

# Indigenous Student Success Program

## 2020 Performance Report



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### 1. Enrolments (Access)

The [CQUniversity's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023](#) *Our Future is You*, aims to position the University as a leader in providing seamless, full spectrum education pathways and gives CQUni an unrivalled reputation for engagement and inclusivity. CQUniversity is proud to have one of the highest ratios of students from low socio-economic, mature age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and first-in-family backgrounds. Indigenous students EFTSL rate has progressively increased each year from 2016 to 2019 (NIAA, 2020) because of the strategies that have been put into place to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments. In 2020, there was a [17% increase in Indigenous student](#) enrolments.

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

##### 1.1.1. Tertiary Entry Program (TEP)

The Tertiary Entry Program (TEP) is an enabling course, delivered by the School of Access Education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. TEP assists students to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to undertake university study and provides a pathway for entry into University.

TEP Courses offered in 2020 include Culture and Learning, Independent Learning, Indigenous Australians and Education, Indigenous Australians and Health, Indigenous Australians: Business and Economy, Indigenous Australians: The Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Introduction to Law in Australia. TEP is undertaken through online education with three TEP residential schools held over the three terms throughout the year. The program is also delivered to students who reside in correctional centres around Australia.

In 2020, 35 students were enrolled in TEP, which was lower than in past years owing to the two enabling courses (TEP and STEPS), merging in Term 2, 2020. The TEP staff worked in a collaborative partnership with the Indigenous Student Support Team, to promote TEP and tutorial and pastoral support in the wider CQUniversity footprint. The residential schools were not undertaken, owing to COVID-19 restrictions; however, closer monitoring of students was ensured and Zoom sessions were offered in lieu of planned residential school sessions.

##### 1.1.2. Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS)

STEPS is an enabling course provided by the School of Access Education. STEPS provides a pathway for people wishing to gain entry to and succeed at university.

STEPS is suitable for people who may be returning to work after some time away; required to meet pre-requisite subjects for a desired diploma or degree; or desiring additional support to gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to successfully enter and undertake further study. Units include Preparation Skills for University, Essay Writing for University, Technical Writing for University, Fundamental Mathematics for University,

Intermediate Mathematics for University, Technical Mathematics for University, Computing Skills for University, Positive Learning for University, Introductory Physics, Introductory Biology and Introductory Chemistry.

STEPS requires between one to six terms to complete. Students have the option to enrol in term one or term two and each term is approximately four months in duration.

In 2020, 153 Indigenous students were admitted to STEPS. This number equates to 8.2% of all STEPS students. Of these 153 students admitted, 22 withdrew prior to census in the term they commenced, 42 withdrew after census, 76 are still currently enrolled and 13 completed their studies. The split between online and on campus study for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students is slightly skewed towards online study, with 73 students enrolling on campus and 80 studying online.

Completion time for both TEP and STEPS students also depend on the results of the student's diagnostic testing (rating literacy, numeracy and computing competence), the time available for study, and the requirements of the diploma or degree in which the student wishes to enrol. Often Indigenous students will enrol in TEP and cross-enrol in some STEPS units that match individual needs and career aspirations. Both TEP and STEPS programs are university funded.

### **The Indigenous Assistance Scheme (IAS)**

The ISSP funded IAS is a tutoring service offered to students enrolled in specific TEP and STEPS enabling units that develop the students' knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake undergraduate level study. The delivery of these courses has resulted in the ability of students to be retained and successful in their study.

### **Career support**

Unit coordinators and lecturers in STEPS have close ties with the Careers Team. The team's collaborative approach and their on-going commitment ensures that students undertaking enabling courses receive appropriate career guidance. The Clever Career Planning module, developed by the Careers Team, is customised to meet students' needs and is an important part of a core unit in the STEPS course, SKIL40025 Preparation Skills for University. The module encourages students to adopt a proactive, informed approach to their study and career planning. As part of the delivery of this material, one of the careers advisors regularly presents an online lecture. The team also monitors the relevant discussion forum on the SKIL40025 unit Moodle site. Students benefit from direct access to the counsellors who are reassuring and respectful in their approach. This program is university funded.

#### **1.1.3. The Woorabinda Education, Enterprise and Research Hubs**

CQUni further cemented its partnership with the Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council (WASC) and Yoonthalla Services Woorabinda, by signing a two-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to continue with the establishment of an education, enterprise and research hub in the community. In March 2020, 18 Woorabinda students received their Certificate 1 in Conservation and Land Management in the first graduation ceremony held in Woorabinda.

ABC news article available [here](#).

A Woorabinda Traditional Elder connected with Central Queensland Innovation and Research Precinct (CQIRP) scientists to partner in research on traditional plants and medicines. He has also worked with an Enterprise Hub member, to develop a business plan for hand creams and medicines made from traditional plants.

#### **1.1.4. Partnerships**

The following partnerships are examples of the many ways in which CQUniversity engages with industry and corporations that result in increased access to university for First Nations students.

## **BHP Mitsubishi Alliance**

The BHP and CQUniversity five-year strategic community partnership is now in its third year. The purpose of the partnership is to address key challenges faced by communities in the BHP footprint, through the funding of four key complementary programs. These include BHP Indigenous and BHP Community Scholarships, a BHP Chair in Indigenous Engagement, delivery of the AIME program and Central Queensland First Nations community-focussed research. Meetings with BHP and their partners have been facilitated to develop a First Nations Community Engagement Industry Guide that aims to provide useful information for those who engage with First Nations communities and to complement different organisation's Indigenous community engagement approaches.

Additional funding was successfully awarded to CQUni's Office of Indigenous Engagement through the BHP Vital Resources Fund for a research project titled: *'Local government disaster management: assessing COVID-19 disaster management responses in First Nations communities'*. The research aims to evaluate local government disaster management plans in Queensland impacting First Nations families and communities to identify key challenges and gaps that have occurred during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Whanu Binal Indigenous Entrepreneur Program**

A partnership with Arrow Energy and CQUni has created an [award-winning pilot program](#) which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and individual workers in Arrow Energy's operational footprint.

A total of 28 participants - First Nations business owners or those who have a business idea to develop - were guided by 20 program mentors, 12 of whom are CQUniversity alumni. The program was delivered using methods including eLearning content and a virtual 'yarning circle'.

The Entrepreneurs were also able to choose content tailored to support their individual learning needs whether they are in the start-up, growing or closing phase of their business. This unique program also provides networks to support the participants, such as 'speed dating with mentors' via LinkedIn.

## **Gidarjil Development Corporation**

CQUniversity continued its six-year collaboration with the Gidarjil Development Corporation, having worked together on projects including seagrass restoration, giant mud crab and fish health. Gidarjil Development Corporation's new vessel Guardian Warrior will be docked at a pontoon at CQUniversity's Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre (CMERC) and will further enhance the organisations' ability to work together.

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

### **1.2.1. Outreach activities**

CQUniversity received grant funding through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), ensuring Australians from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, who have the ability to study at university, have the opportunity to do so. In 2020, CQUniversity used HEPPP funding to implement and continue to deliver several projects across the University; most of these projects impacted Indigenous students positively. The following programs specifically focus on Indigenous students:

#### **a) The Indigenous Pathways Program**

The Indigenous Pathways program is a refreshed version of the long-standing CAP-ED program. Indigenous Pathways continue to focus on engagement with Indigenous communities to understand aspirations and build support for individuals to undertake further studies. The program was significantly impacted by the closure of the Woorabinda, Yarrabah and Cape York communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and funding ceased at the conclusion of 2020.

b) **The Student Engagement Directorate**

The Widening Participation and Partnerships team provide the following suite of programs aimed at improving access to university by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These programs include CQUni Connect, Start Uni Now, Start TAFE Now and Indigenous Pathways.

