Engagement
4. Ensuring responsible stewardship

Strategic Goal 3 (a) commits Notre Dame to ensuring “both independently and in partnership with others, that the University makes an active and positive contribution to the wellbeing of Australia and the Australian community by implementing strategies and practices that embed and promote Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community, with particular focus on social justice, health and education”.

This Employment Strategy directly supports this strategic priority.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy - Context

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex and diverse. The Indigenous cultures of Australia are the oldest living cultural history in the world – they go back at least 65,000 years. Indigenous communities keep their cultural heritage alive by passing their knowledge, arts, ceremonies and performances from one generation to another, speaking and teaching languages, protecting cultural materials, sacred and significant sites, and objects. For Indigenous Australians, the land is the core of all spirituality and this relationship and the spirit of ‘Country’ is central to the issues that are important to Indigenous people today.” Ngunnawal Elder, Tina Brown 1.

The University recognises the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian culture and history. Notre Dame aims to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members benefit from the same opportunities, expectations and standards as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members, whilst maintaining strong and vibrant cultures.

Notre Dame values the importance of a whole of University approach that recognises and builds on existing commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and employment and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia. The University is committed to providing strong support for the process of Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Notre Dame’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy: 2019-2021* (Strategy), addresses workforce planning and development issues and sets out the framework to build the skills of all staff members to be competent and confident in developing and delivering services to all communities within the University community, both internal and external.

The operationalisation of this Strategy is the responsibility of all staff of the University and is coordinated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator with support from the Director of Indigenous Education, and the Pro Vice Chancellor, International. Ongoing consultation with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is central to the delivery of this Strategy.

The following cultural terms are used throughout this Strategy and are defined³ as follows:

- **Cultural awareness** is sensitivity to the similarities and differences that exist between different cultures and the use of this sensitivity in effective communication with members of another cultural group.
- **Cultural safety** involves actions that recognise, respect and nurture the unique cultural identity of a person and safely meet their needs, expectations and rights. It means working from the cultural perspective of the other person, not from your own perspective.
- **Cultural respect** can be defined as the recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of a particular culture.
- **Cultural security** means becoming aware of the cultural differences that exist, appreciating and having an understanding of those differences and accepting them. It also means being prepared to guard against accepting your own behaviours, beliefs and actions as the norm.
- **Personal cultural learning** is the action we personally take to expand our knowledge of other cultures and how we use that to shape our service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Objectives

The University is committed to providing employment opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Academic, Research, Professional, General and Executive levels. Culturally responsive leadership provides inspiration to all staff, influences change and builds governance structures and workplaces that ensure staff members are encouraged, supported and free from overt and covert racism.

The following interrelated Objectives provide the framework for this Strategy.

1. Development of Workplace Culture

Notre Dame is committed to creating a culturally safe and inclusive working environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Respect for and recognition of the unique cultural, social and spiritual knowledges and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members bring to the University are central to this commitment.

2. Recruitment

Notre Dame is committed to creating sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the University. Providing effective engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations in support of the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent will underpin targeted recruitment strategies.

3. Professional Development

Enhanced career pathways for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are supported through tailored professional development and training programs.

4. Retention

Ensuring workplace practices provide a supportive and flexible environment which enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to meet professional and cultural obligations. This is critical to the long term success and wellbeing of the University community and in particular its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

These four Objectives are directly interrelated, as set out in Figure 1.

