

CQUniversity Australia  
Indigenous Student  
Success Program



# Indigenous Student Success Program

## 2022 Performance Report



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### 1. Enrolments (Access)

#### Introduction

CQUniversity is a dual sector university encompassing the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) sectors with 15 campuses and study hubs across five states of Australia.

Fig 1 below shows the locations of CQUniversity campuses and study hubs.



The University is recognised as a pioneer and leader in the delivery of distance education, with 64% of the current student cohort made up of students studying off-campus, many of whom are based in rural and remote areas.

CQUniversity's vision is 'to be Australia's most accessible, supportive and engaged university, recognised globally for innovative teaching and research excellence'. Through [CQUniversity's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023](#) *Our Future is You*, and the [CQUniversity Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 – 2024](#), CQUniversity has delivered a series of sector-leading programs that have increased the access, participation and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in vocational and higher education. Our aim is to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by delivering education, training and research that improves lives and offers pathways to meaningful careers. The strategies, programs and partnerships reflected in this report demonstrate the progress made in 2022.

## 1.1. Strategies to improve access to university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

CQUniversity experienced a decrease of 72 students enrolled in 2022, compared to the previous year. This decrease is reflective of the softening in the domestic demand that can be largely attributed to labour market pressures and is being experienced across the wider sector.

The data shows that in 2022, the greatest number of commencing students fell into the 20-to-24-year age group, for the enabling and undergraduate levels. Most students were evenly distributed in the 20 to 24 year, 25 to 29 year, 30 to 34 year and 35 to 39-year age groups at the post graduate level. 366 commencing students identified as female, 116 students identified as male and 2 were unspecified.

Table 1 shows the reduction in First Nations student commencing numbers.

**Table 1:** Commencing First Nations students' data 2020 to 2022.

	Enabling	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
<b>2020</b>	152	299	60	<b>511</b>
<b>2021</b>	162	335	59	<b>556</b>
<b>2022</b>	131	296	57	<b>484</b>

### 1.1.1. Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

CQUniversity developed and launched its second [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 – 2024](#) in NAIDOC Week on Friday 8 July at a community function. CQUniversity news story available [here](#).

The RAP commits CQUniversity to a range of activities and outcomes designed to increasing First Nations peoples access to university including: increasing participation in scholarships and awards programs, increasing philanthropic funding for awards, creating a dedicated Indigenous student prize program, expanding engagement programs with schools and communities to increase access and participation, prioritising new pathway programs into vocational education and implementing a marketing strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments.

The RAP Project Officer and the Governance Officer positions, are integral in the oversight of and committee support for the RAP and are ISSP funded.

### 1.1.2. The Woorabinda Education, Enterprise and Research Hubs

The Mackay-based Indigenous Student Engagement Officer has established partnerships with a range of services regarding Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) on-line studies in

Woorabinda. Darumbal Enterprises assists with the transportation of students to Rockhampton for residentials and the Woorabinda Knowledge Centre provides internet access for study purposes. This work is supported through ISSP funds.

Studies undertaken through the following employers include:

- Certificate III in Horticulture Practices – Woorabinda Land and Sea Range Program
- Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) to commence in Term 1, 2023
- Certificate IV in Community Services or the Diploma of Community Services – Yoonthalla Services
- Certificate III in Business – Woorabinda Shire Council
- Certificate III in Business - Woorabinda State School
- Certificate III in Individual Support -Year 11/12 students Wadja Wadja High School
- Certificate IV in Fitness - PCYC

The CQUniversity Indigenous Girls Academy at Baralaba State School also supports 20 girls from the Woorabinda community in the participation in secondary school, through academy activities and bursaries.

### **1.1.3. Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS)**

In 2022, 191 Indigenous students were admitted to CQUniversity's funded STEPS program. This number equates to 10.7% of all STEPS students and is a 0.4% increase from last year's enrolment numbers. Of these 191 students, 29 students successfully completed their studies in either Term 1 or Term 2. A further 31 students are due to complete at the end of Term 3, and 61 are planning to continue the course in 2023. A total of 70 students withdrew from the course, but it is expected that some of these students will return to study when their personal circumstances permit. The online enrolments were significantly higher with 116 students enrolled online compared to 75 students on-campus.

First Nations STEPS students and their tutors continue to receive printed copies of their textbooks and study guides. This initiative is enabled through ISSP funds. STEPS students also continue to receive support from the ISSP funded tutoring service and the careers team.

### **1.1.4. Bachelor of Medical Science (Pathway to Medicine)**

In 2021, CQUniversity introduced a medical school pathway program in partnership with the University of Queensland (UQ). This innovative three-year undergraduate course is available to students graduating from Year 12, in the year of application. Offered at the Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses, successful completion gives direct entry into UQ's four-year Medical Doctor program provided at Rural Clinical School sites in Bundaberg, Harvey Bay and Rockhampton.

Fifteen applications were received from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students and three offers to commence the course in 2022 were accepted.

Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty AC and her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM gave keynote addresses to welcome and inspire the students, at events held in Bundaberg and Rockhampton. The Bundaberg Health Services Foundation and the CQ Hospital Foundation provided the students with personally engraved stethoscopes as a symbol of the community's support for their future as doctors.

The Pathway to Medicine is committed to supporting the students by arranging and sponsoring activities such as:

- Student's attendance at UQ Indigenous medical student events and NAIDOC Week celebrations.
- Mentoring opportunities by Indigenous GPs in the local community and between CQUniversity and UQ students.

- Attendance at the Rural Medical Association and Rural Doctors Association Queensland conferences.

Two applications were received from Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander students for the 2023 intake, however both students did not progress further.

To increase the student cohort, the Regional Medical Pathway First Nations Working Group, comprising of CQUniversity, UQ and the Central Queensland and Wide Bay Hospital and Health Services, are working in collaboration with the student and admissions and the marketing and communications working groups, to develop a recruitment strategy.

### 1.1.5. Partnerships

The following partnerships demonstrate the variety of ways in which CQUniversity engages with schools, not-for-profit organisations and industry. These partnerships are aimed at increasing students' aspirations and facilitate improved access to university for First Nations students.

**Buralaigm Weiber** (meaning 'place of learning' in Gooreng Gooreng) is a 20-week program, funded by Australia Pacific LNG. In 2022, a First Nations staff member was employed to coordinate the program with 23 year three and year four students from Gladstone West State School. The school viewed the program as a great success and implemented two school-based classes for non-Indigenous students.

18 First Nations year eight students from Gladstone attended an annual four-day **Yallarm (place of shells) Monadelphous Indigenous STEM camp** at the Boyne Island Environmental Education Centre (BIEEC). The program is developed by the BIEEC in conjunction with CQUniversity and is funded by Monadelphous. It aims to give students a taste of a future STEM career. Students engaged in a series of science, cultural and technology activities that included raft making, shelter building and investigation of ecosystems. CQUniNews story available [here](#).

CQUniversity Gladstone campus hosted **Pre-QUIP**, a program for Indigenous year 10 students funded by Australia Pacific LNG and Shell QGC with events held at the Gladstone and Rockhampton North campuses. This event forms part of the career development program to investigate potential career opportunities in the region.

CQUniversity continues to support the **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF)** through hosting Year 12 graduation ceremonies in the Rockhampton and Mackay regions. Year 12 students, schools, families and the community participated in these events which bring together Indigenous students from many schools across each region to jointly celebrate the successful completion of Year 12. news story available [here](#).

Support of the **Kutta Mulla Gorinna Special Assistance School (KMG)** established on the CQUniversity Mackay (Ooralea) campus continued through a partnership involving co-sharing of facilities, study and pathway options and outreach activities. KMG students undertook courses in Certificate II in Engineering Pathways, Certificate II in Hospitality, Certificate II in Salon Assistant and the White Card Short Course. Career education activities were delivered to 79 students as part of CQUni Connect.

