

Indigenous Student Success Program

2024 Performance Report

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1. Declaration

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

2. Enrolments (Access)

In 2024, *Murmuk Djerring*, the University of Melbourne's Indigenous Strategy 2023–2027, continues to guide the University's commitment to Indigenous engagement, succeeding the University's third Reconciliation Action Plan. *Murmuk Djerring* sets out the aspiration to be the University of choice for Indigenous people, with unprecedented investment to attract, nurture and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. Tangible support through a range of programs and initiatives will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students personally succeed while at the University of Melbourne and go on to contribute nationally and globally.

The *Murmuk Djerring* Indigenous Strategy Action Plan continues to drive progress across five strategic priorities—Leadership; Place, Heritage, and Culture; Partnerships; Indigenous Knowledge; and Truth-Telling and Justice—serving as the overarching framework for achieving this aspiration.

Supporting *Murmuk Djerring* is the Indigenous Student Plan 2023–2027, which was endorsed in 2023 and remains central to enhancing the student experience.

The University of Melbourne has had in place Indigenous Student Headline Targets. These include a 1000-strong Indigenous student cohort by 2029 and undergraduate to graduate student enrolment and success ratios to be equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 2025.

The total number of applications has been increasing since 2018 and the number of admissions has followed suit, reaching a total of 555 Indigenous student enrolments in 2024. Of note is the increase in Indigenous postgraduate student numbers in 2024, continuing the strong growth from 2023.

2024 Enrolment Highlights

- 145 Indigenous students commenced in graduate programs during 2024. This brought the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled postgraduate degrees at the University to 60.3% compared to 48.5% of non-Indigenous domestic students.
- In 2024, 9 Indigenous students commenced with Melbourne Chancellor's Scholarships, bringing the total number of Indigenous Chancellor's Scholars to 42. These high-achieving students enjoy fee exemptions and are guaranteed a place in a graduate program of their

choice if they satisfy eligibility requirements. Students also receive a living allowance for up to 3 years.

Table 1: Commencing and total Indigenous enrolments and EFTSL by course level in 2024

Course Level	Commencing		Total	
	Headcount	EFTSL	Headcount	EFTSL
HDR	<10 ¹	<10 ¹	65	37.12
HDCW	69	51.13	168	120.38
OPG	72	23.50	85	26.63
UG	63	51.56	207	163.75
NA	<10 ¹	<10 ¹	10	1.63
Total	<220¹	<135¹	<535¹	<355¹

Table 2: Total Indigenous student enrolments at the University in 2024 by academic division

	Headcount	EFTSL
Architecture, Building and Planning	17	14.13
Arts	124	85.59
Business and Economics	37	21.49
Education	58	26.03
Engineering and IT	<10 ¹	<10 ¹
Fine Arts and Music	51	38.75
Law	36	23.99
Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences	121	81.70
Science	73	51.57
Non-Award	10	1.63
Total	<535¹	<355¹

Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development: Outreach and Engagement

Provision of Indigenous student recruitment, retention and support services (*directly funded by ISSP*)

The Outreach and Engagement Team supports the University's Indigenous student recruitment strategy. The team is comprised of a Manager, Outreach and Engagement and two Outreach Officers. The team works closely with Admissions, Future Students, Scholarships, Faculties, and Schools to increase Indigenous student access and participation at The University of Melbourne.

The Outreach and Engagement Team has coordinated several activities while continuing to establish and build strong relationships with local, regional, and interstate communities, schools, and prospective students interested in studying at The University of Melbourne. The key activities coordinated in 2024 include:

¹ This value has been adjusted to protect Indigenous student privacy.

