

# UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2023





## Acknowledgment of Country

The University of New England wishes to acknowledge the custodians of the many lands on which it conducts its business.

In doing so UNE also acknowledges the Elders of those lands past, present and future as knowledge holders and as key stakeholders in the education and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Cover: Artwork by Larissa Ahoy

Larissa's story:

*Long ago in the Dreamtime when the echidna reaches a certain age he must go 'Walkabout'. He must travel throughout the lands, in order to become one with Mother Earth. This is where he will learn life skills and become the master he was born to be. On his journey he will face obstacles and challenges that will guide him throughout the rest of life. One of the challenges he faces on this journey, is that he is amongst the bountiful surroundings of the Anaiwan Nation, whilst at the same time, he must be careful as to not step into his neighbouring Nations, as this would be seen as breaking the laws of our people.*

# Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor



Above: **Professor Annabelle Duncan PSM FTSE**  
Vice-Chancellor and CEO UNE  
Photo: University of New England

I am pleased to introduce the 2019-2023 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy*. The University of New England (UNE) has a strong history of connection with the local Anaiwan people on whose land the University is located. We have connections with the Dhungutti, Kamilaroi and Gumbaynggirr nations located within the New England footprint. Our reach also extends to the Dharug and Biripi nations on whose land UNE Sydney and the Taree Study Centre are located.

We are committed to building respectful collaborative relationships with the local communities to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at UNE. Working collaboratively with the local communities is critical to the success of this strategy, and is an approach that aligns with the *Closing the Gap: Prime Ministers Report 2018* and the *Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020*. Indeed the principles that underpin this strategy are drawn from both these reports.

Importantly, it is noted with the release of the *Closing the Gap: Prime Ministers Report 2018*, that New South Wales is on track (although disappointingly the only State) to meet the

employment target set in 2006 to halve the unemployment gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians. Unfortunately, at the national level the employment gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the non-Indigenous population has widened and is now larger than it was in 2016. There is much that can be done to improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally.

This employment strategy documents our commitment and action plan to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here at UNE. As already indicated, we will partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to facilitate employment options and career paths that reflect their strengths and aspirations.

Success in the implementation of this strategy requires genuine engagement and commitment from all Faculties and Directorates across the University. I look forward to working with the Senior Executive to implement the 2019-2023 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy*, and welcome the opportunity to commend it to you.

## Overview and Guiding Principles

The University of New England (UNE) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2023* (Employment Strategy) provides a platform to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The UNE Employment Strategy 2019-2023 will guide the development of action and approaches that support culturally aware work places and practices, improved employment opportunities, career development options, including academic career paths, for current and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students.