The **Indigenous Girls Academy** is a partnership between CQUniversity, Baralaba State School and Mount Morgan State High School. The academy is committed to supporting and enabling First Nations women in making active choices towards realising their full potential in all aspects of their development and wellbeing. In 2022, academy participants engaged in weekly school visits, two leadership camps (CQUniNews story available [here](#)), National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week, end of year school celebrations, school awards and community programs at Woorabinda.

More than half of the Academy participants received a QCoal Bursary to support their individually identified needs. The bursaries assisted with schooling, readiness for study or transition to work.

The Academy celebrated school graduations, transition to work and further education for several Academy participants. The Academy is jointly funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), QCoal Foundation and the Matana Foundation.

The **BHP Mitsubishi Alliance** and CQUniversity five-year strategic community partnership has entered its final year, with negotiations underway for a further five-year contract. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and disruptions and the additional funding reallocated from the AIME program, CQUniversity sought to extend the current BHP contract and scholarships provisions through until June 2023. These scholarships enable First Nations students to live, study, and contribute to their home communities. Since the beginning of the partnership, 14 First Nations students have been supported to completion of their studies, including four students graduating in December 2022. These graduating scholars include teachers, occupational therapists, nurses, lawyers, medical scientists, exercise and sport scientists, paramedics, and psychologists who contribute to the prosperity of regional communities across Queensland. (CQUniNews story available [here](#).)

In 2022 the BHP/CQUniversity partnership funded and supported an additional 11, two-year Indigenous scholarships valued at \$20,000 each, to commence in Term 1, 2023. CQUniversity is very pleased with the academic achievements and results of the BHP Indigenous scholars.

The collaborative **Whanu Binal Indigenous Entrepreneur Program** supports First Nations entrepreneurs from ideation to growth strategies and is sponsored by Arrow Energy and delivered by CQUniversity. Now in its third year, a total of 28 First Nations participants were guided by six First Nations program mentors. Participants interacted with Indigenous presenters over 32 on-line yarning sessions and discussed topics such as how to start a business, business accounting, procurement practices, entrepreneur mind-sets, well-being and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property. The successful program enables participants to connect with each other and learn about networks to tap into. Whilst some participants realised that running a business was not suitable for them, others secured business deals or won a contract with a mining company. (CQUniNews stories are available [here](#) and [here](#)).

#### 1.1.5. Marketing

CQUniversity's **See It. Believe It** Indigenous 2022 student campaign delivered a university funded recruitment campaign for television, radio and print media. It featured current and graduated First Nations students and promoted links to First Nations student specialist support, scholarships and news. This campaign will also be undertaken in 2023.

Indigenous Student Engagement website is available [here](#) and the recruitment video is available [here](#).

## 1.2. Scholarships, bridging/enabling support and outreach activities.

### 1.2.1. Outreach Activities

The Widening Participation and Partnerships team provides the following suite of programs, aimed at improving access to university by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These programs include the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funded [CQUni Connect](#), [Start Uni Now](#) and [Start TAFE Now](#) programs.

**The CQUni Connect program** is CQUniversity's widening participation program delivering career education aspiration-raising programs to students from low SES backgrounds. The program engaged with over 2200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which comprised almost 20% of the total student participants from schools in Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and western Queensland regions. School leavers

were supported to make the transition to university through the provision of a QTAC voucher, which covers the cost of the QTAC application fee.

**Start Uni Now (SUN) Program** enjoyed a 13% increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants compared with the previous year. Students studied 20 different units across the three terms with 63% undertaking a STEM related unit.

**Start TAFE Now (STN)** saw 142 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students undertake a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course while at school, including 8% at Certificate III, IV or Diploma level. Targeted programs were offered to provide opportunities to engage students to pursue careers in the health and trades fields. Donor funded bursaries by Ergon Energy and Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal were provided to 20 students undertaking a STN course. (CQUniversity social media [here](#)).

The Widening Participation Team has entered a joint research collaboration, comprising of eight Queensland universities through the Queensland Widening Tertiary Participation Consortium. The project funded through the Australian Government Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program, will utilise a strengths-based approach to work in selected Queensland regions and with regional priority groups, in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to help prepare and build learners with successful study capabilities.

### 1.2.2. ISSP Scholarships

In 2022, 93 scholarships were awarded, compared to 71 in the previous year.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of 2022 ISSP scholarships and payments.

**Table 2:** ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2022 payments<sup>1</sup>

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total <sup>2</sup>	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	11,100	6	11,100	6
Undergraduate <sup>4</sup>	170,775	78	19,762	4	98,172.35	323	288709.35	405
Post-graduate <sup>5</sup>	8,000	4	-	-	16,552.15	3	24,552.15	7
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>178,775</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>19,762</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>125,824.50</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>324,361.50</b>	<b>418</b>

In 2022, the scholarships were renamed '**Dare to Be Deadly**' (D2BD), following the naming convention for all ISSP funded scholarships. This change aims to make the Indigenous scholarships more noticeable and inviting to First Nations students and link to the other Dare to Be Deadly programs coordinated by the Indigenous Student Engagement team.

The number of applications in Term 1 exceeded the yearly ISSP budget allocation, due to an increased promotion and awareness building exercise and greater student demand. An additional \$100,000 funded by the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) paid for Term 2 and Term 3 applications.

This funding supported:

- Term 2, 2022 - 15 x D2BD Launch Scholarships in lieu of the D2BD (ICECS) Scholarship to assist students from regional areas and/or low SES backgrounds with expenses associated with undergraduate study and 6 Technology Bursaries.

- Term 3, 2022 - 3 x Technology Bursaries and 49 Boost Scholarships in lieu of the D2BD (ICECS) Scholarships.

Table three shows a breakdown of the 2022 bursaries as shown in the Reward section.

**Table 3:** Breakdown of 2022 Bursaries

Indigenous Commonwealth Professional Registration Bursary	3
Indigenous Commonwealth Graduation Registration Bursary	31
Indigenous Commonwealth Dare to Be Deadly Laptop Bundle Bursary	19
Indigenous Commonwealth Dare to Be Deadly Bookshop Bursary	277
Indigenous Commonwealth dare to Be Deadly Emergency Grant	1
Jilbay RHD Academy Finishing Stipend	1

For a list of scholarships visit: [List of current scholarships](#)

## 2. Progression (outcomes)

### 2.1. Strategies to improve unit success rates and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The responsibility for student support has been embedded university-wide amongst a number of departments and all schools. Strategic partnerships have been developed to facilitate a shared knowledge and skills base across the University. Teams that work closely together include, but are not limited to, the Office of Indigenous Engagement, the Indigenous Student Engagement team, the Scholarships Office, the Academic Learning Centre, Marketing, Governance, Widening Participation, Student Health and Wellbeing, the Tertiary Education Division, the Strategic Engagement Directorate and the Office of Research. Key teams such as the Office of Indigenous Engagement and the Indigenous Student Engagement team operate within the Research Department and the Student Engagement team, respectively. Importantly they are both Indigenous led, with all staff in the Indigenous Student Engagement team identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The following data shows success rates broken down into the three course types: enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Success rate measures academic performance by comparing the equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) of units passed to the EFTSL of units attempted.

Table 4 shows the success rate for the Enabling course. In 2022, the success rate increased by 0.2% compared to the previous year. Whilst the pass rate in 2022 decreased by 5.72 EFTSL, the fail rate in 2022 decreased by 5.87 EFTSL. The withdrawal rate in 2022 increased by 0.38 EFTSL compared to the previous year.

**Table 4:** Success rate for Enabling course.

Year	Success rate	Pass	Fail	Withdrawn
2020	53.1%	43.75	32.7	5.87
2021	52.7%	38.37	33.12	1.37
2022	52.9%	32.65	27.25	1.75

Table 5 shows the success rate for the Undergraduate level. In 2022, the success rate increased by 2.2% compared to 2021. The pass rate in 2022 remained the same compared to 2021. The fail rate in 2022 decreased by 13.62 EFTSL and the withdrawal rate in 2022 increased by 2.12 EFTSL. Enrolment rates decreased by 0.38 EFTSL in comparison to the previous year.

