

# **INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM**

## **2022 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**University of New  
England**

**30 April 2023**



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## Document Purpose

The Indigenous Student Success Program (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 options taken by UNE in 2022 to support current and future Indigenous students to achieve success. It is not an exhaustive statement of all UNEs 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 describe additional supports the university is committing to lifting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes, given the supplementary nature of ISSP.

## Document Protocols

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Indigenous Student Success Program - 2022 Financial Acquittal. A statement of review and endorsement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism, in operation at UNE throughout 2022, commences on page 22 of this document. The UNE ISSP-2022 Financial Acquittal has been included.

## 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" between 16 March and 30 April 2023. The data in the dashboards available within Business Intelligence Services Apps are predominately updated through the UNE Data Warehouse nightly. They may differ slightly from what is reflected in this report.

## Summary

The University transitioned back to a business-as-usual (BAU) approach during the 2022 period. There were continued disruptions of activities in reaction to changing health directives; however, the return to BAU is positive. The university realised an uptake in staff and student activity on campus during the reporting period. National economic changes resulted in a decrease in student numbers across the sector as employment opportunities increased. The number of Indigenous students dropped slightly across this period. Still, more significant changes to domestic and international student numbers resulted in an increased percentage of Indigenous student participation at UNE.

Indigenous staff numbers grew across the period, and student success at post-graduate and undergraduate levels made gains. Student completions remained high in 2022. UNE strategies and activity across the institution have continued to attract Indigenous students to the organisation and support graduation numbers. However, challenges still exist in student success. The Decadal Strategic Plan, Indigenous Education Strategy, Workforce Strategy, and Senior Leadership changes provide the foundations for ongoing growth and Indigenous student success at UNE.

UNE's long and sustained record of working to improve higher education opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians continues, as does the outreach to the region, particularly Tamworth, Moree and Taree.

Founded at UNE in 1986, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre remains integral to UNE's efforts to improve higher education and employment outcomes for Indigenous people. The Oorala Aboriginal Centre will continue to play a vital role as UNE aspires to continuously improve its support of Indigenous students and staff in Higher Education. Empowered by the 'Future Fit' agenda, the Centre will strive to be at the forefront of securing UNE's aspirational goals to: *"Empower communities, Build Resilience and offer Personalised Learning Journeys for the increasing cohort of Indigenous Australians who choose to study with us."*

There is more to be done across the Institution to support and grow the academic success of our Indigenous students. However, in so doing, we strive to bring practical effect to UNE's aspirations for and commitments to Indigenous Higher Education.

## **1. Enrolments (Access)**

### **TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program**

The TRACKS program prepares Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for undergraduate study. Students can access support and guidance as they investigate tertiary education and decide on their future.

In 2022, enrolment numbers for TRACKS remained steady, with 81 students enrolled. Of these, 53 were continuing students, and 28 were commencing students. Fifteen students completed the TRACKS course in 2022, and most are now successfully transitioning into undergraduate studies.

### **Internal Selection Program (ISP)**

ISP is designed to provide access to University study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with professional work or community experience and any formal qualifications from TAFE or other training providers. The number of people who access university via this program is small compared to the other entry pathways available. However, the program remains key to our pathway options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Miroma Bunbilla Program**

This program is designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a pre-entry pathway to the Joint Medical Program offered by the University of New England (UNE) and the University of Newcastle (UoN). Each year, up to 17 places are set aside for admission. In 2022, the program was held on campus in Armidale and Newcastle. UNE successfully recruited three students via this pathway.

### **Student Recruitment/Careers Market**

The UNE Student Recruitment team and the Oorala Aboriginal Centre collaborate to identify opportunities to support and improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, targeting regional and remote communities. In 2022, UNE received increased interest from regional communities requesting UNE's presence and participation in events in their area. Our participation has strengthened ties in key regional communities, including Moree, Forbes, Tamworth, Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Taree, Walgett, Coonabarabran and Rutherford.

### **Schools & Community Engagement Coordinator**

In 2022, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre recruited a person for this project role. This role is partially (50%) funded by ISSP, with the other 50% funded by other sources. The coordinator works with schools and Indigenous community organisations.

### **Community Engagement Activities**

UNE remained active in regional communities in the Armidale, Tamworth, Taree & Moree areas as regular sites for engaging the community with information and activities relating to university access and participation. Events were often linked to community and educational interests and cultural celebrations, providing an opportunity to engage with a diverse group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **New Strategies**

### **Indigenous Pathways Guide**

In 2022, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre created the Indigenous Pathways Guide in collaboration with UNE Marketing. The guide aims to support and improve access to the university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It achieves this by providing a single resource designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The guide includes targeted information about the university, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre, and our student experiences. The guide has been distributed with our outreach activities in schools, the community and careers markets.