**CQUni Connect**

CQUni Connect is the University's widening participation program that delivers career and education aspiration-raising programs to students from low SES backgrounds. In 2020, the team engaged with over 1164 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which comprised approximately 16% of total student participation. Participation numbers were significantly impacted by COVID-19, with programs unable to be undertaken during Term 2 of the school year. Students from both primary and high schools in Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Western Queensland regions participated in a range of tailored programs. School leavers were supported to make the transition to university through the provision of a QTAC voucher which covers the cost of QTAC application fee. Furthermore, CQUni Connect supported Indigenous participants through partnerships with Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Project Booyah and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundations (QATSIF).

**Start Uni Now (SUN) Program**

SUN enables participation from high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 10–12, looking to commence undergraduate studies while still at secondary school. SUN units are available online and are supported by a dedicated Schools Engagement Team, with further support from the Indigenous Student Engagement team. COVID-19 impact was minimal as the delivery model for SUN is based around 'learning anywhere, anytime'. Students who successfully complete SUN may be eligible to apply for direct entry into undergraduate study at CQUniversity. In 2020, the SUN program had 25 students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is a 250% increase on 2019 numbers. The Schools Engagement team has team conducted targeted outreach programs in partnership with the Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton, as part of their Indigenous careers program for students in Year 10 – 12 and have also engaged with students at careers expos, subject selection nights and school information sessions.

In Term 3, 2020 the IAS tutoring service extended assistance to SUN students and was well received by the two students that engaged with the tutoring program.

**Start TAFE Now (STN)**

Previously known as VET in Schools (VETiS), the Start TAFE Now (STN) program enables students in years 10–12 to commence vocational education studies as part of their senior schooling education. Students can study STN courses on-campus, by distance or as part of a partnered school arrangement. Students who complete STN courses have a pathway into tertiary education and are encouraged to use their studies as credit towards a diploma or an undergraduate degree. STN courses were impacted by COVID-19, due to a five week pause of on-campus classes resulting from the closure of Queensland schools. The STN program had 322 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students identify. This is a 79% increase of participants from 2019. A key objective was delivery of targeted programs to provide opportunities to disengaged Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to attain qualifications including Certificate II in Hospitality, Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Work Preparation and Certificate II in Engineering Pathways.

c) **The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)**

AIME is a successful national outreach program managed within the Office of Indigenous Engagement, which assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete high school and progress to

higher education. The program builds self-confidence and pride in being Indigenous in students from years 7-12 and develops student aspirations to graduate from year 12 and continue on to further education or employment. Students learn about higher education and career opportunities and access free mentoring support. The project also engages university students and community members trained as program mentors. Mentors receive focussed leadership, cultural training, and have a unique opportunity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

AIME completed its third year of a five-year sponsorship with BHP. COVID-19 forced many restrictions upon the 2020 program, however, 128 mentees were still able to participate. AIME reached out to schools to show their support and introduced Imagi-Nation {TV}, a live daily TV show on YouTube. The show brings mentors into viewers homes and helps make sense of today and imagine tomorrow. The show is broadcast through AIME's partners to over 6 countries and across the AIME university and school network. School students were also able to participate in Imagi-Nation classroom and ROCKET which consisted of a one-hour program hosted by a student, to a live audience of fellow students.

**Table 1 Scholarships - breakdown of 2020 payments<sup>1 2 3</sup>**

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total <sup>4 5</sup>	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling <sup>6</sup>	\$22,500	15	0	0	0	0		
Undergraduate <sup>7</sup>	\$76,500	51	\$8,268	3	0	0		
Post-graduate <sup>8</sup>	\$6,000	4	0	0	0	0		
Other								
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>\$8,268</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>\$113,268</b>	<b>73</b>

The figures indicated above are on the number of payments, not the number of students supported as some students received the scholarship in both Term 1 and Term 2 and is counted as two separate scholarships. The number of unique students is as follows:

Enabling Education Costs = 12

Undergraduate Education Costs = 39

Postgraduate Education Costs = 2

The ISSP funded Scholarships Officer has continued to provide greater access to scholarships and bursaries by Indigenous students and support to scholarship recipients. Bursaries aimed at providing students with just-in-time financial assistance for expenses encountered at various stages of the student lifecycle were also available. The bursaries assisted with the purchase of textbooks, preparation for placements including vaccinations, uniforms, first aid and CPR courses, travel expenses to attend residential school or placement, graduation ceremony registration fees and professional registration fees needed for graduation or employment. Additional bursaries were also provided in 2020 in response to hardship resulting from COVID-19 lockdowns and transitioning to online study. These bursaries included wellbeing packs promoting healthy eating, drinking water, exercise and staying connected to family and friends during lock downs.

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

## 2. Progression (access and outcomes)

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

Whilst the actual success rate showed a very slight increase, CQUniversity's position compared to the 40 institutions currently participating in ISSP, decreased by four positions from 2016 to 2019. (NIAA, 2020). The following strategies have been put into place to improve transitions:

#### Undergraduate students

The Indigenous Student Engagement Team manage the IAS Tutoring Program. In 2020, 78 Casual Learning Advisors were employed and matched to 167 students. All IAS Learning Advisors (tutors) have an undergraduate degree. More than half the Learning Advisors have completed postgraduate programs. Where possible, students are matched with a Learning Advisor from their specific field of study.

The Indigenous Student Support Team operates a 24/7 lab with broadband capability on both the Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses. Indigenous students also utilise the facilities available to all students and participate as members of the CQUniversity community, at all CQUniversity Campuses.

CQUni staff regularly monitor students' academic progression through a database called CQUni Success. The database provides insight to the students' engagement with systems such as moodle, contact with colleges and academics and assignment submission and academic progress. Academic Liaison Officers from each of the colleges work with the Indigenous Student Engagement team to facilitate retention and success. The Student Engagement and Corporate Services Directorate can refer students to CQUni's Indigenous Student Counselling service or external service providers when required. This includes crisis or emergency housing support, emergency relief and support for family and domestic violence. Promotional material regarding community-based agencies is available at each of the campuses and study hubs.

The ISSP funded Indigenous Student Counsellor was appointed at .5 FTE during 2020 to provide counselling support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students. The position provided 202 occasions of service to students, of which 37 were First Nations students (18% of total occasions of service). Overall, the Student Counselling Service provided 556 occasions of service to First Nations students (to 88 individual students).

Additionally, the Indigenous Student Counsellor provided a group debrief session for students and staff who had been impacted by an incident involving a fellow student. Their contributions to team planning, case discussions, resource development and service delivery led to improving the cultural competency of the team.

The Wellbeing team also assisted with student check-ins in 2020 due to the impact of COVID19 on students and communities. An online Yarning Circle 'ONEMob' was established to provide a culturally safe place for students to come together and yarn. The fortnightly sessions covered a range of issues from social and emotional wellbeing, cultural mentoring and yarning with Elders and other students to maintain connections and supports.

All undergraduate and post-graduate students undertaking study at CQUniversity, who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, receive regular emails from the Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) and Indigenous Student Engagement Officers throughout study term. These emails provide information regarding the following:

- Welcome to term
- Available scholarships, cadetships, and international student exchanges
- How and where to access academic and personal assistance at CQUniversity
- Meet and greet opportunities (provided at some campuses).

