

ADVANCING INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 2010 – 2013

Working Together - Making a Difference

Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, Monash University acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners and Elders, both past and present, of the land on which the University's six Australian campuses stand, the Wurrundjeri and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin nation and the Brayukaloong clan of the Gunnai/Kurnai people.

Monash's commitment to Indigenous Australia

In February 2008, the University Council made the following resolution, immediately following the Prime Minister's apology to Indigenous Australia:

Monash University is fifty years old this year. But its half-century cannot compare with the tens of thousands of years in which Indigenous Australians have walked, lived and flourished across the breadth and length of Australia.

Echoing the sentiments of apology and partnership affirmed by the Prime Minister, Monash reaffirms its role to advance the educational and career aspirations of Indigenous Australians.

This will occur on every one of Monash's eight campuses – metropolitan, regional and international – and in our staffing, educational and research programs.

This strategy represents a renewed level of commitment by the University to ensure that every Indigenous staff member is valued and supported in reaching their potential and achieving their career aspirations. The University is committed to improving the overall economic and social conditions for Indigenous Australians through increased participation in education and employment.

The University acknowledges that through the contributions of our Indigenous colleagues it is afforded the opportunity to learn from the original custodians of the land on which our Australian campuses are located.

Background

Monash University is Australia's largest University. It is important that, as we seek to become leaders in research and education in Australia, we continue to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Monash recognises that the implementation of an employment strategy requires a holistic approach and that the strategy's success will depend upon this being a shared responsibility by all. The University recognises that participation in employment, particularly in a tertiary setting, is part of an education continuum. That continuum starts at kindergarten, and each step builds upon its predecessor.

Reflecting this fact, the University strongly supports the underlying principles and the findings of the Wannik Strategy. This strategy outlines the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from kindergarten to the final years of secondary school. The document seeks to redress the issues faced by Indigenous students.

“High quality education is a key determinant of choice and opportunity for young people throughout their lives. We know that students who stay on at school and complete year 12 are much more likely to undertake additional education and training. In turn, they will have more and better employment options”¹

Indigenous people in Australia's higher education system

Indigenous people continue to be greatly under-represented within Australia's higher education system. The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) in its submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education in 2008 noted that in addition to continuing under-representation of Indigenous Australians in higher education and the low rates of success, retention and completion for Indigenous students at both secondary and tertiary levels, a number of specific interrelated problems are endemic across the sector including:

- The small number of Indigenous people working in Australian universities, especially in senior positions.
- The uneven quality of Indigenous research programs and the limited number of active Indigenous researchers.
- The poor recognition given to Indigenous studies and the lack of visibility of Indigenous culture and knowledge on campus.
- The low levels of participation of Indigenous people in university governance and management.²

¹ Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to our Future, Education Strategy for Koorie Students, Victoria, 2008. p. 5

² IHEAC 2008 – *Submission to the review of Australian higher education.*

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/support_for_education_providers_staff/indigenous_higher_education_advisory_council.htm

Indigenous people in Victoria

The Indigenous community in Victoria is made up of a number of distinct local communities across the state based on location, language and cultural group, and extended family networks. Significantly, Victoria also has a high number of Indigenous Australians from other states. At 0.54% (25,078), Victoria's Indigenous population is relatively small. The Indigenous population of Victoria makes up 6.1% of the Australian Indigenous population. The number of Indigenous people living in regional areas is higher at 1% (13,000); 52.1% of the Victorian Indigenous population live in regional areas, compared to 27.1% of the non-Indigenous population.

Achieving Objectives

The Indigenous Engagement Unit

The Indigenous Engagement Unit, established in February 2010, includes two senior Indigenous staff focused on employment and staff support. The Unit has a multi-functional role. It provides quality support to new and existing Indigenous staff and students. Staff of the Indigenous Engagement Unit will:

- 1 establish and develop strong links with Community members and Aboriginal organisations including Elders to ensure they are well-informed about and are able to support the implementation of the Monash Advancing Indigenous Employment Strategy;
- 2 work closely with staff in faculties and divisions to match potential Indigenous applicants with vacancies;
- 3 develop and maintain a register of Indigenous people interested in applying for employment vacancies at Monash; including people currently employed within the public service, TAFE and other education providers and industry.
- 4 work closely with HR to ensure alignment with the University's e-recruitment strategy; and
- 5 provide support and advice to areas on transition and retention issues affecting Indigenous Australians – noting that retaining excellent Indigenous staff is just as important as attracting new applicants for positions.
- 6 communicate the value of Indigenous employment at Monash to internal and external stakeholders.

Employment Targets

There will be an annual overall University target for increased Indigenous Employment, across all employment categories, which will exceed that which

is in the recently-signed *Enterprise Agreement*. This will be decided by SMT, based on advice received and outcomes achieved.

Key Principles of the Strategy

The key principle underpinning this strategy is that Monash University acknowledges the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be proportionally represented in the Australian workforce. That is, the University accepts its responsibility to provide equal employment opportunities for all Australians and to make a contribution to the overall economic success of Australian Indigenous people.

- The University will foster equality of opportunity in employment for Indigenous people by positively seeking to recruit, develop and support Indigenous staff;
- That University acknowledges that the right to employment equity can only be realised or successfully implemented in a culturally-affirming and safe environment;
- The University recognises and values Indigenous Australian knowledge as a significant contribution to all other bodies of knowledge and acknowledges the skills and experience Indigenous people bring to the University; and
- The University is committed to the positive inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the life of the University, and will therefore provide employment and career opportunities through the implementation of this Indigenous Employment Strategy.