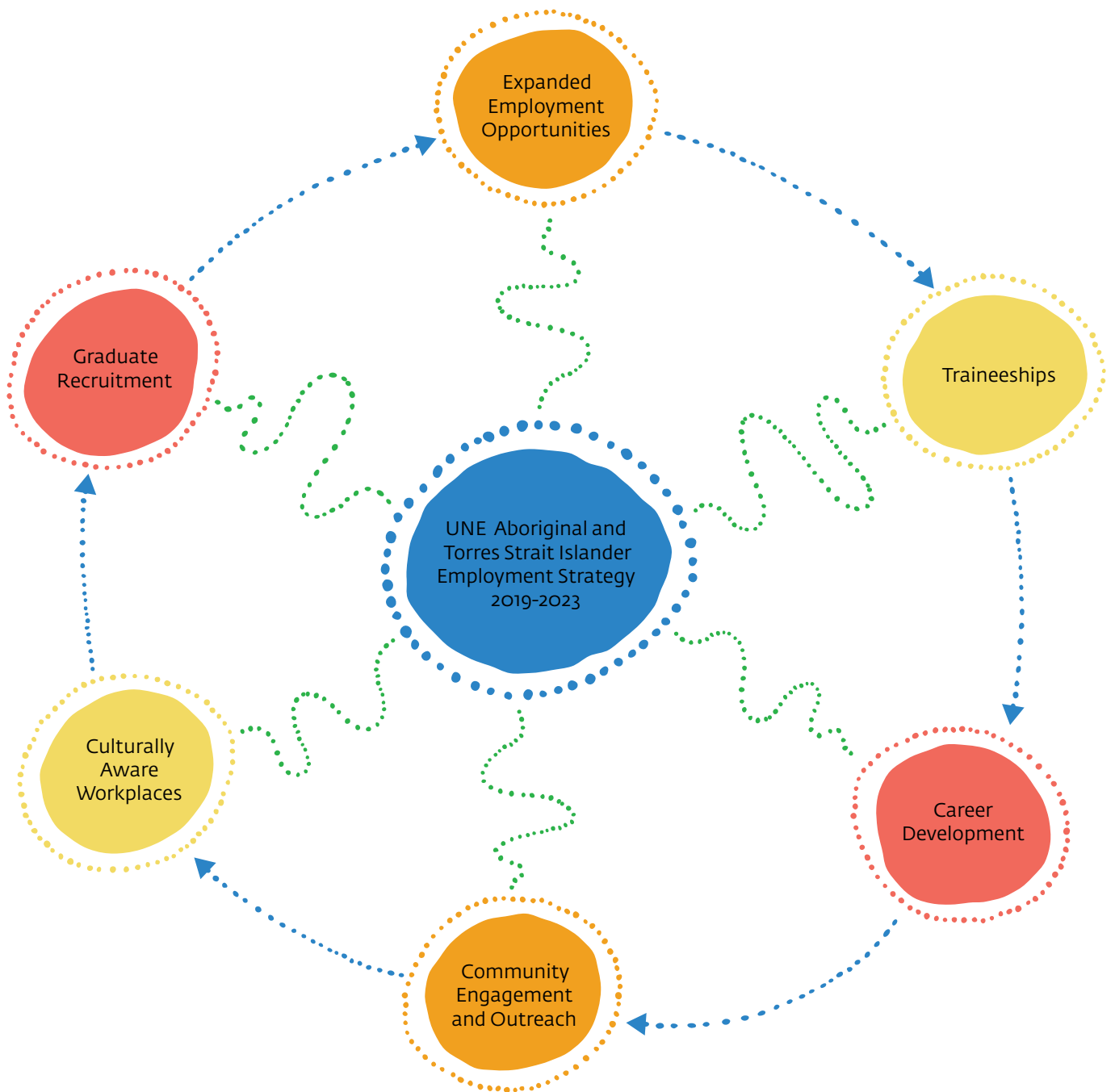
The *Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report 2018* identified a number of key approaches that can contribute to successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These approaches have been incorporated into and inform the implementation, actions and governance of the Employment Strategy including:

- Providing clear leadership responsibility and governance for the Employment Strategy by,
  - a. ensuring responsibility for the implementation is shared across UNE and integrated into the business plans of each Faculty and Directorate as appropriate, and
  - b. aligning the Strategy with UNE Strategic Priorities and the National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy.
- Creating meaningful and continuing employment options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Adopting a strengths-based approach and genuinely consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the design, delivery and evaluation of strategies to improve employment and career outcomes as well as participation in learning and development activities that builds on the existing capacity of our staff.

- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a holistic way that takes into account their unique cultural, social, emotional and economic contexts.
- Valuing Indigenous knowledge, cultural beliefs and practices.
- Genuinely consulting and collaborating with local Aboriginal communities in the development of employment programs and strategies that build on and enhance the capacity of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Reporting on and evaluating the actions identified in the Employment Strategy at organisation-wide, Faculty and Directorate levels annually and recalibrating the strategy regularly to build on successes.

UNE has identified four key objectives for the Employment Strategy:

1. At least three per cent of the University's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023 including:
  - a. Recruit at least one Australian Aboriginal/or Torres Strait Islander person as a senior executive employee at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor or equivalent.
2. UNE will develop a culturally aware and inclusive workplace.
3. UNE will be positioned as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023.
4. We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



## Population Profile

At the last census (2016) there were 2,174 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Local Government Area (LGA) of Armidale Regional Council. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 7.4% of the total Armidale population, up from 6.3% in the 2011 census. The median age of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people in Armidale is twenty-one years compared to thirty-eight years for the national Aboriginal population. These figures indicate that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Armidale and surrounding areas is a growing one. Figure 1 provides an overview of the population by age.

