SECTION 1  OBJECTIVES FOR INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1 Institutional objectives to improve higher education outcomes for Indigenous Australians

The University of the Sunshine Coast welcomes the Universities Australia (UA) Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities (Oct 2011) and aspires to achieving the five central cultural competency principles and recommended practices. The UA Guiding Principles, in conjunction with the Eidos “Indigenous Sunrise Project – A School to University Pathways Project” report (2009), are key documents informing the development of student and adult learner pathways to tertiary study at USC, strategies to maximise higher education completions, and promotion of excellence in teaching and research in Indigenous studies.

USC strongly believes that the collaborative approach and activities undertaken by the Buranga Centre and the University have consistently demonstrated successful outcomes [Appendix 1] in the participation, retention and success of its Indigenous students over the past decade, providing opportunities which will improve health, lifestyle and career progression for graduates, their families and communities. USC has achieved increasing numbers of Indigenous student enrolments from 2004 through to 2012, with the success ratio of those students consistently exceeding the Queensland ratio since 2004.

The success of the University’s Indigenous students demonstrates the effectiveness of integrated strategies, involving a continuum approach from recruitment through to faculty support, and graduate career guidance. Objectives for achieving the USC’s Buranga Centre Operational Plan in 2009-11 included:

- ensuring Indigenous people’s higher education outcomes are a shared responsibility and a shared success across the University through inclusion in key University-wide plans including the Learning and Teaching Plan 2009-2011;
- providing career pathways and income assistance through the success of initiatives including the Indigenous Cadetship Support program;
- actively pursuing growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment through links with community organisations, schools, TAFE and other registered training organisations;

1.2 How the Indigenous perspective is embedded in the University’s Strategic Plan and other key documents

The University of the Sunshine Coast 2011 - 2015 Strategic Plan identifies and commits to a collection of values that guide and direct pursuit of its vision and everyday operational priorities. Three of these values are directly relevant to the University’s commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education:

- Engaging in and responding to the community’s intellectual, cultural and economic needs.
- Adopting consultative processes and ethical behaviour in all activities.
- The advancement of human rights within a tolerant and inclusive society, in which respect of Indigenous and international peoples is fundamental.

The USC Top Level Plan 1 - “Enable access to the USC experience”, includes aspirational targets for Indigenous student participation among its performance measures.
The USC Top Level Plan 2 - "Deliver high quality teaching, learning and graduate outcomes", includes embedding Indigenous perspectives in curriculum design, as a key strategy.

Through its Equity Policy, the University seeks to address racial discrimination and overcome past disadvantage of students and staff in equity groups.

The University's Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2010-2012 details a framework for increasing employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and demonstrates a commitment to resourcing and supporting these outcomes.

The University's 2009-2011 Reconciliation Action Plan was the first whole-of-university RAP to be endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. The initial review and subsequent launch of the 2012-2014 RAP was held in May 2012.

The Student Services Operational Plan 2010-2012 also articulates specific strategies for targeted promotion of the Tertiary Preparation Pathway program, and accommodation-based support for Indigenous students who have relocated in order to undertake higher education. This aims to see an annual increase in the number of commencing Indigenous students enrolling in USC programs, and enhanced rates of success and completion for continuing students.

The Education discipline Operational Plan also supports Top Level strategies through the following goals:
- Develop pathways for different groups of students, including low SES and Indigenous students, into teacher education.
- Open up at least one course in each teacher education program to the Headstart program to support students at secondary school undertaking a course during their final years of schooling that contributes towards a teacher education qualification.
- Support inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in curriculum design.
- Undertake a curriculum review of inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as part of the program development and review process.

SECTION 2 ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY GOALS IN 2011 & PLANS FOR FUTURE YEARS

2.1: Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making.

USC recognises the importance of Indigenous people’s involvement in the high-level decision-making of the University. Opportunities for Indigenous Australians to participate in the governance and management of the University in 2011 included representation on the:
- University of the Sunshine Coast Council (one community member)
- Vice-Chancellor’s Indigenous Advisory Committee (19 Indigenous USC and community members)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s Student Liaison Committee (one student representative)
- Buranga Indigenous Students Committee (BISC student group – 8 members)

In addition to these appointments, Indigenous staff and students at the University participate in meetings with state and national bodies which involve them in educational decision-making:
- Queensland Indigenous Higher Education Network
- Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE Indigenous Advisory Committee
- National Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) Network
- Annual Queensland Servant Leadership Forum (Brisbane – two student representatives)
- Annual National Student Leadership Forum: on Faith and Values (Canberra – one student representative).

