



Oorala
Aboriginal
Centre

Indigenous Student Success Program Performance Report

2025





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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, courses and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia.

We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal community and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future.



Welcome to Country by Anaiwan artist, Larissa Ahoy.

My painting is a representation of the University of New England and its relationship with different communities from all over. The circle in the middle with the lwata represents the University itself, as it is situated on Anaiwan land, and the totem for Anaiwan Country is the lwata. The circles on the top represent the many cultures and heritages from all over the world, and they are all connected with a pathway that leads to UNE. The bottom circles represent the UNE campuses which sit on other nations, connected as well with the UNE in Armidale. The smaller dots are the students, staff and workers who make UNE a success. The line of dots through the middle depicts the journey in which students take to make it to UNE.



The Report

The Oorala Aboriginal Centre is pleased to present this report on behalf of the University of New England (UNE) and extends its sincere thanks to the UNE Executive, Faculties, and Business Directorates for their valued collaboration throughout 2025.

UNE allocates all Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) funding to the Oorala Aboriginal Centre to support the design and delivery of initiatives that enhance access, participation, and achievement in higher education for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) students.

About Oorala

For 40 years, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre has provided high-quality programs, services, and facilities that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout their educational journey at UNE.

The name “Oorala,” meaning “a camp” or “a place where people come together,” was selected by Indigenous students when the Centre opened in 1986. Rooted in the language of the local Aboriginal community, it reflects the historical and cultural significance of the site. Today, Oorala continues to be a place of connection, support, and empowerment for Indigenous students from across Australia.

Document Purpose

The ISSP is a Federal Government funding initiative that provides supplementary funding to universities to help Indigenous students take on university study and achieve successful outcomes (Full details of the Program are available online at ISSP Program). ISSP Grants are primarily focused on supporting Indigenous students who are financially disadvantaged and/or from remote and regional areas. Each Australian university receives ISSP funding based on enrolments, progression rates and course completions of Indigenous students. A special loading recognises the additional costs of assisting Indigenous students from regional and remote areas. As an obligation of receipt of this funding, Universities are required to provide an annual Performance Report (PR) and Financial Acquittal (FA). This Performance Report is expected to include data for the preceding calendar year and outline the major strategies of governance, education and employment used by the University for improving the access, participation, retention, and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

This document and associated financial acquittal report the performance data and strategic directions taken by UNE in 2025 to support current and future Indigenous students to achieve success. It is not an exhaustive statement of all UNE’s efforts, but a summary of the key activities undertaken to support our Indigenous students. The functions of the report are to:

- To demonstrate that annual ISSP funding amounts received by UNE have been used according to the relevant Act (*Higher Education Support Act, 2003*) and guidelines (*Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017*) and
- To outline the additional supports and services offered by the university that demonstrates a commitment to enhancing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Document Protocols

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Indigenous Student Success Program - 2025 Financial Acquittal.

Document Data Disclaimer

Indigenous student data in this report were downloaded from dashboards with the Power BI “Business Intelligence Course Monitoring App” and/or the “Business Intelligence Enrolments and Load App”. The data in the dashboards available within Business Intelligence Services Apps are updated through the UNE Data Warehouse nightly. They may differ slightly from what is reflected in this report.

Indigenous Student Success Program 2025 Performance Report

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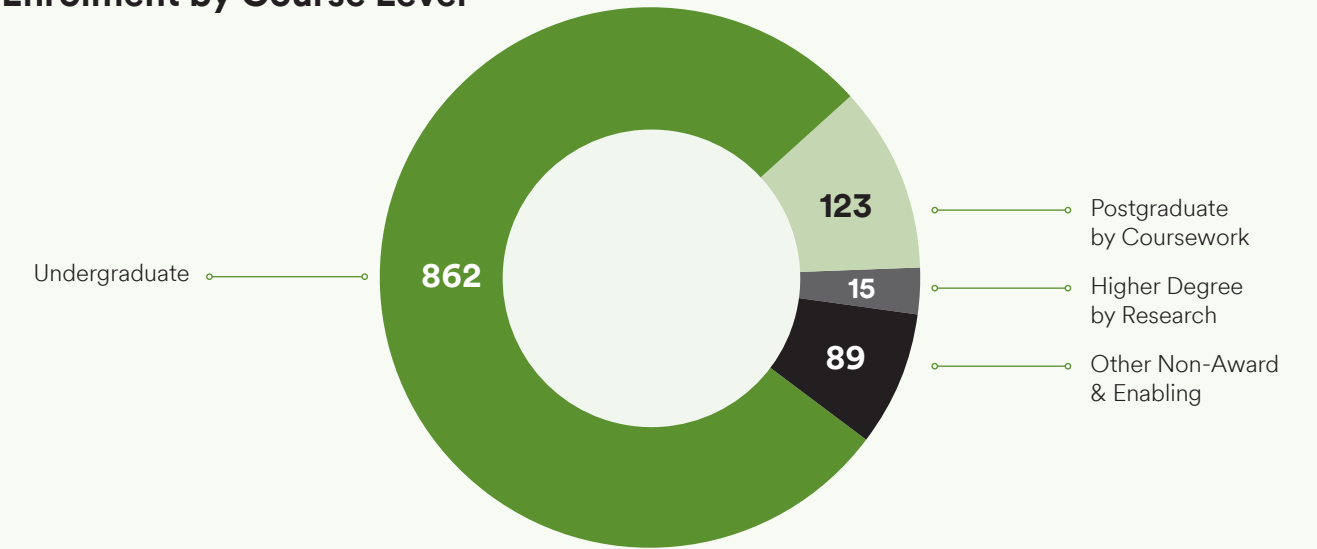
Declaration