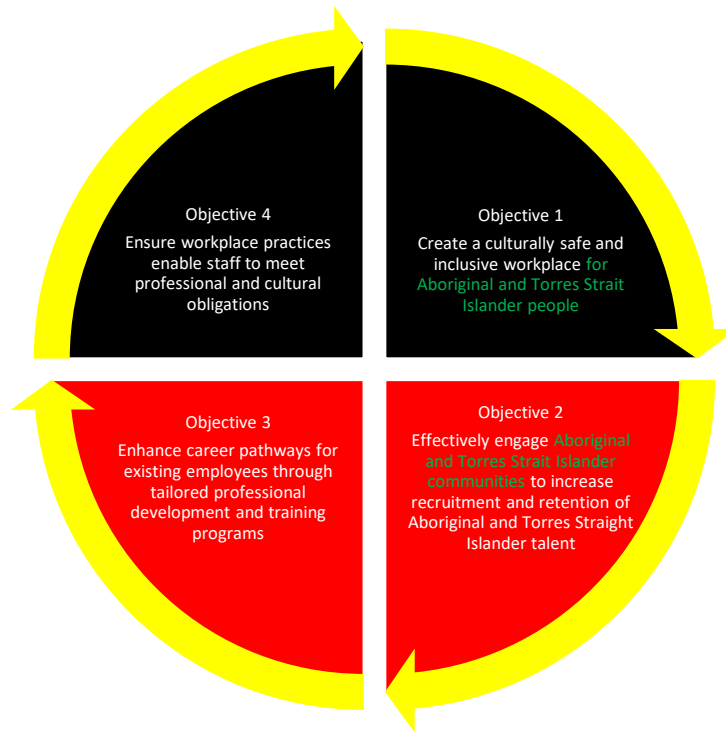


Figure 1: Interrelated Objectives - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

References

1. Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2018. *Closing the Gap, Prime Ministers Report 2018* pg. 23 Ngunnawal Elder, Tina Brown, <https://closingthegap.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/ctg-report-2018.pdf>
2. Behrendt, L., Larkin, S., Griew, R. and Kelly, P., 2012. *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Final Report* (July 2012) <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/heaccessandoutcomesforaboriginalandtorresstraitislanderfinalreport.pdf>
3. Health Education and Training Institute, 2018. *Cultural awareness definitions*. <https://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/courses-and-programs/international-medical-graduate-information/cultural-awareness>
4. Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), 2011. *National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy*, developed by the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council with the support of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra, 2011, <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/nihews.pdf>
5. Universities Australia, 2017. *Indigenous Strategy: 2017-2020*. https://socialsciences.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/SOSSFile/FINAL_Indigenous_Strategy.pdf

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy: 2019-2021

Goals, Actions, Key Measures and Responsibilities

Objective One: Create a Culturally Safe and Inclusive Workplace				
Goals	Actions	Key Measures	Responsibility	Timeframe
Create a culturally safe work environment	<p>Deliver Cultural Awareness Training for current and new staff with attendance expectations formalised</p> <p>Include cultural awareness information in the induction processes of all new staff members</p> <p>Engagement in Staff Commencement Day</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Country protocols to be fully developed</p>	<p>Increase staff participation</p> <p>Positive feedback/survey results</p> <p>Materials educating staff on Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country practices easily accessible</p>	<p>All Schools, Offices and Institutes</p> <p>Staffing Office</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>Director Indigenous Education</p>	Short-term – High Priority
Increase community engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<p>Promote relevant University and Community events to all Staff</p> <p>Engage Local Elders to undertake/conduct Welcome to Country and relevant cultural celebrations and ceremonies</p> <p>Embed Sorry Day, Reconciliation Day and NAIDOC Week activities in Campus event calendars</p>	<p>Increase in numbers of Staff attending university and community events about Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>Director Indigenous Education</p>	Short-term – High Priority
Build a culturally secure and inclusive workforce	<p>Develop Cultural Security Workshops, where appropriate, to further develop Cultural Awareness knowledge</p> <p>Implement a Senior Leaders training program addressing culturally responsive leadership</p> <p>Develop and deliver an elective course in the Graduate Certificate of Learning and Teaching on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Higher Education</p>	<p>Increased percentage of staff participation</p> <p>Engagement of all Senior Leaders in appropriate Cultural Awareness / Cultural Security Training</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Employment Coordinator</p> <p>PD Coordinators</p> <p>Senior Leaders</p> <p>Director, Indigenous Education / ATSEICG</p>	Short-term – High Priority