- **Yagilaith:** Hosted by Murrup Barak, Yagilaith provides an immersive campus experience for Year 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on an ATAR/IB pathway. In 2024, the program expanded in both capacity and structure, incorporating additional workshops, engagement with faculty representatives, and an extended itinerary to accommodate interstate participants. A formal selection process was introduced, ensuring equitable access and a robust application review process.
- **Open Day:** Murrup Barak facilitated targeted engagement for Indigenous students during Open Day, ensuring prospective students and their families had access to tailored consultations. The team provided dedicated staffing at an information booth, engaged Ambassadors to interact with visitors, and hosted an information session at Murrup Barak. Financial support was offered to Victorian-based students and families to encourage attendance.
- **School and Campus Visits:** Responding to changing engagement trends, the Outreach Team prioritized campus visits and personalized consultations over traditional school presentations. This approach provided a more effective way to engage future students, offering them a tailored experience that included discussions about pathways, accommodation, and scholarships.
- **Victorian Indigenous Engineering Winter School (VIEWS):** In partnership with RMIT University, Swinburne University, and Monash University, the Outreach Team supported the facilitation of this program, providing Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12 with insights into engineering pathways. The team played a role in hosting participants at Murrup Barak and delivering presentations about student support services.
- **National Indigenous Business Summer School (NIBSS):** The University of Melbourne once again hosted this program, delivered in January 2025. Murrup Barak and the Outreach Team provided students in the program with information about key student support services available if they pursue studies at The University of Melbourne.
- **Community Events and Expos:** The Outreach Team maintained a strong presence at Indigenous community events, including the Western Bulldogs Nallei Jerring Careers Expo, the Central Victorian Indigenous Careers Expo, and the Ganbina Careers Night. The focus remained on fostering relationships rather than passive information-sharing, aligning with the team's commitment to building meaningful connections.
- **VTAC Support:** Building on previous years' efforts, the Outreach Team provided comprehensive support during the VTAC application period, offering personalized consultations to applicants. An Ambassador was featured in the VTAC webinar, which received positive feedback. The team also worked closely with the Scholarships and Admissions teams to advocate for equitable outcomes for Indigenous applicants.
- **Faculty Future Student Programs:** The Outreach Team refined its role in faculty-led programs such as the Residential Indigenous Science Experience (RISE), ensuring a standardized approach to its contributions. This included offering merchandise, presentations, and catering support while reducing direct financial contributions.

- **Ambassador Engagement:** Recognising the value of peer connections, the Outreach Team expanded the role of Ambassadors in 2024. They played a more active role in community events, facilitated campus tours, and engaged in consult sessions with prospective students, strengthening their impact on future student engagement.

These activities reflect the Outreach and Engagement Team's commitment to fostering strong connections with Indigenous students and communities, ensuring a culturally responsive and supportive transition into higher education at The University of Melbourne.

The Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development

The Wilin Centre within the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at the Southbank Campus of the University acts as an access point to academic and student support services for Indigenous students who require culturally appropriate support at the Faculty. The Wilin Centre delivers outreach programs to the communities throughout Victoria and the South-East, to remove barriers to access and foster relationships with community practicing artists.

Non-ISSP Funded Strategies to improve access for Indigenous students

Access Melbourne

Access Melbourne is the University's special entry access scheme. It offers students from disadvantaged backgrounds entry to the undergraduate course of their choice, even if their ATAR is below the Clearly-in ATAR. Indigenous Australians are a priority group under the Access Melbourne scheme. Through Access Melbourne, the University now guarantees entry to Indigenous students who meet prerequisites and achieve the following ATARs (or notional ATARs):

- 55.00: Science (Extended)
- 70.00: Design and Arts
- 75.00: Science
- 83.00: Commerce
- 85.00: Biomedicine

Pathway Programs

The Bachelor of Science (Extended) is a degree exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are interested in STEM but have not had the opportunity to meet the Bachelor of Science entry requirements. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who receive an ATAR score of more than 50 are encouraged to apply.

The Bachelor of Science Extended is a four-year degree that include a year of bridging subjects to provide a strong foundation for success in later study.

In 2024, the Bachelor of Arts Extended program has been discontinued due to a decline in numbers, coinciding with increased participation of Indigenous students in mainstream Bachelor of Arts following Access Melbourne's reduced ATAR entry.

PhD Familiarisation Facilitated through The Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

The Indigenous PhD Familiarisation Program is aimed at supporting Indigenous students who are considering applying for and undertaking a PhD. Participants in these programs engage and network with Indigenous academics and current PhD students and work on research ideas as a cohort and with prospective supervisors.