In providing this Performance Report, it is acknowledged that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Enrolments (Access)

UNE total enrolments	22,485
Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolments	1,115
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % of all enrolments	4.96%
Total UNE commencing students	9,948
Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	553
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % of all commencing enrolments	2.46%

Enrolment by Course Level



Outreach & Engagement

New - School-Based Curriculum Promotion and Implementation

In 2025, Oorala finalised the Ronyera Ekina School-Based Curriculum project, a partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training funded through a Collaboration & Innovation Grant. This milestone marked the completion of curriculum development and formal sign-off by the Department of Education and Training.

The curriculum modules for Stage 4 & Stage 6 English were revised to align with NESA National Curriculum changes taking effect in 2026. More significantly, 2025 marked a fundamental operational shift from development and design to distribution and promotion. We engaged with 42 NSW schools spanning across NSW, providing one-on-one presentations and online preview access that enabled teachers to engage with resources remotely and reduced traditional engagement barriers.

By the end of 2025, 16 schools had registered for the program and were actively using the curriculum within their school setting, representing a conversion rate of 38% in the first year of rollout.

New - Burraga Foundation Partnership (Non-ISSP Funded)

UNE's partnership with the Burraga Foundation (Burraga), an Aboriginal not-for-profit, Supply Nation and DGR-status charity, established a dedicated Aboriginal culture and education program in 2025. The program combines Burraga's established relationships across NSW schools and communities with UNE's recruitment pathways and student support offering.

With direct engagement across more than 1,500 Aboriginal HSC students, alongside long-standing connections with NSW AECGs, Land Councils, schools, parents and community members, Burraga delivers in-school programs supported by a network of over 20 mentors. This enables consistent, culturally safe engagement across key stages of the student journey.

The program is designed to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in higher education by building aspiration, awareness and readiness for university. Delivery includes culturally grounded storytelling, in-school and community workshops, and mentor-led goal setting, supported by clear pathways into UNE, including Early Entry, TRACKS, Tertiary Preparation Programs, and connection to Oorala Aboriginal Centre.

Key activations included an overnight Open Day immersion in Armidale and the UNE Careers Summit with Burraga's school network and careers advisors. Strategically, the partnership continues to support pipeline growth and participation outcomes, with direct application success into the UNE Early Entry program from participants.

New - Koori Knockout Partnership (Non-ISSP Funded)

UNE signed as Silver Sponsor of the 2025 NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout in Tamworth, strategically targeting the Under 17 women's competition. This sponsorship reflected UNE's intentional commitment to building visibility and meaningful engagement across NSW school-leaver communities through culturally significant events. The timing and location were particularly strategic, aligning with UNE's expansion into the Tamworth region and the opening of the new Tamworth campus. The on-site activation was led by Oorala Centre staff who engaged directly with prospective students and their families, supported by academics from several UNE schools who were present to discuss their courses, pathways, and opportunities. The event provided an authentic, culturally grounded platform to connect with communities, extending recruitment reach beyond traditional tertiary pathways and positioning UNE as an accessible, culturally responsive institution within the region.

New - TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program Course Review

In 2025, Oorala completed a comprehensive review of the TRACKS program, resulting in strategic amendments to strengthen academic outcomes and pathways for high-achieving students. TRAX unit learning outcomes were revised to better align with overall course outcomes, ensuring coherent progression through the program.

A significant enhancement enables high-achieving TRACKS students to undertake a second undergraduate unit in place of one core TRACKS unit, provided they have completed at least TRAX005 and one additional TRAX-coded unit, achieved Distinction in both, and applied via ASKUNE. This flexible pathway recognises student capability and accelerates progression into mainstream undergraduate study.

Academic support remains central to TRACKS delivery, with continued after-hours tuition provided by a dedicated tutor offering twice-weekly online group sessions and individual Zoom support for targeted assistance. In 2025, 20 students successfully completed TRACKS and transitioned into undergraduate studies here at UNE or with other Australian universities.

To strengthen recruitment and visibility, Oorala developed new marketing collateral including reels and postcards promoting the program to prospective students.

Ongoing ISSP Outreach & Engagement

Ronyera Ekina Program (HEPPP)

A school engagement and outreach program delivering curriculum, on-campus experiences, and in-school activities to strengthen pathways to higher education.

- 16 schools engaged with school-based curriculum.
- 150 students from 8 schools participated in on-campus experience days which delivered 17 academic sessions.
- 18 school visits delivered, including 9 student presentations and 9 staff presentations.

Student Recruitment – Career Expos

A targeted recruitment strategy engaging prospective students across regional and metropolitan locations, alongside on-campus events.