## Regional Schools Breakfast

In November 2022, Oorala hosted an information breakfast session with Aboriginal Education Officers, Guidance Officers, and Principals from 18 schools across the region to forge more responsive and better access options for students from these schools. The morning was a success, and further collaboration will occur through the Pathways Academy and other planned events. The training support needs of Indigenous staff in school were also discussed.

## Scholarships, bridging and enabling support and outreach services to improve access

### ISSP Funded Scholarships

UNE offers a range of ISSP-funded scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support and improve access to university. Scholarships offered in 2022 aimed to address a number of barriers to accessing education, including economic disadvantage, first in the family, from regional and remote areas and those with a range of access needs. The ISSP scholarships were also utilised to celebrate success and contribution to the community, ensuring continued access is supported.

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

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total <sup>ii</sup>	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling <sup>iii</sup>	8,250	7	1,125	1	10,000	7	19,375	15
Undergraduate <sup>iv</sup>	91,625	42	48,375	15	31,750	32	171,750	89
Post-graduate <sup>v</sup>	3,000	4	2,625	2	7,000	7	12,625	13
Other	2,625	3	375	1	4,425	1	7,425	5
Total	105,500	56	52,500	19	53,175	47	211,175	122

## Other Broad Strategies

### The Academy

Oorala secured funding from the NSW Department of Education and Training through the Innovation and Collaboration Fund for the two-year 'Pathways Academy'. Through collaboration with six regional schools, The Academy supports a regional education cluster through face-to-face, mentoring and virtual experiences with educational and community leaders. Experts in First Nations pedagogies, culture, innovation, and entrepreneurship development aim to deliver a solution-focused strategy to raise students' aspirations for tertiary study and secure pathways to UNE.

### Experience Days and Camps

Oorala continues its successful Experience Days program. One hundred eighty-nine students from eight regional schools participated in seven experience days and three overnight camps offering course tasters in TRACKS, Science, Nursing and Sports Science, Criminology, Early Childhood Education, Law and Nursing and STEM.

### National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP)

UNE partnered with Macquarie University and Armidale Secondary College to deliver the National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP). The program engaged 81 high school students in various science activities from years 7-12.

### Indigenous Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator (UNE Tamworth)

In May 2022, UNE recruited a Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator for UNE Tamworth. This is an identified role. The primary purpose of this position is to implement and coordinate student engagement and community outreach activities in Tamworth. The role also seeks to build the aspiration, capability and educational attainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to strengthen the local Aboriginal community and region with a place-based teaching and learning focus.

### Indigenous Stakeholder Engagement Administrator (UNE Taree)

In June 2022, UNE recruited a Stakeholder Engagement Administrator for UNE Taree. This is an identified role. The primary purpose of this position is to support the implementation and coordination of student engagement and community outreach activities in Taree and the greater Mid-Coast region. The role also seeks to build the aspiration, capability and educational attainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to strengthen the local Aboriginal community and region with a place-based teaching and learning focus.

## 2. Progression (outcomes)

Student success remains a priority for UNE. The data table reflects student performance in 2022 compared to previous years.

*Table 2: Indigenous Student Outcomes*

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Indigenous Success	60.05	61.38	62.14	63.35
% Increase (Indigenous)	NA	1.21%	0.76%	1.33%
Indigenous Enrolment	978	987	1023	995
Total Enrolments	26104	26787	26075	23003
Indigenous % of all Enrolments	3.75%	3.68%	3.92%	4.33%
Indigenous Completions	106	80	99	96

### Support Students to Complete Units (*Recurrent Strategies, Activities and Programs*)

#### Personal Retention and Engagement (PREP)

The Personal Retention and Engagement Program (PREP) supports commencing students in their first trimester of study. The culturally competent Student Engagement Officers from Oorala assist new students across a broad range of areas to support their transition and progression. In 2022 the PREP program delivered support to 507 commencing Indigenous students.

#### Orientation

Oorala actively participates in the UNE Orientation program. The program offers online and on-campus activities. Orientation at Oorala also includes PREP and the distribution of welcome packs for all commencing students. In 2022, Oorala offered two online orientation sessions each trimester.

- The Student Experience at Oorala
- TRACKS Academic Session

Oorala also contributed to the on-campus program, including a welcome breakfast, Life-Saver Day showcasing clubs, societies and services and the Tool Kit sessions (intro to all services at UNE).

## Targeted Tutorial Assistance TTA

In 2022, Oorala continued providing academic support for online and on-campus students through the Targeted Tutorial Assistance (TTA) program.