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

Additionally, students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and register as having a disability, receive disability support at CQUniversity. Each student receives the assistance of a disability adviser, who consults about reasonable accommodations to match the student's needs and to develop an individualised accessibility plan outlining required adjustments. The Indigenous Student Engagement team work closely with the Inclusion and Accessibility Support team. Permission is sought from the student to share information with the Learning Advisors who are then able to incorporate any learning needs. Inclusion and Access support is HEPPP funded.

### **International**

The International Directorate has continued to engage with the Office of Indigenous Engagement to identify opportunities for Indigenous students to participate in student mobility programs. One PhD student from the School of Business and Law attended the CAUTHE Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

Due to COVID-19, many programs scheduled to operate and go abroad in 2020 were unable to proceed and limited virtual opportunities were available.

However, CQUni initiated and has been part of a Regional Universities Network mobility group that is focused on increasing outbound opportunities for regional and remote students who may not otherwise be able to participate in offshore learning experiences. In 2021, CQUni was advised that a joint application submitted under the New Colombo Plan programme by four regional universities specifically to provide an Indigenous-led study tour to the Pacific for Indigenous students was successful. We look forward to being part of this first specific tour for regional and remote Indigenous students that will be organised and conducted under the auspices of Elders and Indigenous academic staff from the consortia university members.

### **Postgraduate students**

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Higher Degree (RHD) students receive a funded study place under the Commonwealth's Research Training Program. The School of Graduate Research (SGR) provides direct support for project costs (\$6,000 for PhD students and \$4,000 for Masters students) and for conference support (\$4500 for PhD students and \$3000 for masters students). Where necessary, the SGR will also contribute to salary costs for external supervisors to ensure that RHD scholars have access to appropriate expertise from their disciplinary domain as well as cultural context. ISSP funded CQUni bookshop vouchers were distributed to all Indigenous RHD candidates.

CQUni has ten Indigenous RHD candidates active in their programs or under examination, representing five EFTSL. The School of Graduate Research recorded three new Indigenous Research Higher Degree Commencements in 2020. One Indigenous student was enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Research qualification, (the first Indigenous student to join that course). Unfortunately, there were no Indigenous RHD graduates in 2020.

The Research Division awarded one Indigenous-specific Research Higher Degree Scholarship comprising of \$35,000 living stipend per annum and an Indigenous-specific Summer Research Scholarship comprising \$4000 in living allowance and a \$2000 project grant.

The School of Graduate Research RHD Load Strategy sets out the growth agenda from 2017 to 2021, with an Indigenous target minimum of 10 new Indigenous enrolments identified. This continues to be in place and is being actively pursued.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RHD students are notified of all specific Indigenous research capacity building or research-specific Indigenous events by the Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement).

The University has continued to grow its Indigenous RHD supervisory capacity. Twenty-seven RHD supervisors attended the *Cultural Awareness/Supervising Indigenous Candidates and Projects* session coordinated by SGR in 2020. It was a pre-requisite that Supervisors complete the online First Nations Cross Cultural Competency program prior to joining the session.

### First Nations Research Higher Degree (RHD) Academy

The *First Nations RHD Academy* is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research-focused Community of Practice jointly hosted by the Office of Indigenous Engagement (OIE), and the School of Graduate Research. It was established on 1 October to address the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with research qualifications. The Academy aims to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RHD candidates' research capacity and provide cultural competency training to their non-Indigenous supervisors. The Academy will also develop and undertake Indigenous research projects and establish partnerships in collaboration with other CQUniversity Schools, Research Centres, and Institutes. First Nations students are supported in the following areas: academic and research skills, cultural and pastoral training, financial support, writing retreats, publication and career development workshops.

The Academy supports 10 (headcount) Indigenous RHD students from various disciplines. Despite the late launch, the Academy had provided exceptional learning and teaching opportunities from the beginning of 2020 through:

- Two writing retreats (in February and November)
- Two online academic training sessions via zoom
- Monthly Zoom Meetings (1-2 hrs)
- Regular phone catch-up sessions with students
- Online mentoring sessions as required via zoom.
- Creation of an Academy website [First Nations RHD Academy](#)
- Development of an Academy Moodle site and on-line discussion forums via the Moodle site.

The Academy is jointly funded from the School of Graduate Research and ISSP funds.

## 2.2. Tutorial assistance provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2020

**Table 2a** Tutorial assistance provided in 2020

Level of study	Number of students assisted	Total hours of assistance <sup>9</sup>	Expenditure <sup>10</sup> (\$)
Enabling	21	449	
Undergraduate	144	3,693.75	
Postgraduate	2	76	
Other			
<b>Total</b>	167	4,218.75	254,826.00



**Table 2b Indigenous Support Activities provided in 2020<sup>11</sup>**

Activity <sup>12 13</sup>	Number of student participants	Expenditure (\$)
Tutoring	167	254,826.00
Scholarships and salary	73	316,740.00
Wellbeing Project Officer program costs, salaries and Engagement Officers' salaries	1845	354,221.00
Counsellor	37	66,384.00
Yarning Circle/ Cultural Spaces	30	1,624.00
NAIDOC	150	4,824.00
First Nations RHD Academy and salaries	10	162,047.00
Woorabinda Hub & Community Engagement activities and salary	20	79,954.00
FNCEL	0	29,653.00
First Nations Student Cross Cultural Competency training	0	40,000.00
Branding - OIE Engagement and Communication Strategy including the Billabong Camp motif.	85	25,419.00
Woorabinda Graduation	18	12,078.00
Dare to be Deadly Video	0	12,000
TEP Printing	35	4,123.00
Virtual Acknowledgement to Country – Graduation version	820	3,000.00

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

Indigenous student support is the responsibility of several units across the University that provide the following programs of student support, engagement, advocacy and direction.

#### The Office of Indigenous Engagement (OIE)

The Office of Indigenous Engagement team consists of sixteen staff members and is part of the Research Division. The team is headed by Prof Adrian Miller, Deputy Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, BHP Chair in Indigenous Engagement and Director of the Centre for Indigenous Health and Equity Research, with staff based on the Rockhampton North, Townsville and Cairns campuses.

Prof Miller's multi-skilled team holds considerable experience in the areas of community engagement, research, strategic policy and program initiation and maintenance, governance, administration and communication.

The Office of Indigenous Engagement drives informed policy development to influence the way in which the University provides higher education, training, research opportunities and engagement and to manage the BHP funded Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Program (AIME).

The OIE has led the development of the [CQUniversity Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy \(ILES\)](#). The Strategy is a socially innovative, whole-of-university approach to education, training, and research focused on Indigenous Australians. The ILES offers processes and possibilities for undertaking change maker

research; expanding the University's presence and reach in communities; driving sustainable and responsive changes in training and leading excellence in higher education.

The OIE was also instrumental in CQUniversity public support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which proposes constitutional recognition for Australian First Nations people. In doing so, CQUniversity stands with First Nations people in [support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) and aims to increase the organisational collaboration with First Nations People and engagement and partnership with Elders.

The OIE auspices the Centre for Indigenous Health Equity Research and the First People's Think Tank.

### **The Centre for Indigenous Health Equity Research**

The [Centre for Indigenous Health Equity Research](#) (CIHER) conducts engaged research to inform better decisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. Directed by Deputy Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, Professor Adrian Miller, CIHER boasts an impressive membership with a local, national and extended international focus through networks with research groups, communities, services, government and industry. CIHER has attracted significant grants from the ARC, NHMRC, government agencies and international funding organisations. CIHER members publish to journals nationally and internationally and supervise Indigenous and non-Indigenous PhD, masters and honours students.