- Attended 20 career expos from Maitland to Townsville and west to Lightning Ridge.
- 17,000 participants.
- 2 Indigenous-focused expos.

UNE Open Day

Oorala's presence at UNE Open Day provides a culturally safe and informative environment for prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

- Engaged with over 1,000 registered prospective students.
- Promoted Oorala programs, services, and pathways into higher education.
- Supported culturally safe engagement and strengthened community connection to UNE.

Oorala Community Grants

A community-focused initiative providing financial support to individuals, organisations, and groups while strengthening relationships and visibility within the community.

- 10 grants awarded across individuals, organisations, and sporting clubs.
- \$20,000 distributed in total funding.
- Supported recipients from school-aged students to Elders.
- Strengthened community connection and increased visibility of UNE and Oorala in aligned settings.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Entry Pathways

Internal Selection Program (ISP):

The ISP is a culturally responsive alternative entry pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, recognising professional, community, and life experience alongside formal qualifications. Oorala staff provide personalised support throughout the application process to assess readiness and help applicants collate required documentation.

- 15 participants.
- 2 students successfully admitted to TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program.
- 1 student successfully admitted to Pathways Enabling Program.
- 8 students supported through direct entry application and admitted to undergraduate courses.

TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program:

The TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enhance the knowledge, confidence, and study skills needed for undergraduate study. Delivered by the Oorala academic team, it provides tailored academic and transition support within a culturally safe and supportive learning environment. The program empowers students to draw on their strengths and experiences while creating a clear pathway into university. Upon completion, students gain guaranteed entry into most UNE undergraduate degrees and may receive credit towards their future studies.

- 76 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled.
- 41 commencing and 35 continuing.

Bachelor of Psychology with Honours (Indigenous):

UNE offers an APAC-accredited four-year Bachelor of Psychology with Honours, available online or on-campus, with specialised support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Oorala Aboriginal Centre. The program requires a high GPA (6.25+) in psychology units for entry, focusing on advanced research and clinical skills.

- 9 applications were received.
- 5 offers were made.
- 1 student enrolled in the course.

Broader Entry Pathways

Pathways Enabling Course:

The Pathways Enabling Course is a fee-free, fully online program designed for students with no prior university experience to build academic skills, confidence, and readiness for higher education. It offers a flexible, low-risk way to explore study options while developing essential capabilities such as academic writing and time management. Upon completion, students gain guaranteed entry into most UNE undergraduate degrees and may receive credit towards their future studies.

- 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled.
- 4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed the course.

Early Entry:

UNE's Early Entry program allows Year 12 students to secure a university offer before final results are released, based on their school's assessment of their abilities, work ethic, and potential for academic success. It recognises that an ATAR is not the only indicator of future success and provides certainty about university placement ahead of exams.

- 214 applications for admissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 39 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accepted and enrolled in a course of study. This is an application to enrolment conversation rate of 18%.



Scholarships

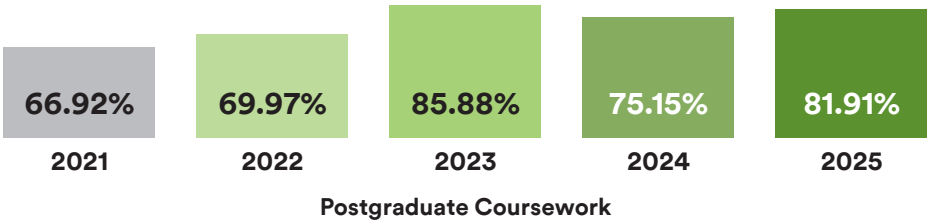
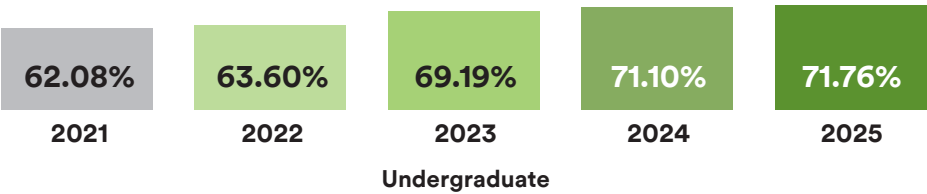
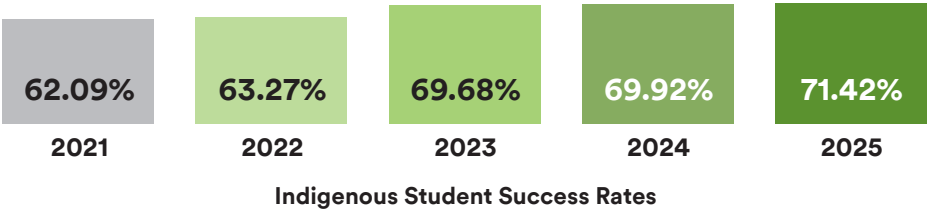
Funding Score	Value
ISSP Funded Scholarships & Prizes	\$465,617.83
Non-ISSP Funded Scholarships & Prizes	\$112,438.37
HDR / RTP Scholarships	\$120,293.07