In 2022, with the easing of COVID restrictions, anecdotal evidence showed that many students returned to the workforce. Some withdrew from study or reduced their study load from full-time to part-time. These students continue to receive support from the Indigenous Student Engagement team to facilitate their return to studies or transition to completion.



**Table 5:** Success rate for undergraduate courses

Year	Success rate	Pass	Fail	Withdrew	Enrolled
2020	69.03%	257.62	101.50	12.37	1.12
2021	69.30%	267.25	108.62	9.50	5.75
2022	71.5%	267.25	95.0	11.62	5.37

Table 6 shows the success rate for the Postgraduate level. In 2022, the success rate decreased by 5.3% compared to 2021. The pass rate in 2022 decreased by 3.87 EFTSL, compared to 2021. The fail rate in 2022 increased by 0.37 EFTSL, and the withdrawal rates in 2022 increased by 0.12 EFTSL. Enrolment rates increased by 3.37 EFTSL in comparison to the previous year.

**Table 6:** Success rate for postgraduate level

Year	Success rate	Pass	Fail	Withdrew	Enrolled
2020	76.7%	19.37	3.25	2.62	3.50
2021	80.3%	20.37	4.75	0.25	3.75
2022	75.0%	16.50	5.12	0.37	7.12

The success rates have increased for enabling and undergraduate students, with a decrease for post graduate students. Noticeably, the withdrawal rates have increased for enabling, undergraduate and post-graduate students. The following strategies have been put into place to improve transitions.

### 2.1.1. Supports for Undergraduate and Coursework students.

The **Indigenous Student Engagement Team (ISE)** provide support to First Nations students through the following culturally responsive initiatives:

The ***Dare 2 Be Deadly (D2BD) Student Journey*** is a culturally safe program that offers online and on-campus programs, to ensure that First Nations students are prepared for studies and connected to services. It is centered on the Indigenous Student Framework developed by Dr Melinda Mann. This program was recognised for its excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Regional, Remote and Rural Education at the 2022 Australian Rural Education Awards. CQUniNews story available [here](#).

The ***Pre-Orientation Program (POP)*** aims to engage students face-to-face and prepare them for their studies. This engagement enables staff to develop connections with students and enhance a sense of belonging and have positive impact upon retention and completion rates.

In week three of each term, the ***Oh My Goodness (OMG)*** program engages with students to ensure that they connect with social and academic support, are reminded of census date, and supported to complete relevant paperwork.

The ***IAS Tutoring Program*** continues to be managed by the Indigenous Student Engagement Team (ISE). Program details can be found on page 12 of this report. This program is ISSP funded.

***Online One Mob Yarning Circles***, co-led by the ISE team and Wellbeing Officer, the Yarning Circles provided staff with the opportunity to actively mentor participants and provide a culturally safe place for students to yarn with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the CQUniversity footprint. Themes included:

- social & emotional wellbeing
- cultural mentoring
- two ways of knowing & learning
- cultural identity
- engagement opportunities

In partnership with the Student Counselling and Wellbeing team, 38 Indigenous students received **First in Family Welcome Packs**, as part of the HEPPP funded Equity Eligible program for promoting student mental health.

### 2.1.2. Data systems and student engagement

CQUniversity has invested in software systems that record and monitor engagements with students aimed at providing support and increasing completion rates. Students are surveyed on their experiences and this feedback informs improvements to university support and programs.

**CQUniSuccess** is a system designed for academics to monitor student engagement with moodle and other platforms for success. **MYCQU** is a portal for students to engage with their studies, academic and professional staff for assistance as required.

The Indigenous Student Engagement team have embedded the D2BD Student Journey into the Sugar CRM system, where student relationships can be built to best support their needs, including letters of support or cultural advocacy.

The team also provides support and strategies to First Nations students, who are not achieving satisfactory academic progress and have been placed into the Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) system. The team also contacts students who have withdrawn from their studies to encourage re-enrolment.

Student engagement and progress is also monitored through the Moodle, Student One, AIMS and PULSE systems which are university funded.

Strategies directly funded by ISSP include all programs and support provided by the Indigenous Student Engagement team as described above.

### 2.1.3. Student Health and Wellbeing Programs

First Nations students benefited from attending the following programs managed by the Health and Wellbeing team.

**Counselling support** was provided to 110 self-identified First Nations students. The ISSP funded Indigenous Student Counsellor worked closely with the Indigenous Student Engagement team to manage the warm referral process.

Programs that continued in 2022 included the provision of Calm Time Sessions, the Mind Waves Study Smart program, with four First Nations student completing the course and the Cultivating Wellness Workshop series, where 5 (22% of attendees) First Nations students completed.

New initiatives include:

In June 2022 the counselling service added the **additional report codes** of Cultural Identity and Sorry Business to reflect other reasons Indigenous students seek counselling support.

**Virtual Cuppa & Yarn** is a weekly online space for First Nations staff and students to catch up and take time out of their busy lives to yarn with other mob in a safe space. The initiative commenced in May 2022, with 14 Indigenous students attending. It is co-hosted by the Student Emotional and Well-being (SEWB) student counsellor and the Indigenous Student Wellbeing Project officer.

**Social and Emotional Well-Being (SEWB) Check Ins.** Additional student support is provided by the SEWB Counsellor and the Counselling and Wellbeing team who can refer First Nations students to the Indigenous Student Wellbeing Officer to undertake check-ins.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA) Training.** The Indigenous Student Wellbeing Project Officer delivered 2 training sessions: one for staff, with nine non-Indigenous and one Indigenous staff member in attendance and one for students: with six non-Indigenous and five Indigenous students in attendance. This year, a First Nations staff member completed accreditation as an AMHFA trainer.

**The Wellbeing Excursion Program** is aimed at supporting students and staff social and emotional wellbeing. The SEWB Counsellor has held discussions with the Woorabinda Traditional Owners and Elders, the Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council, PCYC and Yoonthalla Services regarding protocols to undertake cultural excursions in partnership with CQUniversity. Wellbeing excursions in Rockhampton with the Darumbal Traditional Owners will commence in 2023.

**CQU Out of Hours Student Support Line** established in September 2021, provides out of hours (including weekends and public holidays) counselling and crisis support for students living in Australia. Six First Nations students have accessed the service in 2022.

94 **Wellbeing packs** were disseminated to Indigenous First Year Bachelor students for their improved wellbeing. The packs include products sourced from First Nations suppliers and are aimed to promote well-being, provide information about access to internal support services and build a sense of belonging with the University. Positive feedback received from students showed that they felt grateful, special, excited, supported and connected to CQUniversity due to receiving the Wellbeing Pack.

### **Study Abroad**

One First Nations Bachelor of Laws student received New Colombo Plan funding to be part of a contingent of ten students who travelled to Vietnam in November/December 2022. The CQUniversity Animal and Law Protection study tour formed part of their Law Practicum unit. Additional ISSP funding was provided to cover the student's out of pocket expenses.

Two regional QLD students also attended a Youth Leadership event in New Caledonia and received financial support from the University to participate.

**The Academic Learning Centre (ALC)** provides support to students in the discipline areas of Academic Communication, Computing, Science, Mathematics and Statistics.

The ALC Advisors collaborate with lecturers and unit coordinators in the Embedding Academic Skills project. ALC staff plan activities and deliver workshop sessions that assist students to develop academic literacy and numeracy skills needed to be more successful at the unit assessment tasks. This project is Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funded and focusses on supporting domestic undergraduate students from a low SES background, students from regional areas and remote areas and First Nations students.