**Armidale Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population By Age (2016)**

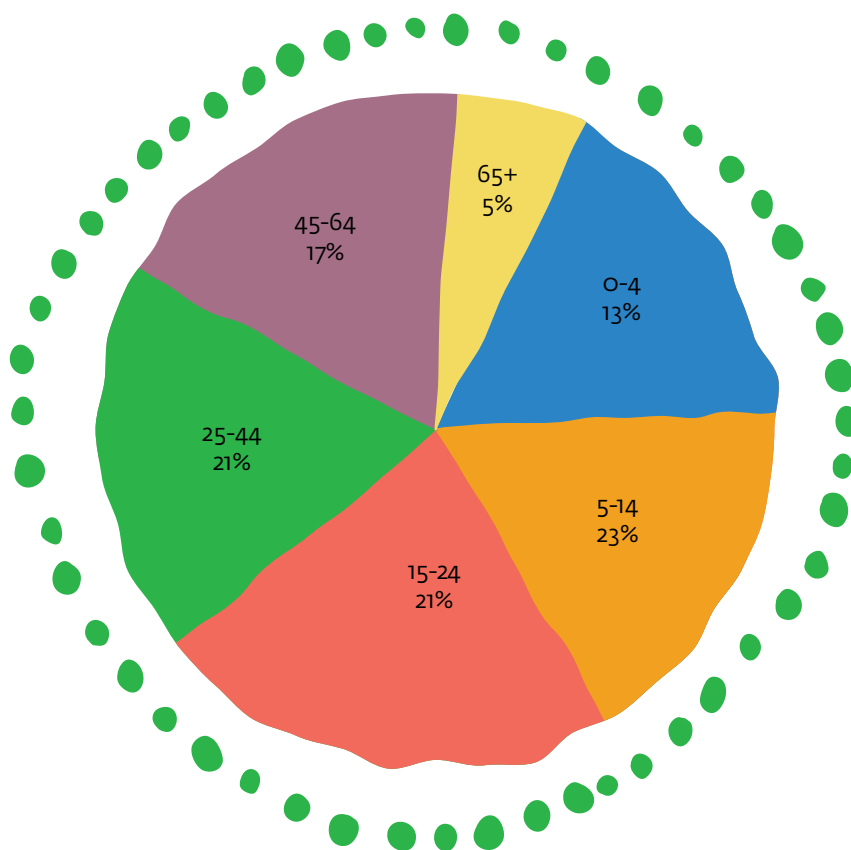


Figure 1: Armidale Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population by Age 2016, (ABS, 2016)

This data is particularly significant for UNE in light of our broader strategic priorities and commitment to the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in university studies to broaden post education employment options and career paths; and our commitment in this strategy to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here at UNE.

We know from The Closing the Gap: Prime Ministers Report 2018 that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-19 years) and young adults (20-24 years) not

in education, employment or training (NEET) has increased in the 10 years to 2016 as Figure 2 indicates. The University has made good progress in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people studying at UNE thereby contributing to a reduction in the number of NEET Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, and is committed to improving the employment outcomes and career paths for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially youth and young adults.