The Buranga Centre and the Vice-Chancellor’s Indigenous Advisory Committee continue to be the peak Aboriginal education and cultural advisory bodies to the University of the Sunshine Coast. The Buranga Centre has also hosted the annual USC Indigenous Education Symposia from 2007 to 2011.
2.2: Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions.

The University is strongly committed to improving the recruitment, development and support of Indigenous people in employment in higher education. The USC Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2010-2012 [Appendix 2] was informed by rigorous community and staff consultation, and reflects the employment priority areas identified by the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council. The Strategy is publicly available on the internet at: www.usc.edu.au/iecds.

The University aims to raise the percentage of Indigenous staff to better reflect the percentage of Indigenous students at USC (2% in 2011). Four full-time professional staff, and one full-time academic staff member, were employed by the University in 2011. Additionally, thirteen casual and part-time staff were employed in ITAS and faculty tutoring positions, and in Indigenous cadetships across the campus. In 2012, the University has established a dedicated Early Career Academic position in each faculty.

The Buranga Centre actively supports the COAG goal to halve the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment outcomes, through initiatives including:
- facilitating employment opportunities at USC for Indigenous people;
- building the profile of the University as a workplace of choice for Indigenous people on the Sunshine Coast;
- providing Indigenous staff with appropriate induction to the University;
- facilitating ongoing mentoring and support for all Indigenous staff, and promoting scholarships and internships where available;
- coordinating mentor training for Indigenous people who are academic and/or community leaders;
- coordinating cultural awareness training for University staff to understand and respect the culture and background of Indigenous people.

2.3: Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher education.

The University of the Sunshine Coast continues to develop opportunities to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing higher education through its undergraduate and postgraduate programs [see Appendix 1 for enrolment and graduation data]. In 2011, 81 new Indigenous students commenced at USC, compared to 67 new students in 2010.

Indigenous students are actively recruited through a range of equity initiatives including:
- Pursuing growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment through links with community organisations, schools, TAFE and other RTOs (eg. John Pearson Consulting):
  - Partnership with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program commenced on campus in 2011, providing undergraduate USC student mentors to local Indigenous high school students.
  - Partnership in the Northern Region, Future Indigenous Leaders Program (2011 and 2012), providing leadership, aspiration and skill building activities with school students from Caboolture to Bundaberg.
  - Partnership in the Dream Challenge (2011), aspirational program aimed at Indigenous students in years 4,5,6 and 7 in fifty schools across Queensland, through the Department of Education, Training and Arts.
  - The Buranga Centre is a member of the Sunshine Coast Indigenous Network Group.
  - Indigenous Services Officers are registered referrers for North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health (NCACCH).
  - “Murri Pathways”, a collaborative strategy established in 2008 by Education Queensland – Sunshine Coast Indigenous Education Unit, Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE(SCIT), North Brisbane Institute of TAFE(NBIT), and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), Australian Defence Force Recruitment, Centrelink and North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health deliver presentations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Sunshine Coast, Cooloola and North Brisbane high schools. This project demonstrated positive outcomes towards improving enrolments in higher education, with the number of Indigenous students admitted to the Tertiary Preparation Pathways and Headstart Programs increasing significantly in 2009 (Appendix 1).
Post-school options promoted include traineeships and apprenticeships, certificates and diplomas, defence jobs, sports and health careers, the Headstart program, TPP and undergraduate courses.

- Representation at NAIDOC events in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast.
- Representation on the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE Indigenous Advisory Committee.
- Representation at the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health “Well Person’s Health Check Days” at Maroochydore and Gympie.
- Representation at the Gympie Regional Careers Expo 2011 and Indigenous Employment Expo, Narangba.
- Participation in local Indigenous youth events.

- Promoting workplace learning opportunities and experience available through the Indigenous Cadetship Support Program.