Table 1: ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2025 payments

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		TOTAL	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling	2,450.00	3	0.00	0	20,550.00	12	23,000.00	15
Undergraduate	135,025.00	64	143,294.42	16	112,950.00	66	391,269.42	146
Postgraduate	18,175.00	6	10,223.41	1	22,950.00	9	51,348.41	16
Total	155,650.00	73	153,517.83	17	156,450.00	87	465,617.83	177



Progression (Outcomes)



ISSP Strategies, Activities & Programs

New – Academic Advisor Role

In 2025, the Targeted Tutorial Assistance Program Coordinator role was redesigned as an Academic Advisor. This shift reflects Oorala's commitment to providing holistic academic support that extends beyond tutoring coordination. The Academic Advisor maintains oversight of the tutoring program while expanding to encompass academic advising, student progression support, and connections to other UNE academic programs and the academic skills office. The role also provides guidance on course selection and academic progression and administers the ISP program.

This redesign positions the Academic Advisor as a key point of contact for students navigating their academic journey. By integrating tutoring support with broader academic advising, the role enables more coordinated and responsive assistance. Students benefit from consistent guidance on their progression pathway, informed course selection, and seamless connections to complementary academic services. This integrated approach supports improved student success and retention by addressing academic needs holistically rather than in isolation.

Ongoing ISSP Strategies, Activities & Programs

Oorala Student Check-In

The Check-In program leverages the UNE's ATRIUM platform, providing real-time data to identify students who need support, and deliver culturally responsive outreach at key moments in the academic calendar, helping students make informed decisions about their progression.

- 28 letters of support for students. The top reasons for these requests were associated with Sorry Business, housing and accommodation crises, family safety, access to technology and financial stress.
- 685 check-in calls made.
- 33% response rate.

TRACKS Student Success Program

TRACKS students benefit from intensive check-ins and guided support to monitor study confidence and identify early disengagement risks. The program connects students with essential UNE student-facing services and programs designed to support their academic and overall wellbeing.

- 100% of commencing students engaged.
- 20 completions with 13 enrolled in undergraduate courses in T1 2026, and 2 enrolled in courses at other universities.

Targeted Tutorial Assistance Program

The program includes one-on-one tutoring sessions, drop-in academic sessions and LANTITE Assessment preparations.

- Usage increased in 2025 by 34%.
- Indigenous students who access the tutoring program continue to see higher success rates, 11% more, than those that do not.
- Students in the School of Humanities, Arts & Social Science reported the highest success rate of 97%. This was more than 15% higher than those that did not use tutoring from the same school.
- 11 of our tutors identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Table 2: Tutorial assistance provided in 2025

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted	Total number of tutorial sessions attended	Total hours of assistance	Expenditure (\$)
Enabling	19	495	1130	
Undergraduate	137	3785	8459	
Postgraduate	14	337	927	
Total	170	4617	10,516	\$500,474.00



Cultural Competency of Staff and Students

New – Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Appointed

The University of New England announced the appointment of Professor Peter Anderson as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in April 2025, with Professor Anderson commencing in the role at the end of June 2025. As PVCI, Professor Anderson provides senior leadership for Indigenous education, employment, and research strategies. He brings deep expertise in Indigenous rights-based approaches to education and Indigenous Data Sovereignty, strengthening UNE's commitment to Indigenous student success.

New – UNE Chancellor Acknowledgment of Country

Early in 2025, newly installed Chancellor Dr Sarah Pearson met with Anaiwan Elders and community representatives to introduce herself and seek approval to learn and deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in Anaiwan language during her official installation ceremony in May.

The Chancellor recognised that language reclamation is central to celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, culture, and identity. By requesting permission from Anaiwan descendants to learn their language, she demonstrated that institutional leadership takes responsibility for cultural practice.

This approach reflects UNE's commitment to embedding cultural competency into leadership practice, establishing that senior institutional leaders actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and take responsibility for learning cultural protocols. The Chancellor's actions reinforce UNE's work in creating culturally safe spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students feel valued.

New – UNE Vice Chancellor Academic Gown

In 2025, Vice Chancellor & CEO Professor Chris Moran engaged local Anaiwan artist and UNE staff member Larissa Ahoy to design artwork for his new academic gown. The artwork reflects UNE's place within its community and the journey of the institution, whilst also honouring the individual story of the Vice Chancellor and his family.

Professor Moran wore the academic robe for the first time at the October 2025 graduation ceremonies, where he shared the artwork's story with graduands and their guests at both the Oorala sashing ceremony and the UNE graduation ceremonies. This initiative demonstrates UNE leadership's commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and narratives into university life, ensuring that significant institutional moments, including graduation, acknowledge and celebrate Country and community.



New – Indigenous Research and Ethics Training (HDR604 Module)

The UNE Graduate Research School delivers Indigenous Research and Ethics Training to support higher degree research candidates and supervisors in conducting ethical, culturally safe research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The module combines online learning via MyLearn with face-to-face sessions delivered twice yearly by Associate Professor Peter Smith, one in each Research Period.