## Indigenous Participation In Employment and Education ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016

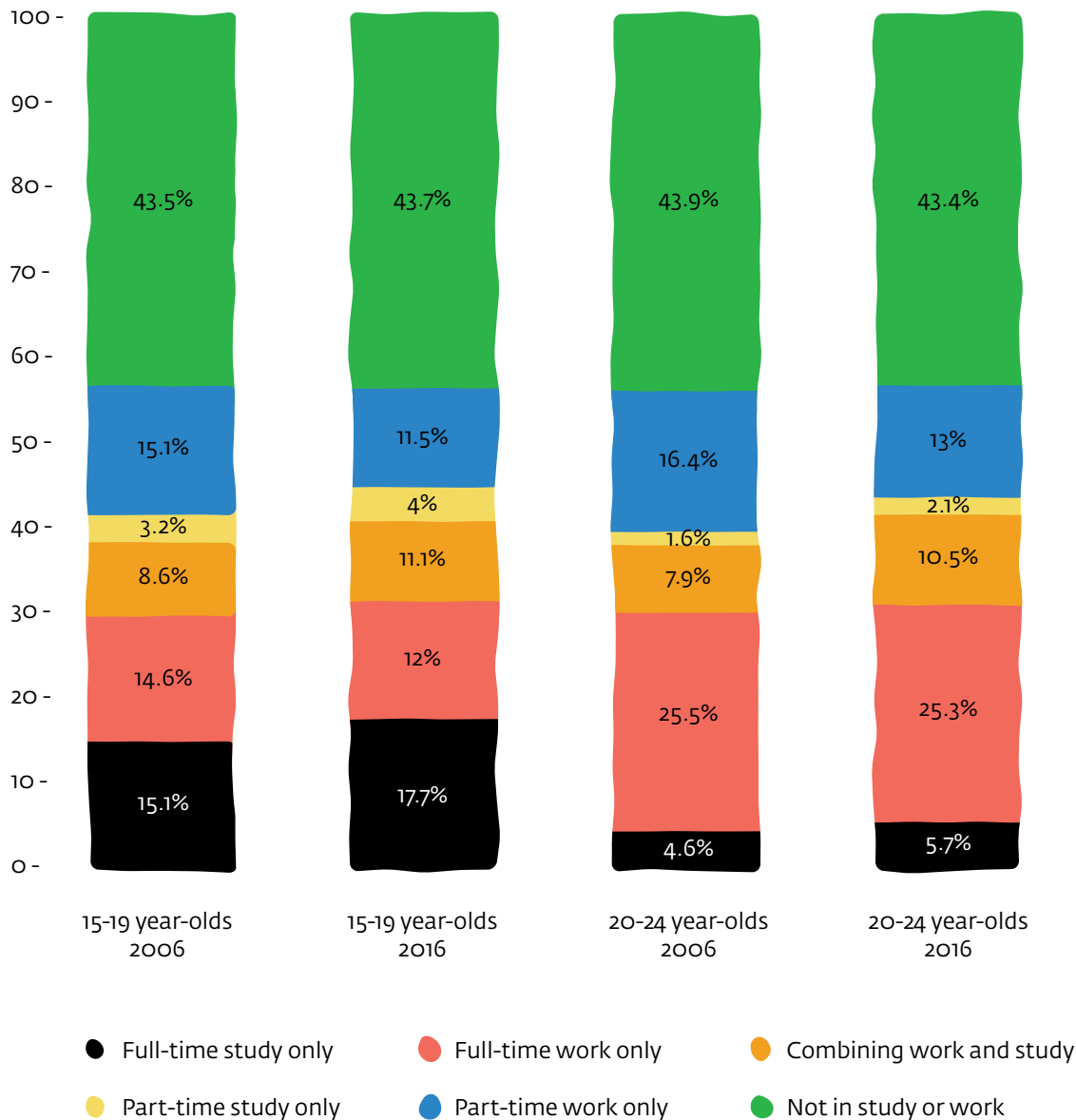


Figure 2: Indigenous participation rates in education and employment (2018 Closing the Gap Report p. 80).

## Current Staff Profile

As at 1 January 2019, UNE employed 36 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at varying levels across its Faculties and Directorates.

There are 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, 26 professional staff members and 1 professional senior staff member. Of the professional staff 9 are employed up to and

including HEO7. Academic Staff are employed at Academic Level A (1), B (6) and C (2) with only one of the current academic staff having a PhD qualification. The Director of the Oorala Aboriginal Centre is the senior officer reporting to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

## Key Documents Informing The Employment Strategy

The documents highlighted in Figure 3 have informed and/or guided the development of the Employment Strategy.