#### **2.1.4. Research by Higher Degree (RHD) students**

First Nations RHD students benefit from the support provided by CQUniversity's **Jilbay First Nations Research Higher Degree (RHD) Academy**. Originally named First Nations Research Higher Degree Academy, the Academy underwent a name change with formal endorsement from the Dean of School of Graduate Research. The new name better reflects the research that Jawun Research Centre and CQU First Nations staff and students are engaged in. Jilbay is a Jirrbal word from Far North Queensland gifted by the Jirrbal Elders to Professor Adrian Miller, the academy's Director. Jilbay means 'old people's wisdom, and in every essence of the word, it's the sharing of old people's wisdom that makes students clever (Jilbaybili), likewise making supervisors/fellows more culturally clever (Jilbaymali). Therefore, Jilbaybili (students) and Jilbaymali (supervisors) are the two critical components of the Jilbay RHD Academy.

One of many new initiatives is the employment of a First Nations academic and researcher to provide additional academic and Cultural advice to students and supervisors.

In its second full year of operations, having commenced on 1 October 2020, the Academy is reaching its goals of aiming to increase First Nations RHD enrolments and completions, building the research skills of First Nations RHD students, and to further develop the cultural competency of supervisors of First Nations RHD Students. Since January 2022, the Academy has grown by seven new enrolments, bringing the total number of Jilbay RHD students to 18.

A highlight for the year occurred when one Jilbay RHD Academy student was conferred with a PhD and a second student with a Graduate Certificate in Research. CQUniNews story available [here](#).

The Indigenous Research Stipend Scholarship, valued at \$35,000 per annum for three years, was awarded to a Jilbay Academy Master of Research student. A new internal scholarship, valued at \$37,500 per annum over a two-year period, was made available from the School of Graduate Research and awarded to another Academy student. This scholarship will be effective from January 2023.

One additional CQU scholarship (linked with the Manna Institute) was also awarded to an Indigenous student who is a Jilbay member.

In 2022, RHD students attended a five-day writing retreat and training workshop in Rockhampton in June and a four-day skill development workshop in Cairns in November. The students received guidance on how to write an academic paper, a thesis and journal articles and how to apply Indigenous knowledge research values and ethics in Indigenous research methods. Other presentations included sovereignty, self-determination and nationhood; research impact and translation, tips on how to develop a webinar and online presence, platform and research profile, and how to use Endnote and NVivo software. Most of the sessions were recorded and are available on the Academy Moodle site for future reference.

Aunty Cynthia Payne accepted the Academy's invitation to be a facilitator for the Jilbay Research Higher Degree Skill Development Workshop. As an Elder and Cultural Advisor, Aunty Cynthia's immeasurable knowledge, experiences and Indigenous world views informed the Indigenous research methods used by students, thereby significantly enriching their experience during that week.

There are currently 26 Jilbaymali (supervisors) of First Nations students, an increase of three academics in 2022.

A casual research worker has been employed to undertake a systemic literature review on supervisor training to better support First Nations RHD students. An evidence based Jilbaymali education support model for supervisors affiliated with the Jilbay RHD Academy will be informed by this research.

Development and promotions of the First Nations RHD Academy occurred via the [Academy webpage](#), promotion on the CQUni Yarning social media pages, and via word-of-mouth.

The Academy is required to submit a six-month progress brief and a 12-month annual report to the university's Research Committee governance group. It is jointly funded by the School of Graduate Research and ISSP.

The **School of Graduate Research** (SGR) continues to provide direct financial support, professional development and additional academic mentoring for RHD students.

First Nations RHD candidates were offered participation in the Thesis Completion Initiative program, which provided group-based coaching support. Two intakes were offered in 2022. Additionally, extraordinary COVID leave and access to “Pivot Pool” funding resources was offered to enable students to reconfigure their project activities to overcome COVID-related delays and disruptions. Ongoing training and support through the RHD intensives and SGR ad-hoc events also continued, including events such as the monthly Kindness Couch meditation sessions to help support wellbeing. (CQUniNews story available [here](#)).

## 2.2. Tutorial assistance

Tutorial assistance provided through the ISSP funded program is detailed in Table 7 below.

**Table 7:** Tutorial assistance provided in 2022.

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted <sup>6</sup>	Total number of tutorial sessions attended <sup>7</sup>	Total hours of assistance <sup>8</sup>	Expenditure <sup>9</sup> (\$)
Enabling	57	282	718.95	42,552.51
Undergraduate	214	2,291	4,698.95	278,116.88
Postgraduate	7	51	134.55	7,963.61
Other	0	0	7	414.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>2624</b>	<b>5,559.45</b>	<b>329,047.31</b>

Please note that the figures in the table are calculated around unique students assisted criteria as instructed.

Throughout 2022, a total of 59 Casual Learning Advisors were employed by the Indigenous Student Engagement (ISE) Team who manage Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) Tutoring Program. They were matched to 278 students, which is 14 fewer students than last year. A current Learning Advisor and Elder is engaged to also provide Cultural mentorship to the program.

The D2BD Student Journey continues to recruit and employ learning advisors to fill vacancies for applications in new fields of study being undertaken by students. The program provides consistency where students can continue with a Learning Advisor for the duration of their studies. The contracts for the Learning Advisors are reviewed and renewed every year to ensure they are providing culturally safe assistance, with student feedback received throughout the term.

An annual workshop for Casual Learning Advisors is conducted, in which the on-line First Nations Cultural Competency training for staff is promoted. A presentation by the Social Emotional Wellbeing Officer on ways in which the Advisors can assist students was also well received.

An appointment booking system was put in place, allowing students to apply for tutoring for the three terms and advise if they wished to continue with their current Learning Advisor. 289 applications were received by students for the year however, not all were eligible, due to undertaking studies in Vocational Education or not being enrolled to study with CQUniversity.

## 2.3. The Indigenous Support Unit and other Indigenous student support activities

Indigenous student support is embedded across several units within the University. The following programs of student support, engagement, advocacy and strategic direction are described.

## **The Office of Indigenous Engagement**

The Office of Indigenous Engagement (OIE) team is led by Professor Adrian Miller, Deputy Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, BHP Chair in Indigenous Engagement and Director of the [Jawun Research Centre](#). The OIE is part of the Research Division and staff are based at the Rockhampton North, Townsville and Cairns campuses.

The OIE continues to develop and lead the implementation of key strategies such as the [CQUniversity Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy \(ILES\)](#), that has now been replaced by the [CQUniversity Innovate RAP](#) and CQUniversity's [support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart](#).

Highlights for 2022 include:

### **Reconciliation Action Plan**

CQUniversity's new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024 was launched during NAIDOC week in July 2022, at an event attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives and local dignitaries. A university-wide forum was held to present the document to the wider staff and student body. The RAP contains 18 actions and 175 deliverables that aim to build on multiple Indigenous programs underway at CQUniversity, as well as design and commence a series of new initiatives intended to embed reconciliation and advance Indigenous outcomes across the learning and teaching, research and student engagement portfolios.

A key action in the RAP is to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes by increasing the access, participation and completion of programs and degrees.

Professor Miller, led the RAP Working Group that consulted widely with staff, students and community to develop the plan and now leads the newly formed Coordinating Committee that oversees implementation and reporting.

Other achievements mentioned in this report include the draft Cultural Competency Framework and the *First Nations Community Engagement: Industry Guide Phase I*, (p.14), and the *Talking Culture and Acknowledgement of Country Video Series*, (p.15).

The OIE was also successful in nominating prominent First Nations Academics and Community advocates for Honorary Doctorates.

### **Honorary Doctorate**

In recognition of the services to Indigenous research reform and the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, Professor Yvonne Cadet-James was awarded an honorary doctorate.(CQUniNews story available [here](#)).

Dr Mark Wenitong was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for his work in Indigenous health which in recent years has focused on systems policy and research translation. (CQUniNews story available [here](#)).