The training aims to build awareness of ethical standards in research and key principles including informed consent, confidentiality, and reciprocity. Participants develop understanding of the Indigenous context of their research environment and learn to prepare the Aboriginal peoples section in human ethics applications. The module also equips researchers with the knowledge and skills to implement cultural safety practices throughout their research.

Since launching in July 2025, the training has engaged 30 participants, including HDR candidates and supervisors.

Ongoing Cultural Competency of Staff and Students

Frank Archibald Memorial Lecture

The Frank Archibald Memorial Lecture is an annual event held in honour of Mr Frank Archibald, a revered Aboriginal community member of the Armidale area. Frank Archibald was renowned for his knowledge and interest in all issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly education.

The 2025 lecture was presented by Yvonne Weldon. Yvonne is an independent councillor and the first Aboriginal councillor in the City of Sydney's 180-year history. She follows in the footsteps of a proud tradition of activists and change-makers (including her great-aunt Mum Shirl and her uncle Paul Coe, a prominent Aboriginal rights campaigner).

Celebrations of Cultural Significance

UNE continues to celebrate key cultural events including Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC Week, fostering community connection and contributing to cultural awareness and cultural safety across campus.

Cultural Connections

Delivered as part of UNE's ongoing cultural capability work, the UNE Cultural Connections workshop builds staff understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and strengthens respect while addressing racism within the university community.

In addition, UNE expanded its approach by piloting externally facilitated cultural awareness training facilitated by Anaiwan local Dave Widders, which is now being rolled out more broadly across the university.

- 3 Cultural Connections workshops delivered to 16 participants.
- 2 Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Workshops delivered to 41 participants.

All Senior Executive staff participated in a separate Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Workshop.

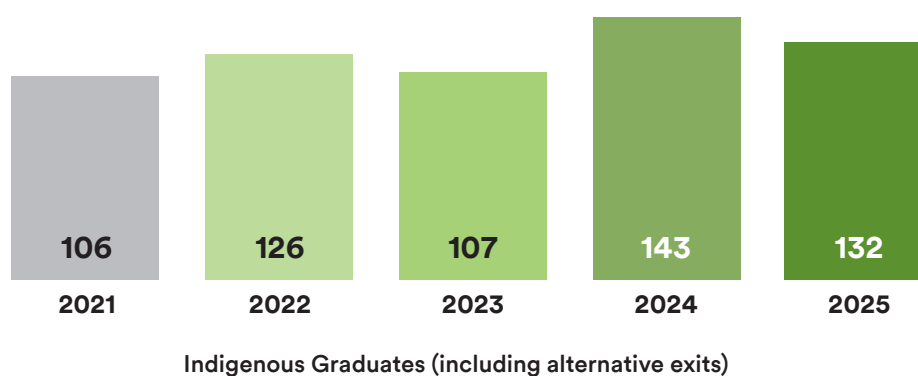
Cultural Heritage on Country

UNE's Estate, Build and Environment team continued an active, ongoing program to identify, protect, and educate staff and students about Aboriginal cultural heritage across UNE's campus and rural properties. This includes practical site management and mapping work, alongside opportunities for on-Country learning that strengthen cultural understanding through place-based education.

- Development of Talimbah artefact and scarred tree management plan.
- Maintenance and GPS mapping of the Duval Mountain fire trail.
- Implementation of the UNE Campus and Rural Properties Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Plan.

Cultural heritage tours delivered for staff and students, guided by EBE Cultural Heritage Officer and knowledge holder Steven Ahoy.

Student Completions (Outcomes)