CIHER is the first dedicated Indigenous Health Research Centre in Northern Queensland that combines expertise in health equity, health economics, public health and impact assessment with policy and governance experience. Using a hub and spokes model, CIHER is expanding the scope of its research to multiple CQUni campuses including Townsville, Brisbane, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Adelaide and beyond.

The three key integrated areas of research strength are Indigenous health, disaster management and impact evaluation.

### **The First People's Think Tank (FPTT)**

In early 2020 the First Peoples Think Tank continued its work on a number of projects initiated during 2019 and also engaged with current issues relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In February, the FPTT held a campus-based event to commemorate the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, which included presentations from a community-based organisation working to reunite families affected by past governments' policies.

From April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about disruptions to the work of the FPTT, including the need for revision of the project plans for the International Savanna Fire Management Initiative. Whilst site visits were postponed due to international travel restrictions, site-based collaborators continued with monitoring and reporting works across several African pilot project sites.

In May 2020 the FPTT's report '[Great Barrier Reef Indigenous Tourism: Translating Policy Into Practice](#)', was released to the public. Funded by Reef and Rainforest Research Centre and the National Environmental Science Program, the report presented 12 recommendations relevant to Traditional Owner groups with interests in Great Barrier Reef tourism, mainstream tourism stakeholders and enterprises, industry bodies and regulatory and management authorities.

Due to the serious financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian tertiary education sector, CQUniversity underwent a major restructure in mid-2020. As part of this restructure, the First Peoples Think Tank was disestablished on 6 July 2020.

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

The Indigenous Student Engagement Team functions within the Student Engagement Directorate and provides a direct link between the provision of general student support services and Indigenous specific

support services. The team, comprising eight staff members provides advice regarding the services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) tutoring program, financial guidance around scholarships, cultural advocacy, safe learning assistance, basic program information and referrals. Referrals are made to the counselling and well-being team, the mentoring program, the Academic Learning Centre and the Inclusion and Accessibility Team for students requiring additional study support. Staff are based on CQUniversity Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Bundaberg campuses.

Assistance is provided to students in all Colleges at CQUniversity, with each Indigenous Student Engagement Officer working across the University Colleges. Relationships with academics have been strengthened, building their capacity to support Indigenous students.

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.

ISSP funds partially subsidise salaries of OIE and Indigenous Student Support staff and pay for the scholarships, well-being, counselling and the tutorial assistance programs.

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

### **Indigenous Wellbeing Officers**

The Indigenous Wellbeing Project Officers continued 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](#). The strategy is aimed at improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students at CQUniversity, as well as the implementation of culturally safe places on campuses and hubs. Consultations continue with Indigenous staff, non-Indigenous staff working in the Indigenous space, Traditional Custodians and community members. Due to COVID-19, progress on some of the culturally safe places was placed on hold until it was safe to re-engage with students, staff and community. Cultural spaces are being developed in Mackay, Cairns and Townsville.

### **The Billabong Camp design**

The ISSP funded Billabong Camp brand has been designed by Balarinji, a design company specialising in Indigenous design, to develop OIE brand motifs to reflect the unique identity of the Office of Indigenous Engagement. The artwork titled 'Billabong Camp' depicts time-worn tracks that lead to a shady place of water with clans gathering under paperbark trees after a long, hot journey. The design places people at its centre – referencing students, researchers, people and community.

The design has been made available to university staff, when creating learning materials, reports or presentations that relate to Indigenous matters.

The campus map featuring the campus Traditional Country names has been recently updated and is available from the marketing image catalogue for staff use. The campus map can be viewed [here](#). The Townsville Campus also developed a cultural space and promoted NAIDOC week and placed the Indigenous language map of Australia in key areas of the campus including the reception area.

## **Indigenisation of the Curriculum**

CQUniversity engaged in a significant curriculum refresh in 2020 (CQURenew), which reviewed the structure and delivery of undergraduate courses in accordance with a new Curriculum Blueprint. It was decided that specific implementation to 'Indigenise the curriculum' was out of scope for 2020. A broader project to consider the overall Indigenous strategy and better analyse completed work with regard to embedding Indigenous knowledge within coursework, was accomplished. The principle engaged was 'to do better, not quicker'. A new approach to assisting academic staff design courseware was also implemented, setting the groundwork for Learning Design and Innovation Directorate (LDI) learning designers, who worked with the Office of Indigenous Engagement. Opportunities for staff to embed Indigenous knowledges into course delivery and assessment in an authentic and holistic way, as appropriate to discipline were created.

Online First Nations Cultural Competency Training for Staff, implemented in 2020, demonstrated that it was having impact and academics are engaging with it. A specific example was seen when a question on appropriate terminology associated with Indigenous issues was raised at a Curriculum Committee meeting and addressed by a fellow committee member who had completed the training. It served as a reminder to the group of the importance of engaging with the training and being able to make informed decisions.

2020 saw the initiation of a new project (Gondwana Project) that aims to develop scenarios and experiences for students and staff that will make it easier to embed Indigenous knowledge into courseware. This ISSP funded project will commence in 2021.

## **Indigenous Graduate Attributes**

The Office of Indigenous Engagement and Learning and Teaching Services partnered to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures graduate attributes, approved at the Learning and Teaching Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board, on 12th June 2019. Technical revisions of the Academic Information Management System did not occur due to the impact of CQURenew in 2020, and accordingly, revised and new graduate attributes were not embedded into the various curriculum related documents. This will become focus work for 2021 and will require staff to map and describe how the Indigenous Graduate Attribute is embedded within courses and units at either enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

## **Indigenising the Curriculum Community of Practice**

An Indigenising the Curriculum Community of Practice commenced in 2018 to share best practice for Indigenising the curriculum and to increase awareness of the reasons for, and the value of Indigenising the curriculum. A restructure in 2020 impacted membership of the Community of Practice. In 2020, 4 meetings were held with 26 staff attending, and topics included: Aurora Foundation Internship Program, AIME Mentoring Program, CQUni Yarning presence on LinkedIn and Facebook, Indigenous Assignments - motivation, process, and the results. This represents a significant drop in number of meetings and attendance over the year, which reflects largely the impact of COVID-19 and a significant restructure, on the capacity of staff to engage in communities of practice generally. The Community of Practice is University funded.

## **Indigenous Content**

CQUniversity delivers courses in the Arts, Health, Allied Health and Education program areas that contain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. CQUniversity teachings in the field of Indigenous Studies draw upon an array of disciplines including history, literature, anthropology, politics, education and sociology, developed to build an understanding of past and contemporary issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Engagement

CQUniversity is committed for all areas across the University to build capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Activities undertaken to achieve this include:

- Participating in Open Days and Orientation Week by the Indigenous Student Engagement team, and CQUni Connect staff
- Inviting staff from across the University to participate in scholarship panels for Indigenous students and in recruitment and selection panels.
- Providing advice to other sections of the University about engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and on Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country and cultural ceremonies
- Working with community organisations and University staff to build long-term partnerships in relation to a variety of activities such as work-integrated learning, attendance at conferences, research projects, etc.
- Connecting with a growing cohort of First Nations and non-Indigenous people through the promotion of success stories, research and employment opportunities on social media platforms such as [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

### First Nations Cross-Cultural Competency training

An online First Nations Cultural Competency induction program was launched for CQUniversity staff on 27 May 2020. The compulsory training for all fixed term and permanent staff has been co-developed between the Office of Indigenous Engagement, and John Briggs Consultancy. Casual staff are also encouraged to complete the course. The 40-minute course offers an introduction to the history, culture and contemporary issues facing First Nations People in Australia. It explores the diversity of Indigenous Australian cultures and language groups and aims to help staff develop a culturally safe and competent workplace and learning environment for students. The course supports CQUniversity staff to better engage with First Nations colleagues and students and also equips non-Indigenous staff with the knowledge and skills to engage with Indigenous-led organisations and communities. To date over 1350 staff have completed the training with very positive feedback received. Discussions are underway with the creator to develop an online student version.