Strategy Implementation

The Implementation of the Strategy will include the following elements:

1. Relationships with Indigenous people and Communities - local, interstate and internationally;
2. Recruitment & Employment: Facilitating effective recruitment & promotion;
3. Induction and Orientation for new Indigenous staff;
4. Performance Development and Mentoring;
5. Staff Career Development and Career Pathways; and
6. Valuing Indigenous culture and perspectives at Monash.

1. Relationships with Indigenous people and communities – Marketing and Communication

Objective:

Establish, maintain and promote effective and ongoing relationships with Indigenous people and communities.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Organise events such as cultural days and discussion groups between Indigenous community members and relevant Monash University departments and personnel.
- 1.2 The University will consider the strength of an organisation's Indigenous principles when awarding contracts for external supply of goods and services to the University.
- 1.3 Promote the use of Monash University facilities to Indigenous communities. (This could include meetings, conferences, events, family days, NAIDOC celebrations).
- 1.4 Increase communication with Indigenous people and communities via newsletters, community visits, job fairs and events.
- 1.5 Support and participate in Indigenous community events and groups.

Outcomes:

Monash University will become an employer of choice for Indigenous people and communities.

Monash University and Indigenous communities will have strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships.

2. Recruitment & Employment - Facilitating effective recruitment & promotion

Objective:

Achieve a steady growth in the number of Indigenous employees across all categories of employment at the University to achieve population parity with those regions where Monash operates.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Reserve three Early Career Development Fellowship positions to create an academic career pathway.
- 2.2 All selection panel members to receive information on culturally-appropriate conduct of interviews with Indigenous applicants.
- 2.3 At least one Indigenous staff member to be a full member of all interview panels when an Indigenous candidate is being considered.
- 2.4 Advertise employment opportunities through culturally-appropriate mediums such as the Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Indigenous online networks, Indigenous organisations and other training organisations.
- 2.5 Provide support and advice to Indigenous students regarding employment opportunities at Monash.
- 2.6 Ensure HR systems, such as e-recruitment, support the Advancing Indigenous Employment Policy.

Outcomes:

Increase the number of Indigenous staff to achieve population parity with the Victorian Indigenous population by 2013 and work towards population parity with the national figure of 2.5 %.

An Indigenous workforce at Monash which reflects the same proportions as the non-Indigenous workforce in terms of employment category (Academic, Professional, Trades and Services).

Indigenous communities will be well-informed about employment opportunities at Monash University.

Incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and cultures across all areas of University activity – research, teaching and learning and community engagement.

Cultural safety will be incorporated in recruitment and selection training, processes and practice.

3. Induction/Orientation for new Indigenous staff

Objective:

To provide a welcoming and culturally-affirming transition experience for new Indigenous staff to Monash.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Development of an Induction program for all new Indigenous staff which is specifically tailored to the needs of Indigenous people.
- 3.2 Provide an induction starter kit to assist new staff to orient themselves prior to commencement of employment.

4. Performance Development and Mentoring**Objective:**

To maximise retention rates by ensuring the formation of a culturally-safe, rewarding working environment for Indigenous employees.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Provide ongoing Indigenous cultural safety training for all employees at Monash.
- 4.2 Provide networking, career development guidance and mentoring opportunities for Indigenous employees.
- 4.3 Develop and maintain a website supporting the Indigenous Engagement Unit's goals and objectives.
- 4.4 Consult with the Indigenous employee network on processes, policies, strategies and programs.
- 4.5 Staff of the IEU will support and advise all parties in relation to performance development and management.

Outcomes:

Increased retention of Indigenous employees.

Indigenous staff will have access to:

- Up-to-date support, advice and information on employment and career advancement matters;
- Indigenous employees network meetings; and
- Monitoring and support on an ongoing basis.

5. Staff Career Development and Career Pathways

Objective:

To provide support and encouragement for Indigenous employees to establish careers at Monash.

Strategies:

- 5.1 Ensure that Indigenous employees are informed of internal and external training/development programs, and encouraged to participate where relevant.
- 5.2 Provide advice, support and referral for Indigenous employees seeking to improve their employment skills.
- 5.3 Encourage Indigenous employees to acquire tertiary and certificate education where appropriate.
- 5.4 Implement a Career Development Program to assist career progression of Indigenous staff.

Outcomes:

Increase in number of Indigenous employees above the HEW 5 level.

Improved Indigenous staff retention rates.

A highly-skilled and educated Indigenous workforce at Monash.

6. Valuing Indigenous Culture and Perspectives at Monash

Objective:

Increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and cultures among non-Indigenous staff to develop the University campuses as culturally-safe workplaces.

Strategies:

- 6.1 Develop and implement a University-wide program of cultural safety training, to be offered bi-annually.
- 6.2 Include an Indigenous cultural safety component within the University's Induction program for new staff.
- 6.3 Graduate Certificate in Higher Education to include Indigenous Knowledge Module

Outcomes:

All campuses of the University will be welcoming, friendly and culturally-affirming environments which provide a culturally-safe place for all staff members.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An ongoing review and evaluation of the *Advancing Indigenous Employment Strategy – Working Together Making a Difference* will be conducted by the Indigenous Engagement Unit.

Human Resources will inform the Indigenous Engagement Unit of all resignations by identified Indigenous employees before completion of processing. The staff of the IEU will conduct exit interviews with staff leaving the University.

The IEU will provide bi-annual reports to the Indigenous Advisory Council on implementation of the strategy and progress against the University targets.

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