*Table 3: Tutorial assistance provided in 2022*

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted <sup>1</sup>	Total number of tutorial sessions attended <sup>2</sup>	Total hours of assistance <sup>3</sup>	Expenditure (\$) <sup>4</sup>
Enabling	30	235	454.75	
Undergraduate	130	2866	6069.16	
Post-graduate	7	115	232.75	
Other	6	173	343	
<b>Total</b>	173	3389	7,099.66	\$514,821

## Student Check-In

In 2022, the Oorala Student Experience team continued the Student Check-In program. The program seeks to engage with all students at two key stages in the teaching period, providing personalised information and advice to support student progression. The Student Experience team reviewed the program in 2022, enhancing areas such as identifying 'at risk' students and communications. This activity became increasingly crucial with the introduction of the Job Ready Graduate package, specifically with regard to the course progression requirements.

*Table 4: Student Check-In 2022*

Student Check In – T1 2022	Student Check In – T2 2022	Student Check In – T3 2022
<p>Contacted 639 students 178 engaged with the activity - 27.8% overall. 41.2% of those that did engage were phoned. 21 advised that they had plans to withdraw from studies in T1 (3.2%).</p>	<p>Contacted 620 Students 75 engaged with the activity – 12% overall. 84% of those that did engage received a phone call. Three advised that they had plans to withdraw from studies in T2 (0.48%).</p>	<p>Contacted 539 Students 80 engaged with the activity – 14.8% overall. 94.6% of those that did engage received a phone call. 10 advised that they had plans to withdraw from studies in T3 (1.85%)</p>

## Oorala's Student Engagement Officers

The Oorala Student Experience Team offers information and advice to current students to ensure they are involved in academic, social, and cultural studies. The best way to ensure that Indigenous students complete their courses is to give them access to a committed team that can offer comprehensive support throughout their degree program. 2,391 SRM student-staff interactions were recorded by the Oorala Student Experience Team in the Student Relationship Management (SRM) system in 2022.

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

<sup>2</sup> Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

<sup>3</sup> Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

<sup>4</sup> Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

## Oorala On the Road

The Oorala Student Experience team engaged with their online student cohort through Oorala on the road. Approximately 80% of Indigenous students at UNE study online. Oorala on the Road leverages UNE campuses in Tamworth, Taree, and the Sydney Campus (Parramatta). Oorala meets with students face-to-face at these campuses.

## UNE Student Experience

The Student Experience division invests heavily in supporting student progression and other aspects of the student lifecycle by delivering core services and targeted communications. In addition, the Student Experience division works collaboratively with the Student Experience Team at the Oorala Aboriginal Centre to ensure that their operations are culturally inclusive.

## Non-ISSP funded Undergraduate Scholarships

The Oorala Aboriginal Centre and the UNE community support Indigenous undergraduate students by providing the following:

- Additional non-ISSP funded scholarships.
- Discipline-specific awards and prizes that support and recognise academic achievement and progression.
- Actively facilitating the application of eligible students for external scholarship opportunities.
- Providing a detour program.

*Table 5: Non-ISSP Funded Scholarships paid to UNE Indigenous undergraduate students in 2022*

Scholarship Title	Number available	Number awarded	Value of Scholarships
Aboriginal Scholarship in Creative Education	1	1	\$3,125
Max Schroder UNE Scholarship	5	1	\$6,000
Max Schroder Indigenous Mentoring Scholarships	2	2	\$16,000
Ella Schroder Indigenous Residential Scholarship	1	1	\$10,000
The Mildred and Betty Scholarship	2	2	\$9,000
Essential Energy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship	1	1	\$7,500
Previous award of Mildred and Betty Scholarship		1	\$3,000
Previous award of Grosvenor Engineering Indigenous Scholarship		1	\$4,000
Previous award of Ella Schroder Indigenous Residential Scholarship		2	\$20,000
Previous Award of Max Schroder UNE Scholarship		5	\$27,000
TOTAL		17	\$105,625.00

## UNE Graduate School

A strategy to support HDR students with cultural support includes financial resources for Indigenous students. The Graduate School offers Indigenous Higher Degree Research students the Cultural Mentor Payment. This payment is for cultural supervision and/or mentoring. The payment is \$7000 per annum.

## New Strategies, Activities and Programs

In 2022, Oorala implemented a number of new strategies to augment student outcomes (detailed throughout the report).

### Elder-in-Residence Network

In 2022, UNE strengthened the Elder-in-Residence program by advertising for additional interest to create a diverse network. The Elder in Residence at the Oorala Aboriginal Centre provides Indigenous leadership, cultural advice and pastoral support to the entire University Community. Expressions of interest have been received and actioned.