One face-to-face workshop was held at the Noosa campus, however further sessions were put on hold due to the pandemic.

The CQUniversity Office of Indigenous Engagement Acknowledgement to Country video has been created for use at University events and formal occasions. This version has been purposely created for use at all CQUniversity campuses and study hubs, as it specifically refers to the acknowledgment of First Nations people from everywhere in Australia.

The First Nations Cultural Competency training and the Acknowledgement to Country Video are both ISSP funded.

### Social Innovation Through an Indigenous Lens

In 2020 the Office of Social Innovation collaborated with Bundaberg student and Bundjalung man, Leslie Lowe, to deliver a series of workshops exploring social innovation through an Indigenous lens. These workshops were attended by staff and members of the community and gave participants a greater understanding of the traditional Indigenous approach to problem solving. Over the course of these four-hour sessions, participants were taught to recognise and appreciate Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, and were challenged to consider how these knowledge systems could be used to tackle a pressing social issue.

While the primary purpose of these workshops was to look at the traditional Indigenous approach to problem solving, the lessons learned can still be used by staff when interacting with Indigenous students or other

members of staff. Participants commented that the greater understanding of Indigenous world views would be useful when interacting with Indigenous students and staff in the future.

Due to COVID-19, this workshop was only delivered in two locations, rather than the five that had been planned. Further face-to-face delivery is being considered in 2021.

### **Public events**

CQUni has hosted a number of events at various campuses for staff, students and community members. A few examples of our public events include:

- To encourage University staff to host events promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and culture, the 2020 Calendar of Significant Indigenous Dates was made available to all staff.
- CQU Creates Art competition and exhibition with an Indigenous Art category attracted good quality entries in 2020 with an outstanding artwork chosen as the winner.
- The [CQUni Yarning](#) Facebook group and [LinkedIn profile](#) continued to promote CQUniversity's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander related activities, research and events. Membership of the Facebook group has grown to 516 with 1600 posts in 2020.
- The Cairns campus held a National Apology Day Morning Tea with guests from Link Up and Elder Aunty Nora Saveka.
- The Sydney campus sponsored the Nanga Mai Awards initiative which is part of the CQUniversity's overarching strategy to engage with the First Nations community in NSW.

### **Indigenous Procurement**

CQUniversity's Procurement Policy and Procedure (available from <https://www.cqu.edu.au/policy/all-policies>) includes the following sections.

- "The University is committed to social and Indigenous focused procurement during all stages of the procurement process as part of its social innovation obligations" (Section 4.9) and
- "As part of a commitment to continuous improvement and better practice, the University will seek to progressively increase the proportion of procurement expenditure on goods and/or services that demonstrate improved sustainability, social and Indigenous focused procurement outcomes from year to year" (Section 4.10).

A StaffNet directory of information, resources and an Indigenous supplier register to assist buyers to engage with social and Indigenous suppliers has been developed and reporting frequency and functionality has improved. This project relates to a key performance indicator in the [CQUniversity Strategic Plan](#); Our Communities – Increasing social and Indigenous procurement activities of CQUniversity.

### **Policies and Procedures**

All CQUniversity staff inductions include training in policies and procedures. The University Code of Conduct addresses racist, harassment and bullying behaviours.

The Acknowledgement to Country wording is available on printed palm cards, is readily accessible from StaffNet and is also available for download on mobile phones.

Policies titled '[Engaging and Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)' and the '[Commonwealth Scholarship Selection Policy](#)' continued to be available in 2020, with the former policy replaced by '[Engaging and Communicating with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander/First Nations People Protocol](#)' in 2021.

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

## **Supporting the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and Reconciliation**

The University's support of the Uluru statement from the Heart was officially launched at National Reconciliation Week. Staff and students also contributed to two National Reconciliation Week videos in celebration of the week. To hear what reconciliation truly means to the people of CQUni watch them both [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

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

The RAP Working Group has been established to engage with stakeholders and develop the CQUniversity Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Co-chaired by the Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) and the Deputy Vice-President (Strategy and Innovation), the group will liaise with Reconciliation Australia to gain endorsement and hand responsibility for the management of the RAP to the RAP Coordinating Committee by the end of 2021.

### **Cultural Sashes**

VET graduates, undergraduates and postgraduates who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander can opt to receive recognition through the presentation of a cultural sash as they cross the stage at all graduation ceremonies. Family and friends of the graduate are invited to attend the ceremony. Graduates are encouraged to participate in promotional activities (i.e. media articles, testimonials etc.) to highlight their achievements.

### **Public space**

- Initiated by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Campus Canvass Project has resulted in the creation of over 30 art works painted on buildings on the Rockhampton North campus. A number of these reflect Indigenous themes. One of the murals, which has attracted plenty of community interest and pride, depicts Aunty Ollie Donald, custodian of the Darumbal people; and Malcolm Mann, a Darumbal Traditional Owner, CQUni Connect Officer and an alumnus of the University.
- Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Perth campuses have signage that incorporates local Indigenous languages. The CQUni signage manual provides a guide for staff and contractors on the process of creating dual language signs.
- The Billabong Camp artwork has been applied to windows and glass doors on the Townsville, Cairns and Rockhampton North campuses.
- All campuses have either flagpoles where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag banners permanently displayed in campus reception areas.
- In partnership with local Elders, Bundaberg and Rockhampton campuses have created accessible Yarning Circles, featuring native plants and wheelchair access. A set of guidelines were developed for participants.

The Indigenous Wellbeing Project Officer, First Nations Cultural Competency training, the Yarning Circles, and the Billabong camp design are ISSP funded. All other initiatives described above are University funded.

### 3. Completions

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

Completion rates have improved by 6 positions over the period 2016 to 2019, in comparison to the 40 institutions currently participating in ISSP. This is largely due to the strategies and support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as outlined above. A total of 76 undergraduate conferrals were made.

As previously outlined, strategies to facilitate the improved completion rate, include the provision of scholarships; tutoring through the Indigenous Assistance program; provision of a culturally safe learning environment and support from Indigenous Engagement Officers and the Office of Indigenous Engagement. Professional and academic staff have received professional development to provide culturally safe and appropriate support to students.

#### 3.2. Strategies connecting graduates with employment (both within and outside of the institution).

The Alumni Relations team collaborates with the CQUni Careers team to offer and promote a range of free employment support services to graduates. Services include:

- Assistance with writing cover letters and resumes, and addressing selection criteria
- Access to career professionals to help with individual situations
- All graduates have free, unlimited access to the [CareerHub](#) employment resource hub and jobs board – this is promoted in both general and Indigenous-specific alumni publications throughout the year and is advertised on student and alumni web pages.
- A range of placement opportunities, graduate programs and job vacancies are promoted via the CQUni Yarning profiles on both LinkedIn and Facebook. Employers are encouraged to promote their vacancies via the Facebook page.