- Targeted scholarship opportunities.
  - Including scholarships for Headstart students (in Years 11 and 12 of high school).
  - In 2011, four USC students received the Rotary Indigenous Health Foundation Scholarships.

- Indigenous Alternative Entry Program.
  - All QTAC applicants who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are invited to participate in the Indigenous Alternative Entry Program. The panel interview and assessment of applicants’ skills, experience and aspirations, may lead to an offer of admission into a degree program or could guide applicants to consider the TPP pathway as a preparatory program.
  - Admissions procedures enabling a more seamless transition to undergraduate study from the TPP program.

- Tertiary Preparation Pathway alternative entry.
  - Prospective undergraduate students experience university life before committing to a degree program.
  - Courses completed as part of the program are free of charge.
  - Students undertaking TPP are provided with the same assistance offered to all Indigenous University students through the Buranga Centre.

- Headstart entry.
  - Prospective visiting students experience university life before leaving High School.
  - Students gain guaranteed entry into most USC degrees if they successfully complete two courses within the Headstart program and obtain a Queensland Certificate of Education.
  - Academic credit for Headstart courses is awarded towards related USC degrees.
  - A number of scholarships are available to Headstart students. These scholarships assist students from low-income families, or students who identify with other recognised equity groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or students with a disability. The scholarships are for one semester of study, and cover the Headstart course tuition fee furthering the incentive to participate in the Headstart program.
  - Students undertaking the Headstart program are provided with the same assistance offered to all Indigenous University students through the Buranga Centre.

- Other recruitment activities include the annual USC Open Day, Indigenous Job Markets (Brisbane and Sunshine Coast) and other careers fairs in the state including Tagai State College (Thursday Island Secondary Campus).

2.4: Achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of other Australians.

As a young regional campus, the University is able to maintain close contact and support for many students. USC also delivers a collaborative model for Indigenous student success that is different to other tertiary providers. The Buranga Centre is positioned in the Student Services portfolio and operates as part of a multi-disciplinary team which includes professionals in cultural competency, Education, Psychology, Nursing, Social Work, Public Health, and Careers Counselling. High levels of participation and retention for Indigenous students are achieved through:
- An Indigenous orientation program.
  - Including academic skills workshops, tours of the campus and facilities, and personal introductions. This enables a comfortable integration into University life. Indigenous students also meet Student Services staff and are encouraged to access generic support available including: Counselling; Disability Services; Graduate Careers and Employment; and the Student Engagement Officer.

- Dedicated study areas and a social room on campus.
  - Including access to reference books and laptop computers.
  - Plans for relocation of Student Services to a new teaching building in the future include an expanded Buranga Centre with outdoor recreation area and a healing circle.

- The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme tutoring program.

- Assistance in accessing the Indigenous Cadetship Support program.
  - The Indigenous cadetship project is vitally important in assisting students to gain valuable vocational work for integrated learning experiences. In addition to the financial support provided, USC students have had a high transition from cadetships to graduate positions.
  - 27 cadets have been placed with employers since 2010.

2.5: Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians.

Increasing the retention and completion rates for Indigenous students is a priority of the University, particularly as excellent employment outcomes have been demonstrated for Indigenous graduates. The University focuses on providing academic and personal assistance, and a culturally supportive environment on campus through:

- Student mentoring program and dedicated support for Indigenous students.
  - Personal and academic support is also accessed through the generic assistance of Student Services, often via referral from Buranga Centre staff. Students are able to access academic skills advice; financial assistance; accommodation support; and health and wellbeing advice.
  - Buranga Centre staff members are registered referrers through the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health and can organise free medical and dental consultations for Indigenous students.

- Student achievement is acknowledged and celebrated through an annual Indigenous graduates and family morning tea, where students are presented with an Indigenous graduate stole and a certificate of achievement.

-“Buranga Synergy Program” for accommodation and learning support:
  - formal on-site and culturally appropriate pastoral care - through the Program Leader who is an advanced-level Indigenous student living in the student residences and providing on-site support.
  - facilitation of a peer “learning community” for new students in the residences - a sustainable community of engaged learners who will be encouraged to collaborate, reflect and learn from each others’ thoughts and experiences;
  - regular on-site academic support through the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme - ITAS tutors are available to provide regular learning support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students living in the residences.