### Indigenous Orientation Guide

The Oorala Aboriginal Centre and the UNE Marketing team collaborated to create the Indigenous Orientation Guide. This resource was created as a part of the Multi-Media project funded by rollover from the 2021 ISSP funding. The guide was designed to create a student reference document in print and electronic, supporting their orientation to UNE and transition to higher education. This allowed the Student Experience team to reduce the volume of information provided during onboarding activities such as PREP and Orientation, instead focussing on targeted advice and information for that time of their student journey.

### Oorala Community Engagement at UNE Colleges

From the start of 2022, a range of activities were conducted within the College precinct, including student well-being, celebrations and events. PVC-Indigenous Strategy and Oorala staff were active participants in events to support students and raise the profile of Indigenous Staff and Students.

### UNE Community

In the UNE community, Oorala organised or supported a broad range of activities to raise the visibility of Indigenous students and create a safe and inclusive campus. Some activities included art exhibitions, such as the reconciliation week exhibition of local artists, the grinding stones archaeology photographic display, and the Student photography competition (Your Place Our Country). Students and staff participated in the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education. Oorala held the inaugural Indigenous Staff and Students Awards Night. Indigenous students and staff participated in the UNE Tamworth Aboriginal Working Group. This cross-community group addresses issues relevant to Indigenous participation in higher education in the LGA. The Moree Strategy includes a First Nations objective offering courses and initiatives explicitly designed to support First Nations students and research. These activities are a strategy to connect students to the institution and the wider community and enhance progression through extra-curricular activities.

### Academic Support Review

In 2022, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre completed a full review of academic support offered to Indigenous students at UNE. The review aimed to improve student and tutor experiences, make tuition services more accessible, and improve programme administration to tutor communication. Specifically, we undertook the following improvements:

1. Implementation of online induction for tutoring staff
2. Review of Tutoring Online Portal and Enhancements
3. Review and update of TTA Program Guidelines in preparation for 2023

4. Review and update online content
5. Environmental scan of tutorial programs at other institutions
6. Reviewed tutor recruitment to improve tutors' quality and increase tutor availability.

During Trimester Three of 2022, Oorala added the Oorala Study Skills and LANTITE Preparation online study sessions to its suite of academic supports. The LANTITE sessions were designed to help prepare education students for the LANTITE Literacy test by revising some of the essential language and literacy skills from the upper primary and early secondary curriculum and the LANTITE Numeracy test. This includes revising explicit instruction of the required mathematical concepts from the upper primary and early secondary curriculum.

There were nine Oorala Study Skills online sessions held across Trimester Three. These were designed to assist students with the broad academic skills needed for tertiary education. These sessions covered skills such as research and referencing, academic writing, revision, and exam preparation.

#### Oorala Study Skills Videos

In 2022, staff developed three new videos to assist students in developing study skills independently. The suite is embedded in the TRACKS unit TRAXOO5, Academic Literacy Skills. The videos can be found on YouTube and [www.une.edu.au/info-for/Indigenous-matters/oorala](http://www.une.edu.au/info-for/Indigenous-matters/oorala)

#### Faculty Indigenous Liaison Officers

Four Indigenous liaison officers were engaged in enhancing the outcomes of Indigenous students against their non-Indigenous peers by providing targeted and culturally competent mentoring and advice. This student-focused role helps academics in each Faculty better support Indigenous students, particularly in units and courses with low success rates, by developing and tracking enrolment and progression plans to optimise success. The role is designed to allow Indigenous students to participate in an academic dialogue that values their experiences as Indigenous Australians, which they may not be able to access in their family or community. This creates Communities of Practice where all students can participate, giving Indigenous students a sense of belonging and improving retention. It improves faculty-student communication.

#### Social and Wellness Activities

The Oorala experience team introduced social sports sessions with staff and students to encourage well-being, fitness and friendships and build rapport between students and support staff. This activity also supported students in preparing for the National Indigenous Games and acting as a tool for wellness. Participants valued the activities and the activities will continue.

#### Atrium Project

Atrium offers an evidenced-based approach for enhancing a student's learning journey and improving outcomes by creating close student-teacher relationships, improving student progression and the overall student experience. The project also aims to improve retention and engagement by streamlining and supporting the outreach by UNE Academics. Atrium helps academics identify students, understand their context, offer support and document interactions.

#### Research Support

Staff established meetings with the UNE Research services team to discuss current HDR student needs. The Head of the Graduate School also has a standing appointment with the PVC-Indigenous Strategy. The actions are the first steps in developing a dialogue to support Indigenous Higher Degree Research students.