### **Jawun Research Centre**

Directed by Professor Adrian Miller, the Jawun Research Centre, (formerly known as the Centre for Indigenous Health Equity Research (CIHER), sits within the Office of Indigenous Engagement. The Jawun Research Centre capabilities are in system sciences, public health equity research, impact assessment and evaluation, health economics, evidence reviews and translation/advocacy.

From June 2022, ISSP also funded an innovative project to develop a model of collaborative engagement and research with Indigenous organisations based on the development and implementation of collaborative agreements with five Indigenous organisations.

The collaborative agreements will include:

- 1) engaging and preparing Indigenous students from those organisations to study with CQU; and
- 2) developing opportunities for impactful research including for Indigenous Research Higher Degree students.

The following organisations have indicated support: Yumba-Meta Ltd (Townsville); Woorabinda Shire Council, Mamu Health Service (Innisfail); Palm Island Community Council; and Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service (Yarrabah). An initial meeting was held in Cairns in December 2022, focussing on data sovereignty and its role in Indigenous priority research. Further collaborations and knowledge exchange is planned, with the role of students to be further clarified.

### **The Indigenous Student Engagement Team**

The Indigenous Student Engagement Team operates within the Student Engagement Directorate and provides a direct link between general student support services and Indigenous specific support services. The team, comprising eight Indigenous staff members based on the Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses, provides mentoring and advice regarding the services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This includes the IAS tutoring program, financial guidance around scholarships, cultural advocacy, safe learning assistance, basic program information and referrals to both internal and external supports.

Staff also participate in University and STEPs orientation days, open days and events such as NAIDOC week and are members of recruitment and scholarship panels. Staff continue to host on-campus and online events to connect with students in creating a culturally safe place to yarn and connect with others in their fields of study while sharing some of the challenges and impacts of life, work, study balance.

ISSP funds partially subsidise salaries of OIE and Indigenous Student Support staff.

## **2.4. The strategies to improve cultural competency of staff and/or to ensure the university offers a culturally safe and enriching environment.**

### **2.4.1. Programs and Projects**

A mix of new and existing programs operated in 2022. New initiatives are described below:

**A First Nations Cultural Competency Framework** has been completed and will be submitted to CQUniversity Academic Board in 2023. The Framework outlines the three levels of cultural competency education required for all staff and students at CQUniversity - introductory, intermediate and advanced/graduate - and provides a series of training activities and courses to be completed. Staff cultural competency will be incorporated within professional development and targeted to the role, and for students integrated within the First Nations course curriculum required under the RAP. The OIE will be employing two new Indigenous staff members (Academic B and HEW 5) to design and deliver First Nations cultural competency education programs during 2023. Both positions are HEPPP funded.

An introductory online module in First Nations Cross-Cultural Competency for staff was implemented in 2020 and is now available as a non-credit bearing micro-credential. The *First Nations Cross-Cultural Competency for Students: It Starts with Understanding* is a short online module delivered as a non-credit bearing micro-credential commencing in 2023. Further courses and programs will be developed for the next stages of cultural competency training, as outlined in the First Nations Cultural Competency Framework. These will combine online courses with workshops and engagement with community organisations and other intercultural experiences.

As of December 2022, 272 additional employees had completed CQUniversity's online **First Nations Cultural Competency induction training**.

CQUniversity Australia and BHP launched the ***First Nations Community Engagement: Industry Guide Phase I***, 22 June 2022 at the CQU Ooralea Campus, Mackay.

This important document was developed specifically for industry and organisations that engage with First Nations communities in Australia. The next phase of this work is to develop a *Guide* for First Nations community engagement from communities' perspectives, incorporating engagement protocols and identifying what First Nations communities want from their industry engagement and/or industry partners. The BHP sponsored Guide can be found [here](#). (Television news story available [here](#)), (CQUniNews article available [here](#)).

Audio and visual productions produced by Office of Indigenous Engagement are available for individual listening or lecturer inclusion as teaching aids, in classroom presentations. Production of both series began in 2021 and continued through 2022.

A series of podcasts titled ***Talking Culture*** aim to increase staff and student awareness of First Nations people, through listening to a collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices that relay personal accounts of Country, history, cultures and knowledges and how these aspects of life are active in the lives of the storytellers. Eleven podcasts were produced in 2022, with six currently available online and a further five to be added in 2023. Storytelling voices include those of an artist, a filmmaker, a cultural museum curator, a CQU academic, a private businesswoman and a corporate manager. The podcasts are available online [here](#).

Production of a series an ***Acknowledgement of Country Video Series***. This series currently includes six productions, with a seventh production near completion. Protocol and copywrite restrictions allow for use by CQUniversity staff only. These videos deliver individual approaches to acknowledging Country and may be used to begin events or meetings or introduce lectures. The videos are not tied to a specific region, cultural knowledge or Country and are designed to be used across the University's national footprint. They are located for download in the non-public area of the CQU website available to staff only login. There have been many enthusiastic responses from those listening to the podcasts and using the videos, from staff, students and external stakeholders.

### **Cultural Safe Spaces**

CQUniversity has committed to creating and enhancing culturally safe campuses and has developed the draft ***CQUniversity Culturally Safe Space and Place Guidelines***. The establishment of additional Cultural Space and Place at campuses is designed to welcome, engage, support and promote the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, alumni, and visitors.

Cultural gardens and a yarning circle were established at Mackay Ooralea campus. The opening of these facilities included the traditional naming of the gardens. An indoor Culturally safe space was developed at Mackay City campus and is due for completion in early 2023.

### **Indigenous Procurement**

Sections 4.8 and 4.9 of the CQUniversity's Procurement Policy and Procedure (available online [here](#)) includes the University's commitments to Indigenous-focussed procurement. The CQUniversity Procurement Policy and Procedure is currently under review with the intent to expand the information and processes available on Indigenous supplier procurement. In addition to the key performance indicators (KPI's) outlined in the CQUniversity Strategic Plan, a Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP) is presently under development. The CPP will include reference to the KPI's in the Strategic Plan, feeding these down into the procurement strategies developed within individual departments and schools.

A StaffNet directory of information and resources, plus an Indigenous supplier register designed to assist buyer engagement with Indigenous suppliers, are available to support staff to meet these KPI's.



The University's annual spend with First Nations owned businesses has increased in 2022, by \$54,000 despite the cessation of a major contract. An additional 16 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander suppliers were engaged. During 2022, the Procurement team and the Office of Indigenous Engagement worked closely to develop an agreement template to simplify and standardise the engagement of Indigenous Australians to provide Welcome to Country, Cultural Advisory, Ceremonial and panellist services. Significant consultation was undertaken with the First Nations Council of Elders and Leaders to determine the pricing guidelines.

Existing programs designed to offer a culturally safe and enriching environment continued to operate successfully and were further enhanced.

The **Billabong Camp** brand designed by Balarinji, is increasingly used throughout the University appearing on learning materials, reports and presentations that relate to Indigenous matters and features these designs in buildings. ISSP funds enabled the design to be made available for marketing materials. The artwork is also featured on campus information signs. For example, the Rockhampton North campus has signs at several entrances welcoming students, staff and visitors in language and provides an acknowledgement of the Darumbal Traditional Owners of the land on which this campus is situated.

The **campus map** featuring the campus Traditional Country names is available from the marketing image catalogue for staff use. The campus map can be viewed [here and on page two of this document](#).

The **Indigenising the Curriculum Community of Practice (CoP)**, which aims to promote and share knowledge about First Nations history, culture and learning, met eight times throughout 2022. The CoP changed its name to First Nations in Learning and Teaching in response to a desire by participants to better reflect the intent and remit of the group. The focus in 2022 was on sharing practice within courses that demonstrated the ways in which First Nations knowledge is incorporated into course delivery, either in content or assessment.

It covered such topics as reviewing guides to Indigenising the curriculum and policies on Indigenous leadership and applying First Nations ways of knowing to the curriculum. A focus item on the supervision of Indigenous research candidates was also held. The University funded CoP was supported by an active platform on Microsoft teams, which enabled staff to share ideas and resources.