2.6: To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Indigenous traditional and contemporary cultures.

Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage is a powerful initiative for engaging and uniting all communities in this country. USC recognises the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council’s priority of enhancing the prominence and status on campus of Indigenous culture, knowledge and studies, and achieves this through:

- The University of the Sunshine Coast Reconciliation Action Plan 2012-2014
The RAP builds upon the University’s: Equity – Governing Policy; 2011-2015 Strategic Plan; and Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy.

- An Indigenous Studies minor is offered through the Faculty of Arts and Business, additionally, “SCS130 Introduction to Indigenous Australia” is available to all students as an elective if not required in their program of study. In the Education discipline, a review and mapping of Indigenous education has resulted in the development of a new course that has been included within specific programs. Each Education program now has Indigenous perspectives embedded within the curricula, which supports a focus that moves beyond cultural awareness towards engagement with Indigenous learning in authentic school contexts.

- USC Associate Professor Kathy Lynch, and community elder Dr Eve Fesl, are undertaking the project: “Reclamation and revitalisation of the Gubbi Gubbi language on the Sunshine Coast”, through digitally recording Gubbi Gubbi language. Additional product activities include: cultural notes; phonetic guide; grammar and quizzes. This project is supported through partnership with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

- Hosting of the 5th annual USC Indigenous Education Symposium in September 2011:
  - Focusing on raising awareness of Indigenous culture and facilitating understanding between educators, students and Indigenous Australians. The Symposium’s keynote address was delivered by Dr Karen Martin, Associate Professor in Early Childhood Education, Southern Cross University.
  - The Symposium continues to be a significant event on the Sunshine Coast education calendar, with the 2011 theme of embedding Indigenous perspectives into the education curriculum.

- High cultural visibility and respect through Welcome to Country statements by traditional custodians at all formal University events.
  - Mr Lyndon Davis, traditional custodian and leader of the Gubbi Gubbi Dance Troupe performs Welcome to Country with Didgeridoo (Yirdaki).
  - Mr Brent Miller and Ms Beverly Hand also conduct Welcome to Country addresses at many USC events and Orientation activities including International Women’s Day and the annual USC Indigenous Education Symposia.

- Protocols for acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land are published on the USC website:

- Traditional blessings opening every University of the Sunshine Coast Graduation Ceremony.
  - Maroochy Barambah (Song Woman) singing “Monda Barita” – a traditional song of prayer asking the Almighty and our ancestors to be with everyone at the gathering.

- A framed Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation is displayed prominently in the foyers of the Chancellery; Student Central; Marketing and Communications; and both Faculties.

- Cross-cultural training.
  - A culturally sensitive and supportive environment is fostered through cross-cultural training provided annually for non-Indigenous ITAS tutors, and on a more regular basis for all staff since 2008.
  - Ecological knowledge tours of the USC campus, increasing the knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous issues and culture and developing staff and student cross-cultural understandings.
  - Guest lectures into courses by Buranga staff.
  - Connecting students to the experience, inspiration and vision of important members of the local community including Mr Evan Blackman (Murri Court, Caloundra) and Ms Beverly Hand (community leader and conservationist).

- Events celebrating Indigenous culture.
  - NAIDOC events held at Cotton Tree, Sunshine Coast and at Musgrave Park, Brisbane.
  - The annual multicultural Festuri festival.
  - Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week
  - National Apology Breakfast
• Oxfam – National Close the Gap Campaign.
SECTION 3 EXPENDITURE OF INDIGENOUS SUPPORT PROGRAM GRANT