#### Success Rates

Indigenous student success rates have improved slightly since 2021 (see Table 5). The revision of the Indigenous Education Strategy will place a renewed focus on this outcome.

*Table 6: Indigenous student success (pass rate) (by % (all course levels, including HDR) 2020-2022*

	2020	2021	2022
Indigenous success (undergraduate)	60.26	62.16	63.53
All student's success (undergraduate)	79.06	78.52	77.8
Indigenous success (postgraduate)	75.38	67.47	71.26
All student's success (postgraduate)	86.84	85.27	83.97

## Investment in Cultural Competency

At the institutional level, UNE is committed to promoting actions that acknowledge and respect Indigenous peoples and cultures, increasing Indigenous peoples' position and visibility within UNE. For example, a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners and official opening remarks are given before official events and gatherings. In addition, the Traditional Owners are acknowledged in UNE publications. Opportunities are used to raise the profile of Indigenous Australians, including email banners, flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag and celebrating events.

UNE provides a culturally inclusive community for Indigenous staff and students. To achieve this goal, UNE focuses on partnerships with Indigenous communities. UNE commits to removing systemic and institutional barriers preventing Indigenous peoples from fully engaging in all aspects of the University. This strategy necessitates a commitment to an all-of-university response. The UNE Indigenous Education Plan outlines a plan for ensuring that all university documents, actions, activities, and processes are founded on equitable partnerships and respect for Indigenous peoples and Knowledge. This includes Indigenous Knowledge in curricula and methods of instruction to assist in attracting and retaining Indigenous students and employees.

UNE provides face-to-face training and online offerings of cultural awareness training. In addition, staff and students have been a continued focus of UNE to ensure we have a culturally aware workplace and graduates.

*Table 7: Cultural competency course/s conducted – face-to-face and online for students and staff*

Course	Participant numbers	Mode
Cultural Connections	47	Face to Face
Cultural Awareness and Diversity	5	Online
Residential Student Leaders	69	Online
Joint Medical Program	8	Online
Acknowledgment of Country workshop	18	Face to Face and Online
Tailored Cultural Connections – School of Psychology	11	Face to Face and Online

The People and Culture Aboriginal Employment Consultant, facilitates all face-to-face training over a one-day program and monitors all enrolments online for staff and students.

### Cultural Competency Induction for New Staff

New staff are required to undertake the full-day Cultural Connections Program, which is currently only offered face-to-face. UNE is exploring an online offering for remote employees. Please see page 10 of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, <https://www.une.edu.au/info-for/indigenous-matters/orala/media/documents/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-employment-strategy-2019-2023.pdf>

## Indigenising Curricula

The Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law is supporting actions to improve outcomes for Indigenous students by raising the visibility of Indigenous peoples and issues of diversity in the faculty. Additional efforts include improving understanding of Indigenous values, which feeds into research-informed teaching (RiT). Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge in teaching, including an approved major in Indigenous Organization Management in the Diploma of Business, and a dedicated Indigenous knowledge unit in environmental science, ENSC220 - Australian Aboriginal Sustainability Systems. The Business School also workshopped courses, including mapping Indigenous outcomes in curricula. A proposal has been developed to include an Indigenous Oorala unit in the Bachelor of Science core curriculum. The Faculty has considered membership in a national Community of Practice on incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into computer science curricula. And the School of Law embedded Indigenous cultural content into several units across the curriculum.

The Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education (HASSE) has improved communication with stakeholders to improve opportunities for Indigenous students and their representation in the school. It has included direct online contact with Indigenous students. The Faculty also advertised Identified senior positions in education to assist in academic leadership.

Activities have improved collaboration and communication between lecturers in the different UNE campuses, improved orientation procedures, and enhanced conversations with HDR students regarding ethics and Indigenous higher education research. In addition, there have been professional sharing opportunities on Indigenous pedagogy, such as 8-ways of learning. Finally, in collaboration with Indigenous faculty advisors, HASSE has developed community sessions where lecturers and students come together to discuss issues surrounding studying to improve unit success rates and retention for Indigenous students.

A range of work is underway to embed Indigenous Knowledge within the curricula, and curriculum development across Criminology and Sociology Units, including revising assessment tasks in line with the eight-way pedagogy of Indigenous Learning and embedding of Indigenous Knowledges within subjects to provide an alternative perspective to some heavily Westernised units. In addition, the HASSE team is developing a set of 'Best Practice Guidelines' for embedding Indigenous Knowledges into units at UNE. HASSE is also prioritising changes to policy and practice guidelines to ensure a more inclusive model of delivery that prioritises Indigenous Knowledges and fair participation of Indigenous students.