Objective Two: Increase Recruitment & Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Goals	Actions	Key Measures	Responsibility	Timeframe
Increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples	<p>Establish partnerships with employment agencies which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers</p> <p>Actively promote Notre Dame employment opportunities via relevant external agencies</p> <p>Develop Campus-based employment targets to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rates</p> <p>Promote the University as an Employer of Choice within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations</p> <p>Proactively encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply for positions within the University by strengthening community relationships and promoting cultural events and practices</p> <p>Develop dedicated employment-related resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p> <p>Promote work experience opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</p>	<p>Monitoring the number of employees referred by relevant agencies</p> <p>Achievement of, or significant progression towards, institutional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets</p> <p>Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed at the University</p>	<p>Staffing Office led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>All Deans and Directors</p> <p>Heads of Campuses</p>	<p>Short-term – High Priority</p>
Establish a Traineeship Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	<p>Develop a Traineeship Program, which provides an educational and employment capacity building program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people external to the University</p> <p>Identify opportunities for participation in Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Programs</p>	<p>Establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Program</p> <p>Employment of Trainees in the Traineeship Program</p> <p>Conversion rate of Trainees into further employment post-traineeship (both within and external to the University)</p>	<p>Staffing Office led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>All Deans and Directors, Schools, Offices and Institutes</p>	<p>Medium Term – Moderate Priority</p>

Objective Two: Increase Recruitment & Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Goals	Actions	Key Measures	Responsibility	Timeframe
Promote Notre Dame vacancies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alumni and Current Students	<p>Advertise placements on the relevant pages of the University's website, Alumni Newsletters and Social Media pages</p> <p>Work with the University's Career Officer to publish relevant vacancies to Students</p> <p>Provide career mentoring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</p>	<p>Employment rates and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and alumni</p>	<p>Staffing Office led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>Indigenous Student Support Officer</p> <p>Careers Officer</p>	<p>Short-term – High Priority</p>
Establish appropriate frameworks and protocols for the advertisement of 50D and 51D Positions	<p>Establish an institutional framework for identifying 50D and 51D positions and recruitment practices in the context of the relevant state legislation</p>	<p>Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants for vacant positions</p> <p>Achievement of or significant progression towards institutional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets</p>	<p>Staffing Office led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>Legal Office</p>	<p>Short-term – High Priority</p>
Increase the retention rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	<p>Provide culturally appropriate professional networking and support opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p> <p>Develop a professional mentoring program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p> <p>Organise biannual social and cultural events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff</p> <p>Develop an annual Notre Dame Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff forum to promote sharing of knowledge, experiences, innovation and professional best practice among Staff</p> <p>Make available an Employee Assistance Program specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p>	<p>Number of attendees at relevant professional and cultural events</p> <p>Number of staff participating in the mentoring program</p> <p>Retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p> <p>Identification of appropriate EAP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>Indigenous Student Support Officer</p> <p>Staffing Office and Procurement</p> <p>Director Indigenous Education</p>	<p>Longer term Priority</p>

Objective Three: Enhance Career Pathways, Professional Development and Training Programs

Goals	Actions	Key Measures	Responsibility	Timeframe
Improved career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Delivery of biannual career development and capacity building workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Delivery of workshops PD participation rate Improvement in career progression pathways of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator PD Coordinator	Longer term Priority
Promote appropriate career development and study pathways to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Develop and promote appropriate professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff Promote the Career Development Fund opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Engagement with the Career Development Fund Rate of Workshop participation Track relationship between professional development / study engagement and retention	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator Staffing Office	Medium Term – Moderate Priority
Increase institutional understanding of Notre Dame's recruitment and selection processes relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	Recruitment and Interview Training workshops delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members	Workshop participation rate. Increased number of trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members involved in recruitment processes	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator Staffing Office	Short-term – High Priority
Support current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to apply for internal vacancies	Implement workshops focused on job application and interview skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members	Workshop participation rate Progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to higher positions	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator Staffing Office PD Coordinator	Medium Term – Moderate Priority

Objective Four: Ensure Workplace Practices Enable Staff to Meet Professional and Cultural Obligations

Goals	Actions	Key Measures	Responsibility	Timeframe
Support work practices that enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet their cultural obligations	<p>Deliver of Cultural Awareness (and Cultural Security) workshops to the wider University community</p> <p>Established approved protocols for the provision of Ceremonial (Cultural) Leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members</p>	<p>Delivery of Cultural Awareness (and Cultural Security) Workshops across all Campuses</p> <p>Ceremonial (Cultural) Leave provisions established</p>	<p>Staffing Office led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Coordinator</p> <p>All Schools, Offices and Institutes</p> <p>Legal Office</p> <p>Director Indigenous Education</p>	<p>Medium Term – Moderate Priority</p>