#### 3.3. Strategies to assist graduates.

The University offers a range of benefits to graduates, designed to support career success and life-long learning. Benefits are outlined on our web site at: <https://www.cqu.edu.au/student-life/graduates-and-alumni/benefits>

##### **CQU Connect Mentoring Program**

CQUniversity maintains an online fast-mentoring platform that enables students and graduates to connect with experienced alumni to receive career advice and practical feedback when preparing for job applications or interviews. The mentoring platforms also provide access to free webinars on a range of career preparation topics, which graduates can access on-demand. The mentoring platform has a small, identified group of Indigenous mentors, enabling students seeking an Indigenous mentor to easily connect. The platform has over 200 mentors available to support students and graduates. Indigenous mentors include both male and female alumni and represent both undergraduate and post-graduate study levels.

##### **CQUni Yarning; Indigenous Alumni e-newsletter**

These newsletters feature Indigenous-centric news and opportunities, as well as Indigenous student and alumni profiles. In 2020 the subscriber list grew from approximately 600 to just over 800 recipients.

##### **Profiling Indigenous Alumni**

In 2020 Indigenous alumnus Mr Leslie Lowe was the CQUniversity Alumnus of the Year for Social Impact. As part of his award win, Leslie attended a Graduation Ceremony and was profiled in all graduation programs and University news.



In March 2020, Dr Melinda Mann was announced the 2020 Inspirational Woman of the Year at the Qld Women's Week Launch. Media Release can be read [here](#). Following her graduation, Dr Mann continues to be involved with the First Nations RHD Academy as an adjunct and student mentor.

CQUni's collection of Alumni Banners featuring several high profile Indigenous alumni, including Dr Bronwyn Fredericks, Wayne Blair, Wayne Denning and Tanya Orman continued to fly on the main road within the Rockhampton campus and additional alumni are profiled on the University's alumni [webpage](#) and social media.

OIE continued to work with the Alumni Relations and Corporate Communications teams throughout 2020 to publish [media releases](#) featuring stories of Indigenous alumni and student success. Many stories are picked up by both mainstream and Indigenous media outlets. Questions asked during alumni interviews assist with the creation of alumni profiles, published regularly on our webpage <https://www.cqu.edu.au/student-life/graduates-and-alumni/our-alumni/indigenous-alumni>. In 2020 six new Indigenous Alumni agreed to be profiled. These stories are shared across social media and were particularly well received.

### **Strategies to monitor student outcomes after graduation.**

A key Alumni Relations team responsibility is to retain and manage contact details for graduates and encourage an ongoing connection to the University. The team maintains this information in an official University record-keeping system - SugarCRM.

The following information is recorded:

- Post graduation enquiries about further study, enrolments and completions
- Current employment data
- LinkedIn profiles
- Media coverage
- Interests and associations including community leadership roles
- Involvement with the University

Tracking of alumni data enables CQUni to develop media stories profiling the achievements of our alumni, communications of specific interest to various alumni groups; to deliver invitations to events, opportunities and volunteer activities to cohorts who are actively interested in, or to whom the event has specific relevance.

### **3.4. Strategies directly or partly funded by ISSP or other university resources.**

ISSP funding partially fund OIE staff to work with the Alumni Relations Team to provide content for the newsletter and engage with Indigenous alumni. The alumni program is HEPPP funded.

## **4. Regional and Remote Students**

CQUniversity is a pioneer in the delivery of distance education with almost half of the current student cohort made up of students studying off-campus, many of whom are based in regional and remote areas. In 2020, 770 Indigenous higher education students were recorded as living in regional and remote areas, with 147 residing in metropolitan areas. The University services regional and remote students through the strong delivery of on-line teaching, support services, scholarships and bursaries. The aforementioned programs, student support services and the Woorabinda Indigenous Education, Enterprise and Research Hub, enable regional and remote students to continue to live, work and study at home. Students who must study internally or at a particular campus are able to access the 12 campuses and several study hubs and Regional University Centre partnerships, situated in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Scholarships and bursaries are also available to assist students with start-up costs, such as textbooks, uniforms, technology and equipment. Accommodation scholarships, travel bursaries, industry placement scholarships and work readiness bursaries are also available.

**Table 4 Scholarship data for remote and regional students<sup>14 15</sup>**

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total <sup>16</sup>	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2019 Payments	\$62,721	38	\$10,912	2	0	0	\$73,633	40
B. 2020 Offers <sup>17</sup>	\$112,500	75	\$8,268	3	0	0	\$120,768	78
C. Percentage <sup>18</sup> (C=B/A*100)							164%	195
<b>2020 Payments</b>	\$105,000	70	\$8,268	3	0	0	\$113,268	73

All scholarships were offered and paid to regional and remote students. A significant number of these were to students from Far North Queensland.

## 5. Working with Vulnerable People Requirement

### 5.1. Working with Vulnerable People Requirement<sup>19</sup>

	Yes/No
Has the provider completed a risk assessment?	Yes
Have staff involved in ISSP activity received training?	Yes
Does the provider have a compliance process in place?	Yes

## 6. Eligibility Requirements

### 6.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

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

CQUni has developed a draft *First Nations Education Strategy*, that reflects the university requirements within the ISSP Guidelines. Regular presentations have kept the University Management Committee and CQUniversity Council informed of progress. The Strategy aims to provide guidance for a whole-of-university approach to Indigenous training, higher education and research. The *First Nations Education Strategy* aligns within the Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy (ILES), with the First Nations Success Strategies Committee having oversight of the Education Strategy. The first half of 2021 will see further consultations prior to completion of the strategy. To complement the ILES, a refreshed RAP will also be developed. Until these are approved, the University meets its requirements under section 13 of the ISSP Guidelines through the following programs:

**Prioritise increasing the number of Indigenous students enrolling in, progressing in and completing courses leading to higher education awards.**

#### Ongoing Student Support

- As previously reported, Indigenous student support is delivered through the provision of the enabling programs, tutorial assistance and the employment of Indigenous Student Engagement Officers, the Indigenous Wellbeing Project Officer, Indigenous Student Counsellor, the Woorabinda Hubs Co-ordinator and the Indigenous Scholarships Officer.

### Research Higher Degree

- The support provided to Indigenous RHD students via the First Nations RHD Academy, focuses upon the attraction, retention and graduation of higher degree students. The RHD load strategy also supports the aim of creating opportunities to increase numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking RHD studies.

### Linking with Education Providers

- Improving linkages with schools and VET providers to encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enrol at CQUniversity, is evidenced by attendance at Indigenous careers expos, university open days and programs undertaken by the CQUni Connect team and AIME as previously outlined in section 1 of the report.

### **Facilitate, monitor and improve upon the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in curricula, graduate attributes, and teaching practices:**

#### **Universities Australia's Good Practice Principles for Course Accreditation and Review of Indigenous Curriculum**

CQUniversity has committed to implementing the Universities Australia's Good Practice Principles for Course Accreditation and Review of Indigenous Curriculum. Several options are being considered for the implementation of these Principles and will be embedded in the university wide CQURenew process.