A cross-university collaboration created inclusive and culturally relevant teaching methods to improve student mental health in 2020. The priority continues, and in 2022 colleagues from across UNE continued to work on an inclusive pedagogy for student well-being. This hallmark pedagogy uses Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed pedagogy. These principles help lecturers design, implement, and enact UNE's trademark pedagogy for diverse students. In addition, it improves undergraduate course access for remote, low-SES, and Indigenous students.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health advertised a senior identified position and conducted a leadership workshop that included Indigenous staff in planning to manage Indigenous outcomes in the faculty. The Faculty also uses the Indigenous staff to better support policy and procedures by reviewing advice for academic issues confronting students.

## Oorala Outdoor Learning Precinct

Envisaged as an Outdoor Learning Precinct, the environmental and cultural space at Oorala will include a yarning circle, a smoking pit for ceremonial practices and shaded indoor /outdoor learning spaces. The precinct will lead to developing a community of practice that identifies with place, Oorala, and Country, building better support networks and a sense of belonging for everyone who uses the space. In addition, this space will contribute positively to student and staff experiences at UNE.

## Data Source



UNE uses the Business Intelligence Unit to track student data, including attrition, retention, GPA, completions and success. UNE also uses Qualtrics data and regular surveys to assess student progression.

### 3. Completions (outcomes)

#### Strategies to Improve Completions

UNE employs similar strategies to increase Indigenous completion rates, student success and retention outcomes, as discussed in Section Two of this report. It is critical to provide academic support to students. Oorala plays a significant role by managing programs such as TTA, PREP, and TRACKS and with assistance from the Oorala student experience team. Oorala provides Indigenous students with culturally appropriate well-being services at all stages of their academic careers. In addition to educational difficulties, life events beyond a student's control frequently impact their ability to complete their degree.

The UNE Employability and Careers Unit works to integrate employability into the curriculum and improve graduate outcomes. The team provides one-on-one consultations, online self-help learning materials, work-integrated learning, workshops, and employer seminars for on-and off-campus students. Work300: Integrated Learning-Professional Skills Development is an elective course that can be taken.

#### Data on Indigenous Completion from UNE

Ninety-Six Indigenous students completed course offerings at UNE in 2022. Indigenous students accounted for 3.2% of all UNE graduates in 2022.

*Table 8: Student Completions*

Student Completions	2020	2021	2022
Indigenous Graduates	80	99	96
All Graduates	3673	3635	2964
% Indigenous Graduates	2.17%	2.72%	3.2%

#### New strategies

The efforts to embed Indigenous support in the Faculties have been popular, and we hope to see an increase in completions due to this support. As the project started in 2022, it is too early to tell what impact the activities will have. However, the anecdotal feedback has been positive. The Academic Portfolio Executive Committee has also discussed exit points to ensure students receive acknowledgement of efforts at all stages of study.

#### Student Ambassadors

In 2022, Oorala recruited student ambassadors to improve completion for Indigenous students at UNE. The seven student ambassadors included two commencing students, three students in their final year and two doctoral candidates. Five of the seven students were linked with residential colleges and connected Oorala with on-campus students often not seen after orientation. Student ambassadors played critical completion-focused roles in several standing activities, including orientation, graduation and student recruitment. The Student Ambassadors also play an important role in bringing student voices to the fore and supporting the students' transition back onto campus. The program aims to provide an opportunity for professional development while a student studies and the ability to support their academic endeavours financially. We see these ambassadors as critical to developing the Indigenous Student Association.

It is too early to tell the impact of changes implemented in 2022. However, we do track data on student success. Included in those graduation numbers. Three Oorala student ambassadors

completed their undergraduate studies in 2022. Two have decided to pursue postgraduate studies, and the third ambassador is fulfilling the professional terms of her scholarship.

## **Broad strategies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student's completion**

The University is nesting courses to ensure exit points for students discontinuing study. These exit points will allow students to complete levels of study that will provide qualifications and awards and articulate to higher-level awards at a later date. These strategic exit points recognise the work achieved and capture levels of success.

Restructuring across the Student Experience portfolio will better resources students and provide support at milestones in the student lifecycle. In addition, a recruitment process to bring substantial experience and qualifications into the changing environment is expected to enhance digital engagement and tools to impact student completion and success.

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

UNE is a regional university that prioritises the needs of students who live in our communities. Indigenous students at UNE are 59.27% regional and 3.86% remote. UNE has worked hard to build rapport with regional communities such as Taree, Tamworth, and Moree. The staff in these regional towns are tasked with creating a knowledge community for Indigenous participants and enhancing participation and completion of their studies. As Armidale is located within regional Australia, our primary focus of Indigenous activities remains regional and remote. Growth in students from Tamworth and Moree has been a focus of the University strategy and is reflected in the goals of 'Future Fit', the decadal strategic plan.

