



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

*Enriching Education  
Through Culture*



**DEAKIN**  
UNIVERSITY

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Artwork provided by Belanjee  
Photos by Donna Squire and Simon Fox

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Deakin University respectfully acknowledges the custodians of the land on which our five physical locations are situated and pay our respect to their Elders: past, present and future. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung on whose land our Geelong Campuses are located, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung on whose land our Melbourne campus and Corporate Centre are located, and the Gunditjmara on whose land our Warrnambool campus is located.

# ADDRESS AND COMMITMENT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

I pay my respect to the Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri, Boon Wurrung and Gunditjmara Elders and Peoples who are the custodians of the lands on which Deakin's campuses and centres are located.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy recognises the important contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make to Australia and to Deakin University.

We recognise that as places of learning, universities are powerful agents for social change and have a key role to play in promoting social justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This Strategy outlines Deakin University's commitment to generate and establish successful job opportunities and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Strategy affirms our commitment to a work environment in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and beliefs and values are acknowledged and respected and in which the career goals and aims of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are identified, promoted and achieved.

The Strategy represents our long-term goal to significantly improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at Deakin, setting a target to attract and maintain a cohort of 50 staff by 2021. Deakin aims to provide a culturally safe and supportive workplace in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will develop and flourish. Every manager shares the responsibility for helping Deakin University to deliver on this commitment.

**Professor Jane den Hollander AO  
Vice-Chancellor**



# FRAMEWORK

This Strategy has been developed within the framework provided in Deakin University's strategic plans and several key external reviews, reports and plans:

- LIVE the future 2020's goal to "strengthen our communities, enable our partners and enhance our enterprise".
- Deakin Enterprise Agreement 2017 has set a target to increase our staffing numbers to 50 by 2021.
- Deakin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Agenda 2016-2020 to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing "at all appointment levels and, for academic staff," ensure that these appointments "cover a wider variety of academic fields"
- Deakin Workforce Management Plan goal to "maintain a compelling employee value proposition (EVP)".
- The Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020 vision of "taking a whole of university approach".
- 2011 Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, which noted that staff within the sector at times felt their environment was 'culturally isolating'.
- Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020 to create more job opportunities across the economy.

The Strategy therefore addresses two primary success factors and provides associated initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to thrive at Deakin

Figure 1. Strategic Success Factors



Managers have an important role to play to ensure that Deakin delivers on its recruitment targets. The Strategy has been developed to guide University Executive to sponsor/support appropriate initiatives within their Portfolio, and to guide Deakin managers and supervisors to create a culturally safe workplace for current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

# IMPLEMENTATION

The Deakin University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy requires a whole of University commitment. To achieve the goals of this Strategy:

University Executive will identify and support programs implemented within their Faculties and Portfolios.

Deakin supervisors and managers will play a critical role in bringing strategies to life by engaging with the HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing), and the relevant HR Client Partner, to ensure successful local implementation.

Deakin staff will participate in creating cultural and operational change to support increased engagement with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Human Resource Division (HRD) will support, monitor and report on the progress of the Strategy.

The HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing) will work with all areas of the University to support them to implement and evaluate the progress of locally implemented strategies.



# SUPPORT

Deakin University's HR Division (HRD) has a dedicated position of HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing), as well as HR Client Partners for each Faculty and Portfolio, who will be able to advise on how best to engage with the initiatives included in the Strategy.

In order to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with their career at the University, HRD offers staff and their managers advice and guidance throughout the employment lifecycle at Deakin.

## **Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:**

- Act as a confidential point of contact to discuss employment matters that staff are facing.
- Coordinate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network meetings.
- Advise on career development within Deakin, including advice for internal and external applicants.

## **Support for managers and supervisors:**

- Provide guidance in identifying positions that can be advertised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates only.
- Provide advice and panel support about interviewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates.
- Facilitate foundation level cultural awareness sessions at planning and team development forums.
- Provide general advice in supervising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff seeking support may also wish to contact HR at [indigenous.employment@deakin.edu.au](mailto:indigenous.employment@deakin.edu.au). This is monitored on a regular basis by senior HRD staff who will be able to respond to any queries.



# PRINCIPLES

To achieve the expected outcomes of this Strategy Deakin will be guided by the following principles;

- Recognising and respecting the cultural heritage, values and spirituality and the unique relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have with the land and the natural environment.
- Collaborating in forthright and sincere consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, communities and key stakeholders to achieve sustainable employment and career outcomes.
- Fostering understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, working to equip all staff with knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Access, equity, social justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and their communities.



# ENABLE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Initiative	Action	Responsibility	Involved	Timeframe
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment register and job seeker support	Further develop the portal for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment register engagement strategies and applicant-to-job matching.	• COO • ED HR	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Recruitment	Current and ongoing
	Develop and offer tailored job seeker advice to potential candidates who register, ensuring that they have the best possible chance of employment with Deakin.	• COO • ED HR	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Recruitment	6 months from launch
	Create engagement events for people on this list to keep them connected with Deakin	• COO • ED HR	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Recruitment	6 months from launch
Targeted vacancy advertisement	Enable Deakin Faculties and Portfolios to identify positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates by complying with Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal regulations for targeted advertisement.	• COO • ED HR	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Recruitment	Current and ongoing
	Encourage hiring managers to actively promote academic and professional career opportunities through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and networks.	• COO • Executive Deans of Faculties and Portfolio heads	• Member of SMG • HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment)	Current and ongoing
Senior Appointments	<b>Academic Staff:</b> Create a staff research fund (seed funding), designed to attract senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics (Level D and higher) to embark on research in key areas at Deakin University. Our goal is to not only increase the number of senior academic staff here at Deakin but to also increase overall Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and knowledge's being supported by Deakin.	• DVC Research • Executive Deans of Faculties and Portfolio heads	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Client Partners • Faculties and Portfolios	In place 12 months from launch
	<b>PhD graduates:</b> Create pathways for Deakin university Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PhD graduates to utilise their qualification at Deakin. The University endeavours to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PhD students who are nearing completion and investigate the ability to engage them in employment and further their research at Deakin.	• DVC Research • Executive Deans of Faculties and Portfolio heads	• Institute of Koorie Education • HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Client Partners	In place 18 months from launch
	<b>Professional Staff:</b> Work with Faculties and Portfolios to identify future senior administrative and management (HEW 7 and higher) positions that can be advertised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander only candidates. This will not only increase the number of senior administrative appointments at Deakin but will also help to create a positive work culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are involved in decision making processes.	• Executive Deans of Faculties and Portfolio heads	• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment) • HRD Recruitment • HRD Client Partners	In place 6 months from launch