#### **Great Guide to Indigenisation of the Curriculum**

- The CQUniversity's *Great Guide to Indigenisation of the Curriculum* provides guidance to Academics on how to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, issues and perspectives into the curriculum and teaching practices. Access at: [Great Guide to Indigenisation](#)

#### **Inclusive Indigenous Curriculum**

- The Indigenisation of the Curriculum program and the Community of Practice (CoP) Indigenising the Curriculum are being reviewed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is embedded into the CQUniversity curriculum to encourage a broader understanding and methodology of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives. The intent of the CoP as outlined on p.12, is to share ideas and practices, discuss issues, and provide support for each other.
- From early 2017, it has been a requirement for all new courses and units to reflect on how it satisfies the requirements of the Indigenous Education strategy. This has been achieved through the normal submission process in the Academic Information Management System (AIMS) and is monitored for compliance by the Education Committee. Further compliance is monitored by the appropriate Course Committees, Heads of Course and Deputy Deans: Learning and Teaching. There are a number of units and courses, particularly in the Schools of Education and the Arts and Health, Medical and Applied Sciences, where this practice is comprehensively fulfilled. The overall approach is under review as part of the CQUniversity Renew Curriculum Refresh.
- From mid-2017, Learning Management System sites (Moodle) have encouraged Academics to include appropriate attribution and recognition to formally recognise Indigenous knowledges and sources that they draw upon. A standardized template for online courses is being implemented in 2021, and that process will enable an Acknowledgement of Country for all units offered online at CQUniversity.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures Graduate Attributes**

In 2019, the Office of Indigenous Engagement and Learning and Teaching Services partnered to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures Graduate Attributes. These Graduate Attributes aim to have every student graduating from CQUniversity, recognise and respect the values, traditions and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and be able to contribute to the workplace in a culturally respectful manner.

### **6.1.2. Activities for students and employees that promote cultural competency in Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories and the diversity of circumstances of Indigenous peoples in Australia.**

#### Cultural Protocols

- The CQUniversity Office of Indigenous Engagement Acknowledgement to Country video has been well received at University events and formal occasions. Acknowledgement to Country palm cards have been distributed throughout all campuses and are available electronically on StaffNet. Prior to the impact of COVID-19, many formal campus events commence with a Welcome to Country by Traditional Owners and staff are increasingly confident in giving an Acknowledgment to Country.

#### Cultural Competency

- The online First Nations Cultural Competency Training is mandatory for all permanent and fixed-term staff and has also been made available to casual staff. The First Nations Cultural Competency Framework, a strategy within the ILES, provides participants with beneficial experiences and ways of thinking focused on increasing understanding of Australian Indigenous people and cultures. Further, it provides the opportunity to develop a renewed perspective of what First Nations cultures contribute to the national social and educational landscapes.

#### NAIDOC week

- All CQUniversity staff and students are encouraged to celebrate and participate in NAIDOC week activities each year with campuses coordinating a variety of experiences. Many staff participated in NAIDOC week celebrations in Cairns, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Mackay.

#### Symbolise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Cultures

- The University continues to maintain signs that were erected in English and the language of the local Traditional Owners on the Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Perth campuses. Procedures to incorporate dual language signage were incorporated into the signage manual. Murals have been painted on Rockhampton North campus buildings and Yarning Circles have been created on the Bundaberg and Rockhampton North campuses. The Billabong campfire motif has been designed for use in briefs, presentations and on campuses to promote Indigenous culture and symbolism.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks that have been acquired and displayed across all CQUni campuses, are labelled with wall plaques acknowledging the artist and providing a story or interpretive information for the artwork. A book titled '*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art: The CQUniversity Australia collection*' (2019) is included in the National Library of Australia <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/234495712?selectedversion=NBD65327589>.

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

Targets and outcomes are regularly monitored and progress reports are submitted to University committees. The adoption of the First Nations Education Strategy in 2021 will bring these strategies and programs under one umbrella and will provide a focussed and practical approach to improving and reporting on First Nations Education outcomes at CQUniversity.

### **6.1.4. The CQUniversity Strategic Plan**

The [CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 \*Our Future is You\*](#), was launched in 2019. The commitment to providing access to world class education, research and employment opportunities is stated under Our communities on p.12. The Plan links key performance indicators (KPI's) to the strategic goals. Departmental strategic and operational plans have been developed with these KPI's in mind. Four monthly, six monthly and annual reports are submitted to the University Management Committee and CQUniversity Council on performance measurement against the KPI's.

## 6.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

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

In 2020, the Office of Indigenous Engagement (OIE), in partnership with People and Culture (PAC) drafted a First Nations Workforce Strategy 2020 – 2025. A consultation process with University staff and several University committees was undertaken to gain organisation-wide commitment prior to seeking formal approval in 2021.

The University continued to meet its requirements under section 12 of the ISSP Guidelines through the following documents and strategies.

#### **The First Nations Success Strategies Committee (FNSSC)**

This committee is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the First Nations Workforce Strategy. A 0.5 ISSP funded, Indigenous Employment Officer commenced in 2020 to participate in the development and co-ordinate implementation of the Workforce Strategy. Work commenced on a project to increase the number of identified positions and a media strategy for the advertisement of identified vacancies. The Indigenous Employment Officer was active in the recruitment of two First Nations business trainees who will commence in January 2021.

#### **The Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy (ILES)**

To ensure compliance with Section 12 of the guidelines, an [Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy](#) (ILES) was formally adopted in 2020. The ILES will also form a large part of the 2021 RAP objectives and targets.

The ILES has four pillars; students, research, people and communities, with the development and implementation of the First Nations Workforce Strategy is outlined in section 3. *'Our People'*. The ILES aims to undertake change-maker research; expanding the University's presence and reach in communities; driving sustainable and responsive changes in training; leading excellence in higher education and driving change as a positive disruption to currently held sector ideology.

#### **The Central Queensland University Enterprise Agreement 2017, Section 44: Indigenous Employment.**

This section of the Enterprise Agreement confirms the University's commitment to the responsibilities outlined University's Australia Indigenous Strategy, including a 3% target for employment of Indigenous staff. This is accomplished by utilising the strategies outlined in the Indigenous Leadership and Engagement strategy and the First Nations Employment Strategy. The CQUniversity Agreement was ratified in the Fair Work Commission in March 2018 and is publicly available. [CQU Enterprise Agreement](#)

#### **Special measures (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, women in science and research)**

This section of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure supports and promotes the University's goal and commitment to increasing employment for under-represented groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The application of these special/equal opportunity measures has resulted in the advertising of 16 Indigenous identified positions.

#### **Research Higher Degree (RHD)**

The RHD Supervision Register was refreshed in November 2020. From 539 entries, a total of 45 supervisors indicated that they have experience in supervising Indigenous candidates. Please note this is self-reported data. The First Nations RHD Academy, will connect with and support RHD Supervisors who express interest in working with RHD candidates, in order to build capacity for culturally safe RHD supervision.

#### **Further Employment Opportunities**

An Indigenous identified advertisement and position description templates tailored to support the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment are utilised to attract First Nations applicants. Advertising platforms include the Koori Mail (Electronic and Printed), Ethicaljobs.com.au, SEEK, CQUni

CareerHub, and via email to the Higher Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks. The panel chair is also encouraged to share positions on LinkedIn and to relevant community networks.

### The practical implementation and evaluation of the Indigenous Workforce strategy

The implementation of the ILES and development of the First Nations Workforce Strategy have achieved University wide commitment to achieving identified actions. Data gathered to inform the report has given a sound understanding of trends and areas where the University can best focus its attention. Targets and outcomes are regularly monitored, and progress reports are submitted to University committees.

**Table 6.2 Indigenous workforce data (2020 breakdown)<sup>20 21 22 23</sup>**

Level/position	Permanent		Casual/contract/fixed term	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
Level A	1			
Level B	2			
Academic Salary Package			1	
Professorial Research Fellow			1	
Teacher	2			
Casual Academic			9	
HEW 3		1		
HEW 4		2		1
HEW 5		5		10
HEW 6		2		1
HEW 8		1		
Research Worker 6				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>

The number of Indigenous staff decreased from 2019 to 2020, due to an organisational restructure necessitated by the impact of COVID-19. The Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy and the adoption of a First Nations Workforce Strategy in 2021 will focus actions on achieving employment targets and rebuilding the First Nations workforce.