### **Strategies to improve access**

Strategies for increasing regional and remote university access include employing Indigenous staff in the regions and undertaking promotional activities to target schools. The promotion of the TRACKS program, the alternative entry program, and the Student Experience team's extensive recruitment and outreach are examples. Staff also met with the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly to workshop support mechanisms for Indigenous participants. This has resulted in a deeper understanding of opportunities for members of the Murdi Paaki organisation, and students have subsequently enrolled in programs from regional NSW.

### **Activities**

Implementing the Pathway Academy and collaborating with six regional schools addresses the social, economic, and environmental issues that keep Indigenous students from pursuing higher education. Students are prepared for higher education through a hybrid methodology, including mentoring and virtual experiences. The curriculum encourages students to attend UNE and recognises that these pathways to the university must begin in high school. The Academy also values collaborations with students, their families, communities, and Elders to strengthen cultural identity and belonging and increase educational participation.

UNE's strategic focus and goal to improve our region's social, economic, and relational well-being includes incorporating place and identity into learning experiences. This fosters knowledge communities and increase Indigenous people's self-efficacy. Students from rural, remote, and low-income areas can experience tertiary education through the Academy's curriculum, facilities, resources, and amenities.

*Table 9: By headcount – regional and remote Indigenous student commencement 2020 – 2022 (all courses types, including HDR)*

Indigenous student access (undergraduate and postgraduate)	Measure	2020	2021	2022
	Regional	516	516	495
	Remote	30	39	35

Table 10: ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		TOTAL	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2020 Payments	\$93,100	33	\$27,000	5	\$23,000	12	\$143,100	49
B. 2021 Offers	\$175,000	43	\$54,000	6	\$23,250	30	\$252,250	79
C. Percentage							176%	
(C=B/A*100)								
2022 PAYMENTS	\$83,375	41	\$49,875	16	\$33,000	31	\$166,250	88

Table 11: Scholarships Paid to Rural and Remote Students

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		TOTAL	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling	1,500	2	-	0	7,000	5	8,500	7
Undergraduate	77,375	33	47,250	14	21,000	21	145,625	68
Postgraduate	1,875	3	2,625	2	5,000	5	9,500	10
Other	2,625	3	-	0	-	-	2,625	3
Total	83,375	41	49,875	16	33,000	31	166,250	88

## 5. ELIGIBILITY

The Indigenous Education Strategy 2019-2021 is the primary strategy deployed across UNE to address the participation of Indigenous peoples in UNE programs. The new strategy is under review and close to approval and implementation. UNE continues to operate under the direction of the previous strategy while the redevelopment is undertaken. The Education strategy meets the requirements under Section 13 of the ISSP Guidelines.

The Link to the current Indigenous Education Strategy is

[https://www.une.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/470038/UNE-Indigenous-Education-Strategy-2019.pdf](https://www.une.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/470038/UNE-Indigenous-Education-Strategy-2019.pdf)

### 5.1 Indigenous Education Strategy

The three key areas addressed in the Education Strategy include Indigenous Knowledges, Participation, and Indigenous Students. The achievements in each of these areas are presented in the following headings.

#### Indigenous knowledges in curricula

The University has held an Indigenous Knowledges forum open to all staff at the UNE, and a project is underway to survey the level of Indigenous knowledges in curricula in the Faculty of Humanities Arts, Social Sciences and Education (HASSE). The Division of Education Futures has developed a Course

Design Framework (CDF) that articulates design principles to guide the development of UNE courses and units. This framework includes embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and learning into the core curriculum. The other strategy includes curriculum content, teaching approaches and learning activities drawing upon and relating to Indigenous, inter-cultural and international perspectives. The Faculty of Science Agriculture, Business and Law (SABL) has developed an Indigenous Unit in Science using Indigenous academic staff. Section Two (Indigenising Curricula) addresses additional items under this heading.

### Participation

The task of building collaboration and consultation is ongoing. For example, the Aboriginal Education Centre staff meet regularly to provide input into decision-making and managing outcomes. In addition, invitations for input into policy and strategies are distributed to all Indigenous staff and, in some situations (such as the confirmation of Aboriginality Policy), all students. Regarding academic staff pathways, the work on the revised Indigenous Workforce Strategy is underway, and planning has begun on articulating approaches to increase Indigenous staff participation.