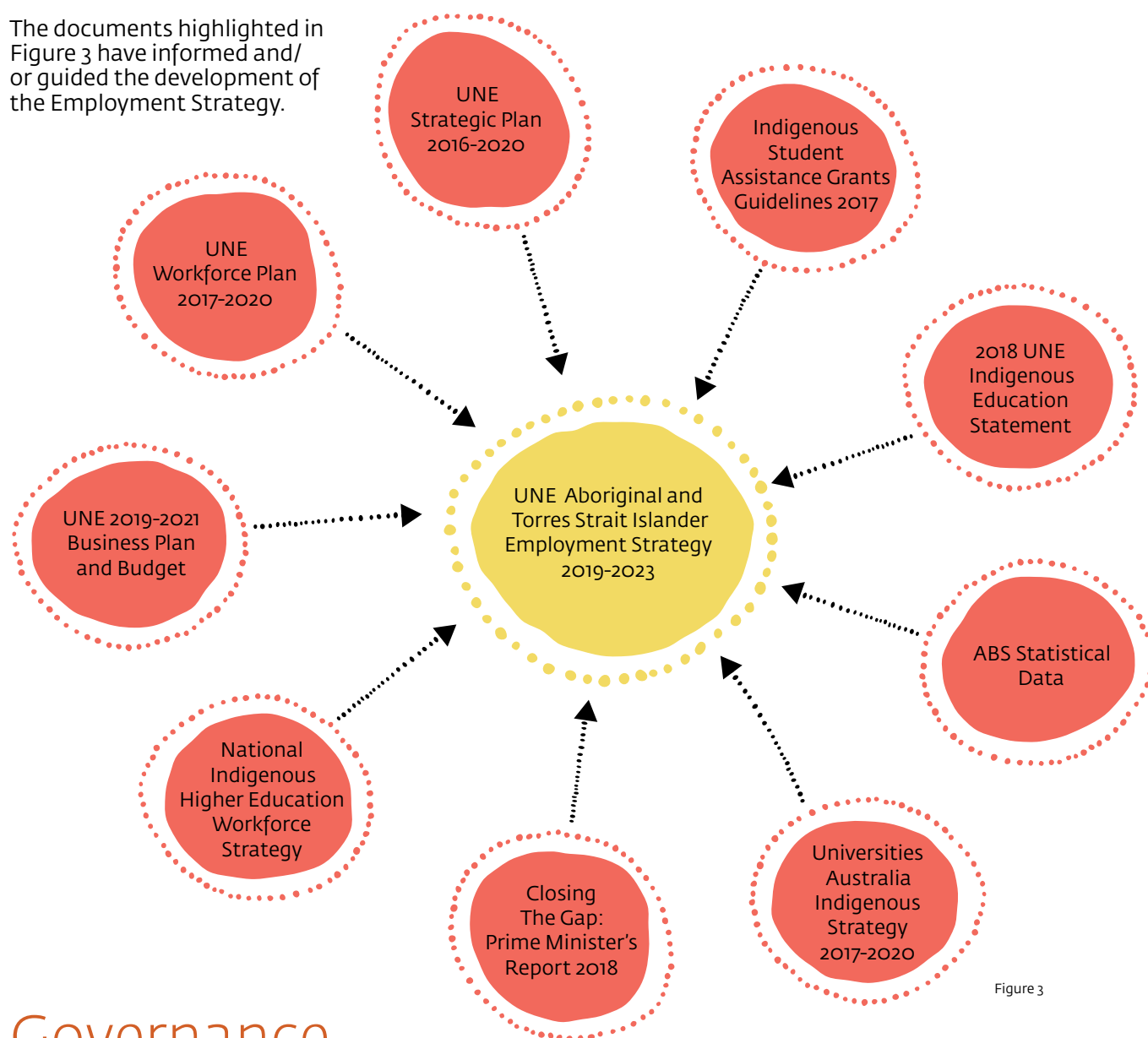


Figure 3

## Governance

Governance of the University of New England Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2023 include:

Annual internal reports on the successes and learnings associated with the implementation of each of the four objectives identified in the Employment Strategy by Faculties and Directorates to the Vice-Chancellor through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Governance Committee.

External reports to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet consistent with the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017.

The existing Governance Committee (already established under the Certified Agreement 2014-2017) will provide overview and monitor the implementation of the Employment Strategy and recalibration as appropriate, to progress each of the four objectives.

Engagement with the Armidale Aboriginal Interagency Committee and/or other peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies representing the Nations on whose land UNE's campuses reside.



# Objectives and Actions

## 1. At least 3% of the UNE's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Increase entry level continuing and fixed-term employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a particular focus on youth and young adults.	Reapply for exemption under Section s126 of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 (NSW) (ADA) to facilitate recruitment into identified positions across UNE.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2019	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in continuing positions:	Annually	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans Directors
	Professional positions x two annually for the life of the Employment Strategy		
	Academic positions x one annually for the life of the employment strategy.		
	NB: increased numbers will be calculated based on the number of continuing positions as at 1 January 2019.		
	Develop a strategy to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that haven't already done so to update their information in the Ascender payroll system identifying their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2020	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
Recruit at least one Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person as a senior executive employee at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor or equivalent.	Create and fund a senior executive level position for recruitment in 2020.	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2020	Vice-Chancellor Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chief Financial Officer
	Go to market to recruit for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior Executive at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent).	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2020	Vice-Chancellor Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Identify opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Academic and Professional Staff positions with a particular focus on continuing and fixed-term roles.	Develop and implement strategies and initiatives to support Faculties and Directorates to identify opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics in continuing and fixed-term research positions at UNE through an employment structure that develops skills and increases the number of early career academics.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Deans Associate Deans Research