## 6.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

### 6.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The First Nations Success Strategies Committee has successfully managed the ISSP grant. Through the formation of a restructured committee, a broader strategic approach to support and develop Indigenous staff and students has been implemented. Representation from areas across the university has resulted in a collaborative approach that has developed initiatives targeted at increasing First Nations Cross Cultural Competency, providing culturally safe workplaces, developing Indigenous leadership, increasing access and equity and embedding Indigenous knowledges into the curriculum.

Improved Indigenous student outcomes, a draft First Nations Workforce Strategy and the employment of an Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator, are some of the many achievements of these strategies and programs.

The program committee is looking forward to another successful year in 2021, with broadened responsibilities and the oversight of new strategies and policies.

### 6.3.2. The university's Indigenous Governance mechanism

The new First Nations Success Strategies Committee (FNSSC) was established on 3 June 2020 and replaced the former Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) Governance Committee. It is a formal committee of the University. Its functions and responsibilities are to:

- meet the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017 (Cwlth)
- represent the Indigenous Employment Reference Group, as outlined in the CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement 2017
- provide governance oversight of CQUniversity's Indigenous strategies and programs including, but not limited to the University's Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Strategy, the First Nations Education Strategy, the First Nations Workforce Strategy, the First Nations RHD Academy, and the First Nations Cross-Cultural Competency training
- provide advice on, review, make recommendations and monitor the use of ISSP grants.
- provide input into the annual ISSP Performance Report.

The Committee is chaired by Professor Adrian Miller, Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) and comprises of 11 members, the majority of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The committee is supported by a Management Accountant Support Officer and a Committee Secretary.

The Committee's Terms of reference are publicly available [Terms of Reference \(TOR\)](#).

### 6.3.3. The names, positions and duration of service of staff that are part of the First Nations Success Strategies Committee.

The committee comprises of the following staff:

Committee Role	Position at CQUniversity	Commenced Service
Chair	Prof. Adrian Miller Deputy Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement)	2018
Deputy Chair	Dr Thomas Doering Lecturer Health Science, School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences.	2019
Members	Mr Robert Spencer, Director Student Engagement	2015
	Ms Leonie Taylor Snr Coordinator Indigenous Student Engagement	2018
	Mr Laurie Armstrong Associate Lecturer, School of Access Education	2013
	Ms Marina Mikecz Executive Officer, Office of Indigenous Engagement	2013
	Ms Emma Cerf, College Co-ordinator, School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences.	2006
	Mr Graeme Driscoll, Team Leader HR Operations, People and Culture	2014
	Ms Sowellyn Kelly, Union representative	2014
Secretary	Ms Sarah Arrowsmith Committees Support Officer	2019
Observer	Ms Tansy Manning Management Accountant Support Officer	2001

### **6.3.4. The First Nations Success Strategies Committee (FNSSC)**

The FNSSC committee met four times in 2020, discussing the following agenda items:

- Terms of Reference and membership of the new First Nations Success Strategies Committee
- Budget – use and management of ISSP funds, salaries and non-salaries
- ISSP funded project progress including Indigenous Assistance Support (tutoring), scholarships and hardship grants, bookstore vouchers
- First Nations RHD Academy
- Indigenous Education and Leadership Strategy
- First Nations Education Strategy
- First Nations Workforce Strategy
- ISSP 2020 Performance report
- First Nations Cultural Competency training
- CQUni RAP Working Group
- Funding application process, mid-year and end of year reporting processes

### **6.3.5. 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 Research Higher Degree 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 Commonwealth Indigenous Scholarships panel
- Chair of the BHP Community and Indigenous Scholarships panel
- Representation in lead roles in the CQUniversity's Centre for Indigenous Health and Equity Research and the First People's Think Tank.

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 panels
- Representation on recruitment selection panels across the University
- Support for activities associated with representation within the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
- Campus Life Committees for several CQUniversity campuses
- Indigenous Membership on the Cairns Regional Engagement Committee (REC)
- Member of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

The Cairns Region Engagement Committee (REC) comprises industry, business, government, community and university members, for the purpose of advancing community identified opportunities and working with stakeholders to support the development of sustainable regions. Committee members contribute to the University's annual review of its strategic plan and provide input into the University's strategic directions, as these directly relate to communities within the region. The committee membership includes an Indigenous representative, whose role it is to represent the diverse interests and views of the region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In conclusion,



## The First Nations Council of Elders and Leaders (FNCEL)

The FNCEL is an ILES initiative funded through ISSP monies. It is an innovative way for the University to engage with First Nations people, in the local communities in which CQUniversity serves. The FNCEL addresses the need for First Nations people's cultural, social and regional input into University processes and programs, advising on matters put before it by senior management. The inaugural CQUniversity Cairns/Townsville FNCEL has completed its series of meetings, with a research project underway to assess the feasibility of introducing a second Council of Elders and Leaders within the CQUni Queensland footprint. The Council provided guidance on key policies and strategies including the Confirmation of Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander Identity protocol and Engaging with First Nations Peoples protocol.

### Student council

In April 2020, calls for nominations for the vacant position of the Indigenous student representative on the Student Representative Council saw an Indigenous student studying a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Science (Psychology) elected to the position.

The Student Representative Council provides students with an excellent opportunity to be more involved with the CQUniversity community and aims to make a genuine contribution to enhancing the university experience for all our students, regardless of mode or study location.

The Student Representative Council prides itself on its unique model of working closely with University management to discuss important issues like student amenities and services, policies and procedures relating to student life and the University's physical, cultural and technological environments.

In conclusion, CQUniversity continues to focus effort on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives and considerations into University processes and structures and building leadership skills, through the inclusion of Indigenous staff and reviews of policies and procedures. This is demonstrated in a wide range of committees, forums and formalised University documents.

These actions also assist to increase the number of CQUniversity staff who improve their understanding of issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is in line with a broader strengths-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education agenda.

<sup>1</sup> Only payments made during 2020 can 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> Record the number of students (head count) not EFTSL.

<sup>3</sup> Include both preserved and new ISSP scholarships.

<sup>4</sup> This figures in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

<sup>5</sup> The total may not be the sum of the previous columns as some students may receive several scholarships.

<sup>6</sup> Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>7</sup> Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>8</sup> Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>9</sup> Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

<sup>10</sup> Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

<sup>11</sup> Add more rows if necessary.

<sup>12</sup> Include a brief description of the activity.

<sup>13</sup> Providers can either provide a breakdown of the major activities or a total for all the activities undertaken. Examples of activities may include mentoring, outreach activities, promotion of scholarships, events, elder-in-residence, career guidance etc.

<sup>14</sup> Only record amounts which would/did require payment during the 2020 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.

<sup>15</sup> Note the data in this table is a subsection of the all student scholarship data provided in Table 1.

<sup>16</sup> This figures in this column should be the sum of the relevant row.

<sup>17</sup> Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2020 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2020 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2020 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships and preserved scholarships).

<sup>18</sup> This data confirms the provider's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.

<sup>19</sup> This section confirms that the provider complies with Section 35A of the Guidelines.

<sup>20</sup> While universities report on the number of Indigenous staff members through mainstream reporting requirements, the additional information provided in this section provides enhanced monitoring of the university's efforts in building its Indigenous workforce.

<sup>21</sup> Record all Indigenous staff employed by the provider, including those not working on ISSP-related activities.

<sup>22</sup> The numbers recorded here should be a headcount of staff and not the full-time equivalent.

<sup>23</sup> There is no longer a requirement to break up these by faculty. Please group together results by level.