### Indigenous Students

Several activities are represented under this heading. UNE continues to offer flexible and inclusive pathways to higher education. The TRACKS program is one example of this approach. The TRACKS Success Program is an intensive support model that provides wrap-around assistance for tertiary study students via the TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program. In 2022 we saw more students completing TRACKS and articulating into undergraduate courses, more confident in their understanding of the university system and more likely to reach out for ongoing support. The development of the School Pathways Academy will see a more sustained approach from School to feed into the pathways options. Work continues improving completion and retention. Although the retention data has improved slightly from 2021, more work must be done. Indigenous completion data for 2022 is excellent at 3.2% of total completions. Ongoing work improving the Indigenous Student Association will also assist in student input to decision-making and voice at the university. Student involvement through employment is important and was strengthened by activity through 2022. This includes student employment in Faculty activities and the Aboriginal Education Centre.

## 5.2 Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The Indigenous Workforce Strategy runs from 2020-2023 and is coordinated by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator in People and Culture. The strategy is supported by an Indigenous Employment Governance Committee comprised of members from across the University. The committee meets quarterly to oversight Indigenous employment activities. Objectives of the strategy include:

- At least 3% of the UNE's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023
- We will develop a culturally aware and inclusive UNE workplace
- We will be positioned as an Employer of Choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2023
- We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

UNE employed 23 Indigenous staff in 2021. That number increased to 35 in 2022. UNE had a benchmark of 3%, and it is currently 2.81% at the time of our last count.

*Table 12: Workforce Data from 01 November 2022*

	Indigenous Staff		Non-Indigenous Staff
	Number	% of total staff	Number
Academic permanent /Fixed Term	9	1.7	529
Academic Casual	10	1.3	762
Professional permanent /Fixed Term	26	3.6	717
Professional Casual	8	1.4	579
Total permanent/fixed term	35	2.81%	1246
Total	53	2.05%	2587

#### Indigenous Staff Career Development

UNE uses Sections 50(d) and 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 for identified positions in advertising to increase academic employment. Even so, attracting academic staff to this region has been difficult. The renewed employment strategy will continue to focus on increasing Indigenous staff explicitly. The proposal being discussed preferences a 'grow your own' strategy.

The University employs Professor Joe Fraser as the PVC-Indigenous Strategy and senior Indigenous member of the Institution. In addition, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy is a member of the University's Senior Leadership Team. The Faculties are in the process of advertising additional Indigenous Professorial positions to UNE.

The Employment Strategy is still current but is being redeveloped for implementation before it expires. The new strategy will be completed in 2023. This responsibility falls to People and Culture and is managed by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator with a working group.

UNE's Indigenous Workforce Strategy can be found at this site:

<https://www.une.edu.au/info-for/indigenous-matters/oorala/media/documents/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-employment-strategy-2019-2023.pdf>

#### 5.3 Indigenous Governance Mechanism

UNE utilises section 11 a(i) of the ISSP guidelines for Indigenous Governance. The two Indigenous persons responsible for the Indigenous Governance Mechanism include Professor Joe Fraser (PVC-Indigenous Strategy) and Ms Samantha Fowler as the Indigenous Engagement Manager (Now Acting Director Oorala).

Both Staff members worked closely through 2022 with the Indigenous Team Leader, Oorala, and the Acting Director of Oorala. The Indigenous Engagement Manager met every two weeks with the Indigenous Engagement Team and collaborated weekly with the PVC-IS to discuss ISSP activities. The supervision of ISSP at UNE lies with the PVC-Indigenous Strategy and is managed by the Director of Oorala in conjunction with the Indigenous Engagement Manager. It is a respectful and collaborative system driven by Indigenous staff at the University.

Indigenous representation is included in the following committees of the University: Academic Board; Executive Team Committee; DVC Team Committee; University Collections Committee; University Research Committee; University Teaching and Learning Committee; STEMQ Committee; Senior Leadership Committee; Convocation; Place Plus Advisory Committee; Moree Steering Committee; Land and Sea Hub; Indigenous Employment Governance Committee; Graduation Steering Committee;

Safety, Wellness and Culture Review Committee; Orientation Steering Committee; Academic Portfolio Executive Committee; WHS Committee; RAP Committees; NSW DVC/PVC Committee; National UA DVC/PVC Committee. Working Groups: Tamworth Aboriginal Working Group; Campus Master Plan; Graduation Working Group; Indigenous Education Strategy Working Group; Indigenous Research Working Group; Indigenous Employment and Career Development Working Group; University Indigenous Collections

### 5.3.1 Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

*Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the guidelines, the Indigenous Governance Mechanism should make a statement with reference to the performance report and the acquittal report in this section.*

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 2022 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 2022 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2022 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.