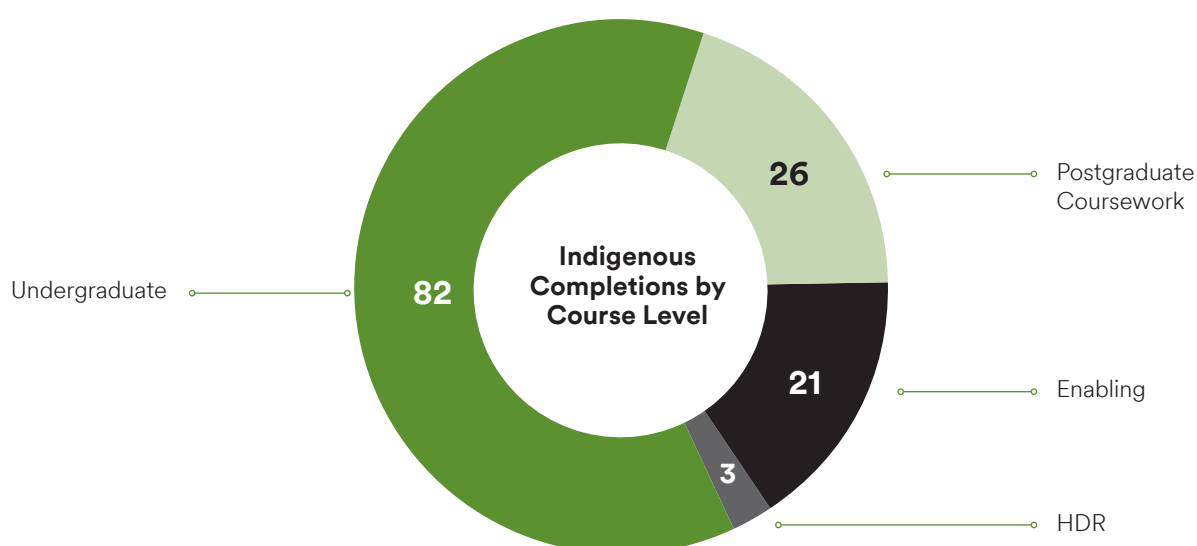


3,323

Total UNE Completions in 2025

4.0%

Indigenous % Graduates 2025



ISSP strategies, activities and programs to improve completions

New – Oorala Student Guide Redesign

In 2025, Oorala redesigned its orientation guide, moving from an alphabetical reference format to a journey-based framework organised around three progressive stages: Getting Started, Get Set, and Go.

The redesigned guide emphasises digital literacy and technical readiness, includes a Pro Vice-Chancellor message affirming institutional commitment to inclusive environments, and incorporates student testimonials to provide relatable peer perspectives. Enhanced content includes comprehensive accommodation guidance, clearer explanations of HELP loan schemes, an expanded Regional Study Hub network, and reorganised wellbeing and support services by function rather than alphabetical listing. Strengthened cultural safety language throughout emphasises student agency and choice, whilst balanced positioning of pathway programs recognises multiple valid entry points to degree studies. The guide reflects a shift from providing information to facilitating student success through staged preparation, accessible language, and responsive design that acknowledges the diverse circumstances and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

New – Residential College Engagement and Support

Oorala partnered with UNE Residential to deliver evening outreach sessions across residential colleges, showcasing available services and building awareness of support options. This work included additional student identification across colleges and progressed discussions around accommodation support and scholarship planning for 2026.

Residential colleges provide critical spaces where students living away from country can build community and connection. By embedding Oorala's presence and services within these spaces, students have easier access to culturally safe support and are better positioned to thrive academically and socially during their university journey.

Oorala strengthened connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students living in residential colleges through collaborative outreach and targeted support planning, improving their sense of belonging and access to university services.

Ongoing ISSP Funded strategies, activities and programs to improve completions

Yinga Kara Orientation Program

Culturally tailored onboarding program for online and on-campus students alike, addressing specific barriers Indigenous students face transitioning to higher education. Includes comprehensive introduction to university systems, cultural services, community connection, and culturally safe spaces.

- 30 students.
- Program ran for Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 intakes.

Oorala Sashing Ceremony

The Ceremony acknowledges the academic achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a culturally significant event shared with fellow Indigenous students, their families, and friends. Participation continues to grow each year, with an increasing number of students choosing to attend and celebrate this important milestone.

- 33 graduands attended May ceremony, including 3 receiving their PHD.
- 17 graduands attended October ceremony.

Oorala Awards

Recognises Indigenous academic and social excellence, as well as the contributions to culturally safe environments and community partnerships.

- Total of 76 nominations.
- 34 students received nominations with 9 students awarded a prize.

Indigenous Student Emergency Fund

The Student Emergency Fund provides timely, discretionary financial assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students experiencing urgent welfare needs not typically covered by scholarships, generally after other support pathways had been explored.

- 12 students accessed the fund.
- Assistance was largely concentrated on basic living and personal safety needs.

On Campus Social Events

Oorala hosts regular on-campus social activities, including student lunches, dinners, and events like bowling and trivia, that help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students build belonging and connection whilst living off country.

- 4 events.
- 30 students participated.

Oorala Cultural Workshops

Oorala continued to offer a series of cultural workshops that aim to maintain cultural identity critical to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's wellbeing.

- 7 cultural workshops.
- 247 participants.

Student Professional Development

Students are supported in their learning and career pathways including the Oorala Student Ambassador Program, attendance at industry conferences, and access to professional memberships.

- 2 Bachelor of Nursing students attended CATSINaM Conference, offering the students a unique blend of cultural safety training, professional networking, and personal empowerment.
- 4 Student Ambassadors provided peer representation and culturally responsive engagement in Oorala activities. In 2025 the ambassadors completed BlaQ LGBTQ+ Training as part of their participation in the program.

UNE strategies, activities and programs to improve completions

With the appointment of a Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in 2025, UNE has established dedicated senior executive leadership to drive Indigenous student success, retention, and completion as an institutional priority. The PNCI role provides strategic oversight across Indigenous education, employment, and research, ensuring that efforts to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completion outcomes are embedded within UNE's broader strategic and governance frameworks. This appointment positions UNE to take a coordinated, rights-informed approach to addressing systemic barriers to completion, aligning Oorala's targeted student support programs with institution-wide strategies including early learner engagement, course portfolio reform, and an improved campus climate for Indigenous students.



Regional and Remote Students

Table 3: ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		TOTAL	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2024 Payments	108,000	54	38,212	9	27,000	25	173,212	88
B. 2025 Offers	471,200	111	243,000	19	20,250	27	734,450	157
C. Percentage (C=B/A*100)							424%	
2025 Payments	242,900	90	136,994	15	20,250	27	400,144	132

ISSP Regional & Remote Engagement

Murdi Paaki Regional Engagement

In early 2025, UNE formalised engagement with the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly through a Statement of Intent, establishing a foundation for sustained collaborative work across the region. To tailor Oorala's approach, an audit of Murdi Paaki communities was conducted to identify localised community needs and barriers to tertiary education access.