MDHS Indigenous Graduate Pathways

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences gives priority access to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students at the University of Melbourne under the Indigenous Graduate Pathways.

Indigenous Alternative Entry Pathway JD

Melbourne Law school offers an alternative entry pathway for Indigenous applicants to the Juris Doctor Program. The Selection Committee will consider the applicant's academic performance in their tertiary studies, and the interview. The interview is intended to provide a face-to-face opportunity for Indigenous applicants to speak to their professional and personal experiences and their reasons for applying to the MLS JD Program.

MURRA Indigenous Business Program

Offered by the Melbourne Business School since 2012, the program attracts Indigenous entrepreneurs and professionals from around Australia and provides them with the tools to grow their own businesses and develop economic opportunities for their communities.

Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity

Established in 2016 at the University, the Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity is an Indigenous-led, lifelong, collaborative fellowship program that seeks to harness Indigenous knowledge and ingenuity to create positive social change. Throughout the yearlong fellowship, the program provides the tools, resources, and connections for fellows, most of whom are Indigenous, to become deeply engaged changemakers across the Pacific region.

Professional Certificate in Indigenous Research and the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Research and Leadership

292 Indigenous graduate research students and Early Career Researchers from across Australia have participated in The Professional Certificate in Indigenous Research and the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Research and Leadership since 2010.

The programs have been instrumental in producing future Indigenous academic leaders with eight current Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous/Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous graduates of the Programs. A further 15 graduates currently hold Associate Dean (Indigenous) and other senior professorial roles.

With the conclusion of philanthropic funding and lack of ongoing institutional funding, the University of Melbourne, together with Western Sydney University and the University of Queensland is seeking Government support. The Programs are a proven model to support the development of an Indigenous academic workforce and Government investment would align with Accord priorities and demonstrate its commitment to delivering tangible outcomes for Indigenous Higher Education. The Proposal seeks an initial Government contribution of \$4 million over four years to secure the future of existing programs and provide scope for program expansion and diversification beyond current offerings.

2.1. Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2024 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ²	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ³								
Undergraduate ⁴	392,500	86	186,000	35	12,500	24	591,000	145
Post-graduate ⁵	122,000	61	2000	1	-7,000	10	117,000	72
Other								
Total	514,500	147	188,000	36	5,500	34	708,000	217

3. Progression (outcomes)

The University of Melbourne continues to work towards realising the Indigenous Student Headline Targets of achieving parity in success rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the undergraduate and graduate coursework levels by 2025. Monitoring of Indigenous students' academic success has indicated that Indigenous students have consistently performed well above the national and Victorian state average, with success rates between 80% and 86% over the last six years and a success rate of 89% for undergraduate and 87% for graduate coursework students in 2024.

Indigenous success rates at the University from 2022 to 2024

Course Level	2022 Success Rate	2023 Success Rate	2024 Success Rate
HDCW	90.10%	87.40%	88.6%
OPG	93.55%	83.38%	90.1%
UG	83.00%	84.28%	84.7%
Total	86.23%	85.43%	86.7%

Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development

Murrup Barak plays a critical role in co-ordinating and supporting the development of a wide range of Indigenous programs, building on the University's aim to increase involvement of Indigenous people across all facets of its operations, as staff, as students, and as interested community members contributing to the quality of our Indigenous teaching, learning, research, and programs.

Murrup Barak provides leadership in the development of a supportive environment for Indigenous students enrolled in University programs. Murrup Barak acts as a point of referral for Indigenous students to ensure that they can appropriately access University academic and student support services.

The 2024 staffing of Murrup Barak

- Director
- Associate Director
- Senior Advisor
- Program Manager

- Graduate Coordinator
- Team Leader Student Success
- Team Leader Outreach and Engagement
- Project Officer – Media and Communications
- Coordinator, Access and Participation
- Administrative Officer
- Indigenous Student Success Officers (three positions)
- Indigenous Student Recruitment Officers (two positions)
- Strategic Project and Engagement Coordinator

Indigenous Student Success Team *(directly funded by ISSP)*

The Team delivers services and programs to cover different aspects of student life including:

- transitioning to university
- access to academic skills
- Student advising
- Student advocacy
- general wellbeing
- community and cultural engagement
- financial assistance
- housing services and global mobility