Due to changes in the Buranga Centre staffing in 2011, the Indigenous Support Program grant was not fully expended, and a carry forward of unspent funds has been requested. The grant was primarily utilised for the salaries of Buranga Centre staff employed to provide services to Indigenous students, and community engagement. The University allocated additional funds for remaining operational costs from its Student Services central budget allocation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME for Indigenous Support Program for 2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 2011 ISP grant $297,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Unspent 2010 ISP funds, carried over to 2011. $12,593</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. TOTAL ISP income for 2011 $309,593</td>
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4. EXPENDITURE of Indigenous Support Program 2011 grant only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4a. Operating costs - salaries</td>
<td>$171,992</td>
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<td>4b. Capital items – laptop computer/software</td>
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<tr>
<td>4c. Higher education provider overheads (incl. postage, ITS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4d. Other ISP expenditure - travel and accomm.</td>
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<td>- printing and promotional material</td>
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<td>- events / Indigenous Education Symposium</td>
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<tr>
<td>4e. Funding provided to Indigenous Education Support Centre [+ above]</td>
<td>$20,469</td>
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<tr>
<td>4f. Total Indigenous higher education expenditure for 2011</td>
<td>$275,326</td>
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5. Expenditure of Indigenous Support Program carry over funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5a. Salaries</td>
<td>$12,593</td>
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<tr>
<td>5f. Total expenditure of 2010 carry over funds</td>
<td>$12,593</td>
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6. Income for Other Indigenous funds provided in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6a. Higher education provider overheads - salaries</td>
<td>$90,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating costs – ITAS (including tutor wages)</td>
<td>$130,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth grants, Scholarships</td>
<td>$187,698</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic funds, USC Scholarships</td>
<td>$32,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>6b. Total Other Indigenous higher education income for 2011</td>
<td>$440,632</td>
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7. Expenditure of Other Funds in 2011 (item 6b)

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>7a. Higher education provider overheads - salaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating costs – ITAS (including tutor wages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonwealth grants, Scholarships</td>
<td>$187,698</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic funds, USC Scholarships</td>
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<tr>
<td>7b. Total Other Indigenous higher education income for 2011</td>
<td>$416,750</td>
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</table>

SECTION 4 HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER’S CONTACT INFORMATION

University Officer
Director, Student Services
Dr Eva-Marie Seeto
Phone: + 61 7 5430 1226
Email: eseeto@usc.edu.au

Indigenous Education Unit Officer
Acting Head of Service
Buranga Centre
Mr Brendan Powell
Phone: + 61 7 5459 4439
Email: bpowell1@usc.edu.au
## Appendix 1

### USC Indigenous student and staff data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Indigenous students (enrolments)</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>128</td>
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<td><strong>Tertiary Prep Program</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Headstart (Yr 11 &amp; 12)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proportion of Indigenous students (Access rate)</strong></td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>1.63%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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<td><strong>Graduates - Bachelor</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduates - Postgraduate</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous persons in Sunshine Coast region (Census data 2001/2006)</strong></td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>USC retention ratio</strong></td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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<td><strong>QLD retention ratio</strong></td>
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<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>USC success ratio</strong></td>
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<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.87</td>
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<td><strong>QLD success ratio</strong></td>
<td>0.78</td>
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<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.81</td>
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<td><strong>Number of Indigenous USC full-time staff</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous cadets at USC</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous ITAS tutors / (total ITAS tutors)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 (15)</td>
<td>5 (14)</td>
<td>6 (21)</td>
<td>12 (26)</td>
<td>14 (32)</td>
<td>14 (32)</td>
<td>6 (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2


The University of the Sunshine Coast acknowledges all traditional custodians of the land and recognizes the strength, resilience and capacity of Indigenous people in this land.

1. Introduction

The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) is strongly committed to improving the recruitment, development and support of Indigenous people in employment in higher education. The Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy has been developed to increase teaching, mentoring and professional development opportunities for Indigenous Australians at USC. It articulates the institutional responsibility for achieving and maintaining strong representation of Indigenous people in employment at USC, and aims to enhance USC as a vibrant, modern and culturally enriched workplace.

The strategy has been written in consultation with USC’s Buranga Centre, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous USC staff, and the Vice-Chancellor’s Indigenous Advisory Committee including Indigenous Elders, members of the local Indigenous community, students, academics, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. Through this consultation and engagement, an employment and career development strategy has been developed that is truly reflective of the needs of our staff, our business, and potential Indigenous employment candidates.

2. Outcomes

- To build upon the successes of the earlier “Employment and Participation Strategy for Indigenous Australians at USC”

- To reflect the employment priority areas identified by the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC)\(^1\)

- To ensure a work environment where respect for cultural, social and spiritual systems practised by Indigenous Australians enriches the activities of USC

- To foster a culturally diverse workforce that is reflective of Australian society

- To be recognised as an employer of choice by Indigenous Australians

- To contribute to reconciliation with Indigenous Australians and communities.