### **Social Innovation**

The Festival of Change is an on-line learning festival, hosted by CQUniversity and is designed to celebrate and inspire changemaking. At this year's event, CQUniversity staff, students and community members were invited to listen to Dr Marjad Page share his inspiring journey with students at the Hymba Yumba Independent School. CQUniNews article available [here](#).

As described in previous reports, CQUniversity continues to enhance cultural competency and cultural safety through its promotion of the **2022 Calendar of Significant Indigenous Dates**, awarding of **Cultural sashes at graduation** and its support of **the Uluru Statement from the Heart**. The **Indigenous Wellbeing Officer** continues to engage with students, staff and community around the ten year Wellbeing Strategy, which will build upon the University's current Mental Health Plan – [Mind Waves](#).

All CQUniversity Policy documents are available from <https://www.cqu.edu.au/policy/view-all-policies>.

#### **2.4.2. Public and campus events**

Staff celebrated **NAIDOC** by connecting with students and communities in Western Australia, Victoria and throughout Queensland. Events ranged from school visits, hosting trivia nights, recognising Elders at a morning tea, holding a painting workshop and attending the NAIDOC march and hosting stalls at the Family Fun Day Expo.

ISSP funding provided financial support to host the NAIDOC events. News stories were published on the internal website StaffNet and the social media pages.

**National Reconciliation Week** was celebrated by the launch of the Acknowledgement of Country videos mentioned on page 15.

Events held on CQUniversity campuses included a Pop-Up Lunch provided by an Indigenous owned and operated catering service on the Brisbane campus, a weaving session at the Cairns campus and a seminar titled *'The rise of virtual yarning'* held by the Jawun Research Centre. A morning tea designed to update staff on the Cultural Gardens and Yarning Circle was held on the Mackay campus, an afternoon tea to launch the 'Reading opens doors' library was enjoyed on the Melbourne campus, and live music and entertainment and student perspectives on how they are brave and making changes in their community was enjoyed by participants at the Rockhampton campus. Other celebrations included a Waranara Tour and Lighting of the Sails on the Sydney campus and a Be Brave and Make Change event on Townsville campus. National Reconciliation Week activities were summarised in this [video](#) sent to all staff and shared on social media pages.

**National Sorry Day** was commemorated on 26 May by the staff and students at the Cairns campus to honour and reflect on the Stolen Generation, the impact of past policies that are still affecting people today, and what "Sorry Day" means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during a Yarn & Create session.

This time of reflection was spent viewing the National Sorry Day testimonials and some staff members and students shared their own experiences. Meaningful and robust discussions about past and current policies, and how we can heal moving forward were held. Attendees were invited to mindfully create and decorate hands and feet stencils, contributing to the Hands & Feet display that built upon last year's creations.

### **Digital and social media**

CQUniversity showed continued commitment to creating and sharing Indigenous content both to internal and external audiences, with more than 60 Indigenous-related stories pitched to media and shared across websites and social channels.

Indigenous students and staff were featured in profiles, podcasts, publications and videos with those stories generating significant engagement across all mediums from traditional to social media.

The [CQUni Yarning](#) Facebook group and [LinkedIn profile](#) continued to grow and promote CQUniversity's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-related activities, job opportunities, research, staff and student success stories and events.

Indigenous-focussed news stories are available [here](#). Many CQU-generated stories were picked up and published by various Indigenous-focussed and mainstream media outlets including Channel 7 News, First Nations Telegraph, Koori Mail and CQUniNews.

## **3. Completions (outcomes)**

### **3.1. Strategies to improve award course completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.**

Table 8 below shows the number of CQUniversity First Nation student completions. The data shows a decrease in Enabling, Undergraduate and Post Graduate completions in 2022, compared to 2021. In total, completions decreased by 61 First Nations students in 2022 compared to 2021.

**Table 8** First Nations student completions

Course level	2020	2021	2022
Enabling	72	61	30
Undergraduate	55	72	52
Postgraduate	10	20	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>92</b>

Aligning with the ASCED Broad Field of Education groupings, table 9 below shows completions by discipline for undergraduate students.

**Table 9** Undergraduate First Nations student completions by discipline

Discipline	2020	2021	2022
Agriculture, Environmental and Related	1	0	0
Architecture and Building	1	0	0
Creative Arts	4	4	1
Education	4	6	6
Engineering and Related Technologies	2	2	1
Health	27	39	30
Information Technology	1	1	2
Management and Commerce	5	5	1
Natural and Physical Sciences	0	1	0
Society and Culture	10	14	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 10 shows completions by discipline for postgraduate students. The greatest number of graduations occurred in the Health Discipline for both undergraduates and postgraduates, with numbers decreasing by ten in 2022 in comparison to the previous year.

**Table 10** Postgraduate First Nations student completions by discipline

Discipline	2020	2021	2022
Education	0	2	4
Engineering and Related Technologies	1	2	0
Health	4	14	5
Information Technology	0	1	0
Management and Commerce	2	1	1
Society and Culture	3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

As previously outlined, strategies aimed at improving the completion rate, include the provision of scholarships; tutoring through the Indigenous Assistance program; provision of a culturally safe learning environment and support programs from Schools and Departments throughout the University.

The Jilbay RHD Academy, in partnership with the School of Graduate Research, is focussed on supporting First Nations Research Higher Degree Students and their supervisors with the aim to increase graduation rates.

Professional and academic staff have received professional development to improve cultural safety and appropriate support to First Nations students.

First Nations Alumni and recent graduates receive support from the Alumni team through career support, an optional alumni [profile page](#), unlimited access to the [CareerHub](#) and are encouraged to join the CQUConnect Mentoring Program. The platform has over 390 mentors available, including 10 Indigenous mentors in a dedicated 'First Nations Mentors Group', to support students and graduates. Additionally, two editions of the Indigenous Alumni e-newsletter '*CQUni Yarning*' were published in 2022.

In 2022, two Indigenous Alumni (out of four recipients) were presented with an [Outstanding Alumni Award](#). Both award winners featured prominently in media and engagement activities. Dr Marjad Page Outstanding Alumnus of the Year was a powerful speaker at a session during the Festival of Change and is now a member of CQU Council. Nareeta Davis, Alumnus of the Year for Early Career Achievement, was a guest speaker in a number of academic units, in addition to her usual tutoring / mentoring duties.

In 2022 CQUniversity celebrated reaching the milestone of conferring 1000+ Research degrees. As part of the celebrations, [Dr Maria Raciti](#) – CQUniversity's first Indigenous PhD graduate, was featured through a podcast and media activities. Other Indigenous researchers were also highlighted and now feature on the alumni profiles page. Over 40 Indigenous alumni profiles are promoted on a dedicated page on the university website.

ISSP funding partially funds OIE staff to work with the Alumni Relations Team to develop news stories and provide content for the newsletter, as well as engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni. The cooperative work with the alumni program is HEPPP funded.

## 4. Regional and Remote Students

CQUniversity is well established in the delivery of distance education with more than half of the current student cohort made up of students studying off-campus, many of whom are based in regional and remote areas. In 2022, of the 951 First Nations higher education students enrolled, 792 students were recorded as living in regional and remote areas, with 158 residing in major cities. Students who must study internally or at a particular campus are able to access the 12 campuses and the Regional University Centre partnerships, situated in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

In 2022, 586 HEPPP eligible (Low SES, Regional and Remote and/or Indigenous Students) First in Family Students commencing their first term of study received a '**First in Family Welcome Pack**'. 92 or 15.7% of the recipients identify as First Nation students.

Current BHP-funded research titled '**Future proofing Indigenous communities; Establishing community hubs**', aims to identify and understand the processes required to develop and implement community hubs which respond to community needs and build capacity. The project also aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the hubs and to develop a framework for their establishment. Developing and implementing community-designed and driven hubs requires building partnerships through collaboration with First Nations communities and key stakeholders.