# DEVELOP STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Initiative	Action	Responsibility	Involved	Timeframe
Engagement with cultural centres, groups and schools	Formally engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and community centres in the Geelong, Burwood and Warrnambool regions, working to create ongoing partnerships to enable Deakin to advertise employment vacancies within their networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Advancement Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IKE Community and Cultural Engagement Officer</li> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment)</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing initiative with formal agreements to be investigated and made within 12 months of launch.
	Create partnerships with local secondary schools, providing the ability for work experience programs at Deakin. Linked to the faculties this will work to create interest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to choose Deakin as their destination for higher education or employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVC Global Engagement</li> <li>COO</li> <li>ED Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Division and PVC Graduate Employment</li> <li>HRD Recruitment</li> <li>Institute of Koorie Education</li> </ul>	In place 12 months from launch
Trainee and student engagement	Create Internship positions and an Intern development program for Deakin students within Faculties and Portfolios at Deakin. Working towards providing skills for the Intern to be job ready at the end of the Internship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVC Global Engagement</li> <li>COO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute of Koorie Education</li> <li>HRD Recruitment</li> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment)</li> </ul>	In place 12 months from launch
	Formalise arrangements with trainee providers who specialise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeships to enable these traineeships to be effective and sustainable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COO</li> <li>ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute of Koorie Education</li> <li>HRD Recruitment</li> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment)</li> </ul>	Agreements in place 6 months from launch
	Work with Graduate Employment Division to create a graduate program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enable their continued association with the University through employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PVC Graduate Employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduate Employment Division</li> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Employment)</li> </ul>	In place 18 months from launch



# SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

Initiative	Action	Responsibility	Involved	Timeframe
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing network	<p>Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network that meets quarterly to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a sense of community between Deakin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members</li> <li>Creating a space where issues and concerns can be raised.</li> <li>Career development opportunities and plans for current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.</li> <li>Retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COO</li> <li>ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>HRD (Organisational Development)</li> <li>HRD Client Partners</li> <li>Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Excellence program	<p>Creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Excellence program that would bring together a range of programs:</p> <p>“Grow your Own” Academic development program which will enable up to two high potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics to be recruited and supported in gaining higher qualifications where the University would provide support in the form of study leave and/or financial assistance (for example through a scholarship). This program would also include mentoring by a senior academic.</p> <p>Encourage the use of flexible work arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in higher education, research, including work towards a PhD.</p> <p>Create a learning and development fund for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to apply for that will assist in the costs of undertaking further learning, assist with the cost of attending conferences and events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVC Research</li> <li>DVC Education</li> <li>COO</li> <li>ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Deans of Faculties and Portfolio heads</li> <li>Institute of Koorie Education</li> <li>HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>HRD Client Partners</li> <li>HRD (Organisational Development)</li> <li>HRD Recruitment</li> </ul>	In place 12 months from launch



# PROVIDE A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Initiative	Action	Responsibility	Involved	Timeframe
Staff induction program	Provide an introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture both in the regions where Deakin is situated and about IKE. This introduction to be provided during compulsory interactive induction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COO</li> <li>• ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>• IKE Community and Cultural Engagement Officer</li> <li>• HRD (Organisational Development)</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing
	Create an induction module for Deakin that Faculties and Portfolios can utilise for local inductions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COO</li> <li>• ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>• IKE Community and Cultural Engagement Officer</li> <li>• HRD (Organisational Development)</li> </ul>	Within 6 months from launch.
Cultural competency program	Provide online and face-to-face cultural competency programs to enable all staff at Deakin to be culturally equipped to provide a welcoming place for study and work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COO</li> <li>• ED HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRD HR Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>• HRD (Organisational Development)</li> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	Within 12 months of launch
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant events	Deliver University events that respect, acknowledge and where appropriate, celebrate significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days/weeks of the year, paying particular attention to NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day. Events to be run centrally for the whole University with Faculties and Portfolios encouraged to hold local events.	University Executive Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute of Koorie Education</li> <li>• HRD Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing
	Ensure that at any major University events an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder is present to provide a Welcome to Country. If an Elder is not available to provide a welcome the event will be started with an Acknowledgment of Country.	University Executive Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute of Koorie Education</li> <li>• HRD Consultant (Indigenous Staffing)</li> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing



Artwork provided by Belanjee

- **Cover - 'Rainbow Dreaming'** – A visual interpretation of the creational story of how the giant snakes created the waterways, leaving behind colourful natural oils that gave life to our land.
- **Acknowledgment Page - 'Saltwater Life'** - A visual interpretation of sea urchins that provided us with tidal knowledge.
- **Back Page - 'Oolгна Connections'** – A visual interpretation of the connections and energies between self and the environment. Unity, balance and restoration.



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