---

3. Objectives & Strategies

**Objective 1.**

**IMPLEMENT CULTURALLY EFFECTIVE INITIATIVES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE EMPLOYED AT USC**

**Indicator**

The annual percentage of all Indigenous staff reflects the increasing percentage of Indigenous students at USC.*

**Strategies**

1. Ensure all USC vacancies are circulated to Indigenous community networks and employment officers.

   **Responsibility**
   - Buranga Centre
   - Human Resources

2. Develop career services that enhance the employment outcomes of Indigenous graduands, including work experience and internship opportunities at USC.

   **Responsibility**
   - career connection
   - Buranga Centre

3. Promote USC’s commitment as an EEO employer to prospective employees, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

   **Responsibility**
   - Human Resources
   - Marketing & Communications

4. Ensure selection panel members have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian societies and culture.

   **Responsibility**
   - Human Resources
   - Buranga Centre

5. Ensure support mechanisms are in place for Indigenous staff and their supervisors (e.g. cultural awareness training, mentoring and orientation programs).

   **Responsibility**
   - Human Resources
   - Buranga Centre

6. Provide flexible employment arrangements to allow Indigenous staff to meet cultural responsibilities.

   **Responsibility**
   - Faculty & cost centre managers
   - Human Resources

Objective 2.

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS STAFF TO PURSUE AND ACHIEVE THEIR PROFESSIONAL GOALS AND POTENTIAL

Indicator

The retention rate of Indigenous staff is equivalent to non-Indigenous staff in comparable positions.

Strategies

2.1 Training needs of Indigenous staff are identified in their PPR meetings.
2.2 Peer mentoring of Indigenous early career researchers.
2.3 Increased scholarship opportunities for Indigenous postgraduate students.
2.4 Targeted promotion of the study and research assistance schemes available to Indigenous Australian staff.
2.5 Expansion of staff skills and experience through PDP, job rotation and secondment opportunities.
2.6 Establish an Indigenous employee support network.

Responsibility

Faculty & cost centre managers
Teaching & Research Services
Faculty Research Co-ordinators
USC Foundation
Scholarships Officer
Faculty & cost centre managers
Faculty & cost centre managers
Buranga Centre
Human Resources

Objective 3.

CREATE A CULTURALLY AWARE AND UNDERSTANDING WORK ENVIRONMENT

Indicator

All new staff receive cross cultural training.

The Vice- Chancellor’s Indigenous Advisory Committee meets at least three times each year.

Strategies

3.1 Liaison with all Faculties and Cost Centre Managers to promote the Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy in collaboration with workforce planning initiatives.
3.2 Indigenous staff and students are active in University governance, leadership and management, including representation on the Indigenous Advisory Committee.
3.3 Enhance cultural competency in managers and staff through induction and professional development programs, and cultural awareness workshops.
3.4 Indigenous culture, knowledge and studies are prominent on campus through acknowledgement and ceremony, artwork, building and environment features, and marketing material.

Responsibility

Human Resources
Faculty & cost centre managers
Vice-Chancellor
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Human Resources
Teaching & Research Services
Buranga Centre
Capital Programs & Operations
Art Gallery
Marketing & Communications
Objective 4.

BUILD UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY THAT ARE STRONG AND MEANINGFUL

Indicator

Biennial consultation demonstrates that Indigenous Elders, Traditional Owners and local community organisations recognise USC’s commitment and engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Liaise with external agencies to promote USC as an employer committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.</td>
<td>Buranga Centre Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Communicate the USC Reconciliation Action Plan to all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Buranga Centre Indigenous Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Hold regular gatherings with local Elders and community organisations to keep open and frequent communication.</td>
<td>Buranga Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Actively participate at local Indigenous events and network meetings.</td>
<td>Buranga Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Acknowledgements

This employment and careers strategy was informed by the research and development work undertaken with community and staff by John Pearson Consulting.

The University of the Sunshine Coast acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Elders and Indigenous community members in the Montville, Noosa, Caloundra, Maroochydore, and Gympie regions for the guidance that was provided in developing this strategy document. The University also acknowledges its staff members for their commitment to supporting this strategy and their participation in its development.