As previously described, the Woorabinda Indigenous Education, Enterprise and Research Hub, supports students in Woorabinda to continue to study and live in their community and travel to campus for residential.

Works undertaken through the **Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund (NAIF)** loan have enabled the continuation of campus upgrades and the introduction of new digital platforms and upgrades to existing digital platforms (digital works). These upgrades and enhancements have provided regional and remote students the opportunity to access facilities and support services equivalent to those being provided on the metropolitan campuses.

The University services regional and remote students through the well-established delivery of online teaching, support services, scholarships and bursaries to assist students with start-up costs, including textbooks, uniforms,

technology and equipment. Accommodation scholarships, travel bursaries, industry placement scholarships and work readiness bursaries are also available. The HEPPP funded First Nations Scholarships Officer supports students with information regarding available ISSP, external and donor-funded scholarships and can provide students with information about how to access Abstudy relocation assistance.

Table 11 shows the scholarship data for remote and regional students. Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships showed an increased level of demand. The need for Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships increased from the previous year, due to the students need to relocate away from home to study.

Please note that in 2022, bursaries and the emergency grant, as identified in Table 3, p.7, have been reported in the ‘Reward’ category in Table 11 below.

**Table 11** ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students<sup>10</sup>

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2021 Payments	140,000	70	4,000	1	-	-	144,000	71
B. 2022 Offers <sup>11</sup>	140,000	70	20,000	4	148,200	366	278,200	414
C. Percentage <sup>12</sup> (C=B/A*100)							193.19	
<b>2022 Payments</b>	<b>178,775</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>19,762</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>125,824.50</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>324,361.50</b>	<b>418</b>

## 5. Eligibility Requirements

### 5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

#### 5.1.1. How CQUniversity has met its requirements under section 13 of the ISSP guidelines.

**CQUniversity’s new Innovate RAP 2022-2024** includes a commitment to continue embedding First Nations content into all new and updated courses, with 50% of all courses to incorporate benchmarked content by June 2024. Academic Board and all course and curriculum committees are required to prioritise the integration of suitable content. An identified Academic C position will be recruited to lead development of the curriculum and embedding content across courses and discipline areas. Academic staff will be supported with resources and professional training on cultures and histories, approaches to developing content and assessments, as well as learning and teaching methods. This new position, set to commence in early 2023, is University funded. It is supported by two HEPPP funded positions; a Senior Learning Designer/Lecturer – First Nations Cultural Competency and an Associate Learning Designer, who are also due to commence in 2023.

The current Learning and Teaching framework also requires that “Indigenous ways of knowing and doing will be embedded within all CQUniversity courses.” Various courses in disciplines including Indigenous studies, health sciences, nursing and midwifery, social work, psychology, education, law, criminology, engineering and environmental science have standalone discipline specific units or embedded modules or topics in units. A First Nations Curriculum Framework is under development and will focus on vertical integration of content in courses, modules, learning activities and assessments, and applying Indigenous pedagogies. The First Nations Learning and Teaching Community of Practice provides a regular forum for staff across the University to share approaches and resources to developing and teaching a First Nations curriculum.

CQUniversity's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate attribute was formally embedded into the University's Academic Information Management System in mid-2022, and all new courses or those being updated are required to specifically address how they incorporated First Nations knowledge within curriculum. By the end of 2022, 23 courses had been approved or renewed to include this information. All CQUniversity online units include an Acknowledgement of Country within the Learning Management System.

Cultural competency micro-credentials for staff and students were developed for delivery in 2023 on CQUniversity's online Be Different platform, and a Professional Certificate in First Nations Learning, History, and Culture was proposed for consideration as a non-award micro-credential. It is anticipated that this course will be approved in 2023 for delivery, which will provide important professional development opportunities for staff.

The University meets its requirements under section 13 of the ISSP Guidelines through the following programs:

- established linkages with schools and VET providers to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enrol at CQUniversity. This is evidenced by staff attendance at Indigenous careers expos, university open days and programs undertaken by the CQUni Connect and Indigenous Student Success teams.
- Indigenous student outreach and well-being and support is embedded throughout the university through the provision of the enabling programs, tutorial assistance and the employment of Indigenous Student Engagement Officers, the Office of Indigenous Engagement staff, the Indigenous Wellbeing Project Officer, and the Indigenous Scholarships Officer.
- the Jilbay RHD Academy that aims to grow and develop First Nations RHD students and their supervisors.
- the Indigenisation of the Curriculum program and the Community of Practice (CoP).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduate Attributes that are embedded in the Student Graduate Attributes policy.
- a standardised template for online courses that enables an Acknowledgement of Country in the introduction tile for all units offered online at CQUniversity.
- the CQUniversity Acknowledgement to Country videos, podcasts and palm cards.
- the online First Nations Cultural Competency Training for staff.
- NAIDOC week, Reconciliation week and celebration of other significant days.
- the use of dual language signs on the Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Perth campuses. Murals painted on Rockhampton North campus buildings and Yarning Circles situated on the Bundaberg and Rockhampton North campuses.
- specific Cultural spaces at Townsville, Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses.
- the Billabong campfire motif has been utilised in briefs, advertising, presentations and on campuses to promote Indigenous culture and symbolism.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks that have been acquired and displayed across all CQUniversity campuses.
- teaching staff in the School of Graduate Research have had incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and/or methodologies into their teaching delivery, written into their annual Pep workplans.

### **5.1.2. The practical implementation and evaluation of the Indigenous Education Strategy:**

The completion and approval of CQUniversity's Reconciliation Action Plan in 2022 provided clear guidance for development and adoption of the proposed First Nations Education Strategy. This provided cause for review of approach, and priority was given to development of the Cultural Knowledge Framework which is a foundational document that supports and complements the Strategy. The Education Strategy will be completed in 2023 following a further review and consultation process.

## 5.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy 2020 to 2025

### 5.2.1. How CQUniversity has met its requirements under section 12 of the ISSP guidelines.

The current **First Nations Workforce Strategy** (FNWS) was approved in February 2021 and can be found [here](#).

In October 2022, a dedicated part-time First Nations Employment Officer commenced within the People and Culture Directorate. This University-funded position is responsible for coordinating and implementing strategies to assist with achieving outcomes as outlined within the First Nations Workforce Strategy, the CQUniversity Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024 and the [CQUniversity Strategic Plan](#). The Officer provides six-monthly progress reports to the First Nations Success Strategy Committee, which are shared with the Joint Consultative Committee and the University Management Committee.

The [First Nations Employment webpage](#) contains information for prospective First Nations staff and encourages job applicants or employees to contact the First Nations Employment Officer for further assistance.

Table 12 shows the numbers (headcount) of First Nations staff from 2020 to 2022.

**Table 12** Number of First Nations staff employed at CQUniversity 2020-2022

Year	Continuing		Fixed Term/Casual		Total
	Academic	Professional	Academic	Professional	
2020	3	13	11	13	40
2021	6	12	15	26	59
2022	6	18	20	30	74

The number of First Nations staff steadily rose from 40 in 2020, to 59 in 2021 and to 74 in 2022 with 2.34% of the CQUniversity Workforce identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. On-going recruitment limitations caused by the budgetary impacts of COVID-19 continue to be a barrier to reaching the 3% target.

First Nations continuing academic staff numbers have grown by three in 2022 compared to 2020, however remained steady from the previous year. Fixed term numbers have increased year on year.

This increase in First Nations staff has largely been achieved through:

- People and Culture diversifying their networks to advertise roles in various Indigenous and community print media, social media platforms and increased professional and Indigenous community networks to ensure more coverage.
- An increase in identified positions advertised and filled, using 'Special Measures' to improve the employment outcomes of First Nations people. Eight identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander roles were advertised and filled in 2022 by First Nations people, compared to seven identified positions advertised in 2021, with five positions filled by First Nations applicants.
- Staff consistently encouraging First Nations community members to apply for all CQUniversity roles, not just Identified roles.