This community-centred understanding enabled Oorala to refine marketing strategies and build awareness of tertiary education pathways within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the region. Leveraging the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly network, Oorala promoted UNE and tertiary study opportunities to a broader audience. In 2025, multiple visits to the region were conducted in locations including Gunnedah, Lightning Ridge, Walgett, Moree, Collarenebri, Coonabarabran, and Coonamble to present the Ronyera Ekina school pathways program, embedding UNE's presence within priority communities.

Oorala End of Year School Prizes

A regional initiative recognising and celebrating the academic achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across local schools.

- 81 Indigenous students awarded a prize.
- 18 schools participated.

National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP)

A collaborative STEM engagement program delivered in partnership with UNE, Macquarie University, and Armidale Secondary College, targeting key secondary cohorts.

- Delivered over two days.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 7 participated.
- 15 student leaders from Years 9–11 engaged.

TRACKS Study Group - UNE Tamworth

The is an ISSP-funded initiative hosted by UNE Tamworth in collaboration with the Oorala Student Experience and Academic teams. The program provides weekly face-to-face study sessions in a culturally safe learning environment, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TRACKS students in the Tamworth region to achieve their academic goals.

- Averaged 6 students per session with a strong correlation between attendance and course completion.
- Sustained course completions and progression into undergraduate courses.
- Strengthen community relationships in the Tamworth region.

Eligibility Criteria

Indigenous Education Strategy

UNE maintains a current, publicly available Indigenous Education Strategy (IES) in accordance with section 13 of the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017.

On 25 February 2026, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) formally requested an extension to December 2026 for the submission of a revised IES. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission confirmed on 26 February 2026 that it is amenable to this approach, subject to the Indigenous Governance Mechanism endorsing an extension to the validity date of the currently approved IES. UNE will provide this endorsement along with a public link to the strategy.

The revised IES is being developed through three interconnected processes: strategic realignment with UNE's Strategic Plan 2026–2035; a comprehensive PSCI Divisional review of Indigenous student, staff, and community measures; and the establishment of UNE's inaugural Elder's Circle and Knowledge Holders.

UNE confirms ongoing compliance with all requirements under section 13:

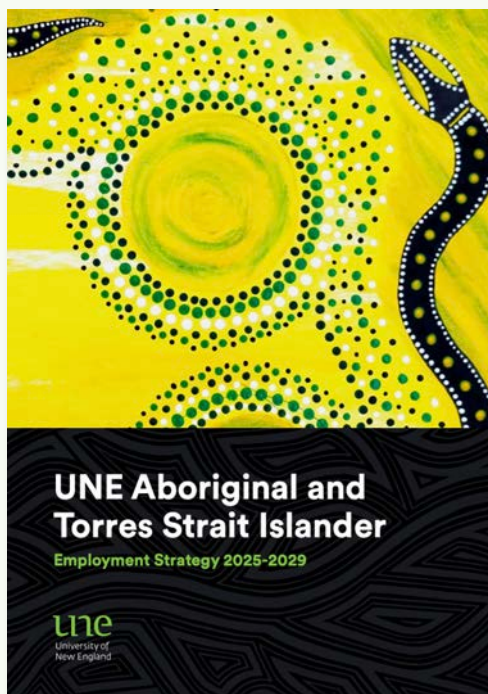
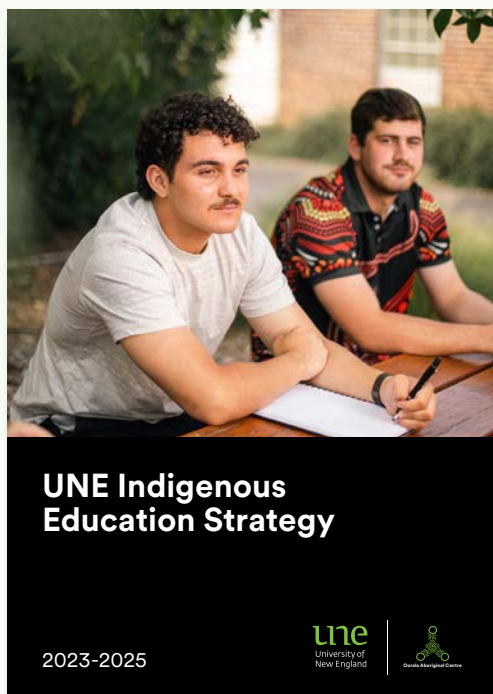
(a) Key Performance Indicators: KPIs are maintained and monitored through the ISSP Governance Committee. Indigenous student success rates reached 71.42% in 2025, continuing a sustained upward trend from 62.09% in 2021.

(b) Enrolment, Progression and Completion: Multiple entry pathways support 1,115 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments and 132 completions in 2025. Community partnerships continue to strengthen pathways into higher education.