## 2. We will develop a culturally aware and inclusive UNE workplace

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
All staff are encouraged and supported to participate in Cultural Connections workshops.	Senior Executive Team (or equivalent) and all Senior Managers are to attend a Cultural Awareness workshop.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2020	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Deans and Directors
	All staff are expected to attend Cultural Connections workshops.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Deans and Directors
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participation in cultural leave and NAIDOC celebrations.	UNE will continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to access cultural leave and participate in significant historical events such as NAIDOC week and/or Sorry Day.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Deans and Directors
Recognition of additional workload for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	Where responsibility for activities such as pastoral care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students fall disproportionately on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, this is recognised in workload planning and is considered in a non-prejudicial way in Performance Planning, Development and Review (PPDR) and academic promotions processes across UNE.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are encouraged to participate in the engagement and/or culture survey.	Provision in the UNE Voice Project engagement and/or culture survey for staff to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and have their responses de-identified and aggregated to enable their collective views and opinions to be heard.	1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2019 and 2022	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to share and report on collective responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to the culture survey and collectively develop actions to build cultural safety and awareness at UNE.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2019 and 2022	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors
Decision making and advisory committees to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and representation.	Where it is feasible and appropriate to do so, decision making and advisory committees should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representation. Particularly where decisions or advice is given on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2020	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors
Our UNE environment is culturally inclusive.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artefacts are visible across all UNE's campuses.	Ongoing	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Facilities Management Services University Librarian
	The UNE environment including infrastructure will promote the languages of those Nations on which our campuses are located. Key venues and buildings to be co-named in language and/or artistically through the use of totems, imagery or other culturally appropriate artefacts.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Facilities Management Services

### 3. We will be positioned as an Employer of Choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Induction and on-boarding.	Develop an induction process for all new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that includes the allocation of a culturally appropriate buddy and/or mentor.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors
Traineeships and apprenticeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Investigate and identify potential traineeship and apprenticeship positions within Faculties and Directorates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Senior Executive Team Deans and Directors <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Develop clear guidelines and processes for traineeships and apprenticeships including engagement and support mechanisms for trainees and apprentices for the duration of their indenture.	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2020	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	On successful completion of the traineeship or apprenticeship, it is incumbent on the hosting Faculty or Directorate to make every effort to provide or source a continuing position for the trainee or apprentice in the University.	2021 to 2023	Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors
Graduate Recruitment.	Investigate options and develop a Graduate Recruitment program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates for implementation in 2020-2021.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
Professional and Personal Development.	Promote the Professional Staff Development Fund to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional staff and encourage applications consistent with the fund guidelines.	Date on which nominations are open—three rounds per year	Senior Executive Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Develop and document scaffolded career paths at UNE for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Review current study leave options to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in accredited study that takes into account their ways of knowing and learning.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Support the participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in UNE Leadership Programs aligned with their classification.	Annually	Senior Executive Team Deans and Directors
	All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Academics in continuing and *fixed term positions are supported to participate in the UNE Early Career Academic Mentoring Program (ECAMP).  *NB: 12 months contract and for the term of the annual ECAMP.	Annually	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services



## 4. We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Involve local communities in the life of UNE.	Provided genuine opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders from the communities in our footprint to engage in day-to-day operations and significant events of the University.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team
	Develop and implement an Elders and Valued Persons policy that guides and recognises the significant contribution and positive impact these individuals have on the life of the University.	Ongoing	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chief Legal and Governance Officer Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Oorala Aboriginal Centre Director Human Resource Services
Building collaborative relationships founded on mutual respect and two-way communication.	Engage with local secondary schools to promote UNE as a genuine option for work experience placements and school-based traineeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Ongoing	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services
	Engage with local secondary schools to promote UNE as an Employer of Choice for post-secondary employment and education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Deans and Directors Pro Vice-Chancellor External Relations Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services Executive Director Marketing and Strategy
	Build on existing, and establish new partnerships, with local communities to identify opportunities for genuine and meaningful engagement across all aspects of university life including employment, curriculum development and research.	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2020	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Chief Operating Officer
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities to plan significant events including NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week.	Annually	Vice-Chancellor Senior Executive Team Directors
	Ensure UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on community consultative forums working groups etc. tasked with the promotion of employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Ongoing	Chief Operating Officer <i>Contributor:</i> Director Human Resource Services

## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, *Census of Population and Housing - Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, 'Table 02. 2011 Census Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Local Government Areas', time series spreadsheet, cat no. 2075.0, viewed 24 June 2019, <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2075.02011?OpenDocument>
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