In late 2022, the University established a talent pool for First Nations Research Higher Degree Candidates. This serves to allow Jilbay RHD Academy candidates to be put forward for consideration, for professional and/or academic job opportunities around the University. The talent pool aims to provide paid employment opportunities that will complement and extend RHD students' research skills development and professional skills. Given the early stage of establishment, there are no outcomes yet to report.

Two FNSSC committee positions are offered to First Nations academics and opportunities for research partnerships with the Jawun First Nations Research Centre are available. These added responsibilities provide experience and evidence when applying for academic promotions.

CQUniversity's Innovate RAP 2022-2024 includes several requirements to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics. HEPPP and special initiatives funding has been secured for the appointment of two identified Academic positions; an Academic C and Academic B to develop cultural competency and curriculum components.

All of the KPIs from the Workforce Strategy have been included in the RAP, with some additional activities including encouraging professional development and career advancement, targeted recruitment programs, and reviewing HR policies to remove barriers to participation. All RAP actions/deliverables include KPIs for all executive members (Vice-Chancellor and President, Vice-President's), as well as Deputy Vice-Presidents, Directors, Deans and Deputy Deans, and staff in management positions.

The University employs Professor Adrian Miller, who holds the roles of Deputy Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, BHP Chair in Indigenous Engagement and Director of the Jawun Centre for Indigenous Research.

### **5.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism**

The First Nations Success Strategies Committee (FNSSC) continues to improve its overview of ISSP-funded programs and strategies through regular process reviews and improved strategic direction.

Its influence in University-wide programs and policies that support First Nations students, staff and communities has broadened through its increased consultative role in the review of policies and offer of ISSP funded services and products that are incorporated into general business University wide.

The adoption of the CQUniversity Innovate RAP has provided a vehicle for the University to demonstrate its commitment to delivering education, training and research that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The ISSP funded programs overseen by the committee contribute significantly to the achievement of the RAP actions.

I look forward to working with the committee that continues to encourage and oversee successful and innovative programs and products aimed at providing rewarding and culturally safe study, employment and engagement experiences for First Nations staff, students and the wider community.

Professor Adrian Miller, Chair First Nations Success Strategies Committee, Deputy Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, BHP Chair in Indigenous Engagement and Director of the Centre for Indigenous Health & Equity Research. Email: [dvp-oie@cqu.edu](mailto:dvp-oie@cqu.edu)

### **5.3.2. The University's Indigenous Governance mechanism: The First Nations Success Strategy Committee (FNSSC)**

The FNSSC comprises of the following positions: the Chair, two Indigenous Academics, one of whom also holds the Deputy Chair position, a senior Indigenous employee, two Indigenous Professional employees, the Director Student Engagement, the Executive Officer, Office of Indigenous Engagement, a representative from the Directorate People and Culture and two Joint Consultative Committee nominees. The Committee is chaired by Professor Adrian Miller, Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) and is supported by a Management Accountant Support Officer and a Committee Secretary. Eight of the eleven committee members are Indigenous and hold senior management or co-ordinator roles within the university. The Committee's Terms of Reference are publicly available [here](#).

In 2022, the Committee's People and Culture representative was replaced by the newly appointed First Nations Employment Officer. This University-funded position is dedicated to overseeing the actions of the First Nations Workforce Strategy.



An additional Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) member representing the NTEU, joined the committee. Both union members attend the meetings when matters regarding the workforce strategy are discussed.

The FNSSC held six meetings and the FNSSC Executive Committee (4 members and 1 observer) held five meetings throughout the year. Membership attendance remains high. In addition to the standard items for discussion listed in previous ISSP reports and the improvements made by the committee as outlined below, the committee also considered the following items:

- the development of principles for use of ISSP funding
- development of a FNSS teams site for committee members
- the proposal to endorse a schedule of fees to standardise First Nations Cultural Advisory services across the University.
- provision of feedback into the University's Code of Conduct review
- a presentation by the Vice President, Students and Corporate Services on an overview of funding received by CQUniversity specific to supporting First Nations students
- enterprise Agreement negotiations relating to First Nations students and staff
- participation in NIAA's consultation on the ISSP funding guidelines.

A self-evaluation survey, undertaken by members provided an opportunity to review the committee's performance and suggest areas for improvement. Survey results indicated that more than two thirds of respondents felt that the committee performed very well against its terms of reference and there was high satisfaction regarding the secretariate support.

Suggestions for improvement included a greater strategic focus on assessing the success and impact of ISSP funded programs and a presentation providing project updates by coordinators in receipt of ISSP funding to the committee.

As a result of last year's survey responses, meeting frequency increased to approximately once every two months. A FNSSC member induction handbook for new committee members has been developed and provided to all existing and new committee members. The reporting process has been enhanced by making forms more intuitive and committee feedback on six-monthly reports and funding requests is also provided to applicants.

### **5.3.2. Activities that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions of the university, curriculum development and or evaluation /review**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved in a range of decision-making processes at CQUniversity. The DVP (Indigenous Engagement) currently holds the following roles:

- Member of the CQUniversity Council
- Member of Academic Board
- Member of Research Committee
- Member of the University Management Committee
- Member of the Research Committee of Academic Board (with full rights of audience and debate)
- Chair of the BHP Community and Indigenous Scholarships panel
- Director of CQUniversity's Jawun Indigenous Health and Equity Research Centre.
- Lead role in the Jilbay RHD Academy

Additionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from throughout the University are active participants in a range of other decision-making activities at CQUniversity including:

- Member of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
- Representation on scholarship and job recruitment panels
- Support for activities associated with representation within the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)

- Campus Life Committees for several CQUniversity campuses
- Membership of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)
- Representation in lead roles in the Jilbay RHD Academy

The RAP also has a dedicated action to ‘Ensure active participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and representatives in CQUniversity’s institutional decision-making and planning processes.’ Activities include recruiting an additional leadership position, membership on Council and its sub-committees, and encouraging participation on University committees, including external members.

Dr Marjad page is an elected member of the University Council and is a descendant of the Kalkadoon, Waanyi and Ganggalidda tribes of North-West Queensland. He is a rural generalist (GP specialist) and aims to help non-First Nations families understand how they can partner with First Nations peoples to make their dreams of self-determination become a reality.

The ***First Nations Council of Elders and Leaders*** (FNCEL).

The FNCEL expanded its membership in 2022, to include additional representatives from across Queensland. With the guidance of its members, it continues to act as a mechanism for fixing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges and approaches in the engagement, governance and educational structures of the University. The final report of the FNCEL six-month trial pilot project was finished and will provide reference for CQUniversity staff to facilitate increased partnerships and collaborations.

### **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group and Committee**

CQUniversity’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) July 2022- July 2024 was overseen by the RAP Working Group that met four times during 2022 to review development and implementation of actions.

Governance is supported by a newly formed RAP Coordinating Committee that leads on implementation and oversees reporting. The Coordinating Committee comprises members drawn from senior management, including Indigenous staff, and external Indigenous representatives to facilitate a wider voice and steering by the local community. Both the RAP Working Group and RAP Coordinating Committee report regularly to University Management Committee and to CQUniversity Council, and provide updates on progress against timelines, as well as any challenges and resourcing needs. All progress reports will be made available to staff, and the University is further required to report annually to Reconciliation Australia and at the completion of the RAP.

## Additional information for completing the template.

<sup>1</sup> This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2022. 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 2022 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.

<sup>2</sup> These 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.

<sup>3</sup> Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>4</sup> Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>5</sup> Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>6</sup> Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

<sup>9</sup> Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

<sup>10</sup> Only record amounts which required payment during the 2022 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.

<sup>11</sup> Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2022 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2022 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2021 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).

<sup>12</sup> This data confirms the university's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.