(c) Indigenous Knowledge in Curricula: Indigenous Research and Ethics Training was introduced in 2025, and the Ronyera Ekina school-based curriculum embeds Aboriginal perspectives into NSW school settings.

(d) Cultural Competency Activities: A structured program of cultural competency development is delivered for staff and students, including Cultural Connections Workshops and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training now being implemented university-wide.

Both the Indigenous Education Strategy and the Indigenous Employment Strategy are publicly available on this web-page - <https://www.une.edu.au/about-une/executive/deputy-vice-chancellor/indigenous-education-statements>



Indigenous Workforce Strategy

In 2025, UNE launched the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2025–2029* at its inaugural Close the Gap Day event. The Strategy sets a target of lifting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment to 4% by 2029, exceeding the ISSP Guidelines requirement of 3%. During the reporting period, inclusive recruitment processes and documentation were developed, and the framework for an Aboriginal staff mentoring program was established. Six information sessions were delivered across business areas to build staff understanding and awareness of the Strategy.

To support the professional development and career advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, UNE piloted an externally delivered Aboriginal Cultural Awareness workshop facilitated by Anaiwan local Dave Widders, with 41 participants across two sessions. This training was subsequently delivered to all Senior Executive staff in December 2025 and is now being rolled out university-wide. Three Cultural Connections Workshops were also delivered with 16 participants.

UNE confirms the employment of an Indigenous senior academic at the executive level. Professor Peter Anderson was announced as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in April 2025 and commenced in the role at the end of June 2025. The PVICI provides senior executive leadership across Indigenous education, employment, and research strategies.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2025–2029* is current and publicly available. It is aligned with UNE's Strategic Plan 2026–2035, which identifies upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to education as a core institutional commitment. The Strategy will be reviewed as part of the broader PVICI Divisional review currently underway, ensuring continued alignment with institutional direction and community priorities.



Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The UNE Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) Governance Committee provides oversight and guidance on the use of ISSP funding, with authority within UNE's governance framework to ensure compliance and strategic alignment.

This is outlined in the Charter of the UNE ISSP Committee and can be found here: https://www.une.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/570090/2025-Charter-of-the-UNE-Indigenous-Student-Success-Program-ISSP-Committee.pdf

Voting members include

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) – Ex Officio (Chair, if appointed).
- Director, Oorala Aboriginal Education Centre – Ex Officio (Co-Chair, or Chair if PVCI is vacant).
- Student Engagement Manager, Oorala Aboriginal Education Centre – Ex Officio.
- Course Coordinator and Head of Academic Team, Oorala Aboriginal Centre – Ex Officio.

Additional members may be appointed by the Chair from Indigenous academics or UNE Elders with relevant experience. The Committee must always maintain a majority of Indigenous members. Official attendees may include individuals invited by the Chair.

The chair invited the Student Experience and the Student Recruitment Team Leaders to contribute to the Committee's work until the appointment of the Student Engagement Manager in July 2025.

The Committee met quarterly throughout 2025 to oversee ISSP related governance and operations. In addition, the Director of Oorala met monthly with the Deputy Vice Chancellor ensuring strategic coordination until the appointment of the PVCI in June.

Indigenous Voice in Decision Making

UNE remains committed to embedding Indigenous perspectives in institutional governance by ensuring formal Indigenous representation across a broad range of key decision-making bodies. This includes active participation in:

- **Academic Committees** – Academic Board, University Research Committee, University Teaching and Learning Committee, Curriculum Committee, and School Education Committees.
- **University Business and Strategy** – Convocation, Senior Leadership Committee, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, Culture Review Committee, WHS Committee, Tamworth Aboriginal Working Group and Campus Master Plan Working Group.
- **Student-Focused Committees** – UNE Student Consultative Committee, Student Conduct Appeals Committee, Graduation Steering Committee, and Orientation Steering Committee.
- **Indigenous Governance Committees** – ISSP Governance Committee and Indigenous Employment Governance Committee,
- **Sector Engagement** – NSW DVC/PVC Committee and the National Universities Australia DVC/PVC Committee.

This inclusive approach ensures Indigenous voices are heard and embedded in UNE's strategic, academic, cultural, and operational decision-making.

Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the guidelines, I certify that:

- i. the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the Higher Education Support Act 2003; and
- ii. the 2025 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution’s use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and
- iii. the 2025 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2025 under the Indigenous Student Success Program; and
- iv. Indigenous Student Success Program funds and any interest earned, or royalties/income derived from these funds was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

I understand that:

- i. the Minister or the Minister’s delegate may seek further information to support this certification; and
- ii. the information contained in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and
- iii. in the event that I have not remitted GST paid under the Agreement to the Australian Taxation Office, it is my obligation to remit those amounts, as required under the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999; and
- iv. it is an offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 to provide false or misleading information.

Certification recommended by the university’s Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name	Samantha Fowler
Title	Director, Oorala Aboriginal Centre
Contact	ooralamgt@une.edu.au



Signed

30/04/2025

Date

Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate:

Name	Professor Peter Anderson
Title	Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous
Contact	pvc@une.edu.au



Signed

30/04/2025

Date