Priority services to increase engagement provided by the Indigenous Student Success Team in 2024:

- Dhumbali Orientation
- Student Ambassador Peer Support Program
- Reward Scholarships
- Student Success Grants
- Food security support
- Conference participation support
- Cultural Workshops
- Cultural engagement with Elders
- Streamlined referral service to mental health support

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2024

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ⁶	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷	Total hours of assistance ⁸	Expenditure ⁹ (\$)
Enabling				
Undergraduate	74	2835	5100	\$872,100
Post-graduate	57	1350	2493	\$488,522
Other				
Total	127	4185	7594	\$1,360,622

The majority of expenditure in table 2 consists of casual salary costs. The implementation of the University's 2024 Enterprise Agreement has led to increased salary expenses by reclassifying ITAS

tutors from Casual Academics to Sessional Tutors. This major change will significantly impact our capacity to deliver other student programs in the future.

Non-ISSP Funded Strategies to improve progression for Indigenous students

Wilin Indigenous Student Support

The Wilin Centre currently employs 2 Indigenous staff members whose roles are directly focussed on student support, retention and success. The numerous support and engagement activities listed in section 1 are available for all Indigenous students enrolled at the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music.

Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health helps connect prospective Indigenous PhD students with senior academics at the University who can assist them with their applications. This includes assisting them to navigate the application process, articulating the applicant's research training and experience, and advocacy during the selection process. The Poche Centre also connects prospective Indigenous PhD students and early career researchers with academic supervisors and mentors. In partnership between the Melbourne Poche Centre and Kings College London, the University also runs the Melbourne Poche Leadership Fellows Program, which supports the development of emerging Indigenous leaders in academic, policy, clinical and research roles. The program is aimed at Indigenous early career professionals in the health sector who are looking to influence broader change for Indigenous people.

Research Unit in Indigenous Arts and Cultures

Faculty's Research Unit for Indigenous Arts and Cultures (RUIAC) operates in partnership with Wilin to provide support to Indigenous students enrolled in allied graduate programs across the faculty. The Indigenous Graduate Research Training Program (IGRTP) includes supervision, research seminars and symposia, reading group, research skills workshops and research training opportunities.

Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Arts

The Indigenous Studies program sits within the Faculty of Arts, School of Culture and Communication. It was relaunched in 2020 to focus on contemporary issues in ways that relate locally grounded insights to world-wide issues and concerns. The Indigenous Studies program seeks to understand the social, economic and political challenges that confront the world today from the points of view articulated by Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous Studies Program provides interdisciplinary teaching and learning, and research activities that critically engage with rich history, knowledge and cultures of Indigenous people of Australia and globally. The program engages and supports Indigenous undergraduate students as well as the growing cohort of HDR students.

Indigenous Studies Unit (ISU)

In the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, the ISU develops world-class teaching and research in Australian Indigenous Studies and works to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Research Higher Degrees. The ISU contributes to an evidence base in a range of research areas that improve outcomes in Indigenous health, economic participation, and cultural and resource management.

Leaders in Medical Education (LIME) Network

The University holds leadership positions in the LIME Network, a collection of medical schools in Australia and New Zealand dedicated to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in Indigenous health, as well as best practice in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous medical students.

4. Completions (outcomes)

The number of Indigenous students completing has more than doubled in the past 7 years, from 76 in 2018 to 179 in 2024 with the University of Melbourne having one of the best Indigenous cohort completion rates in the country.

Completions highlights

- Nine Indigenous Graduate Researchers graduated during 2024, the largest graduating cohort in the University's history.
- 14% increase in overall completions in 2024 vs 2023
- 135% increase in completions since 2018

Murrup Barak's targeted support programs (*directly funded by ISSP*)

- the coordination of the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) with an increased focus on prioritising final year students and those near completion.
- the provision of seminars targeted at Indigenous students to increase student engagement with career providers and graduate programs.
- programs to support cultural development and engagement with Indigenous Elders to support students' cultural wellbeing.
- introduction of the Indigenous Student Reference Group to provide feedback to Pro-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous) on the Indigenous student experience.
- an inclusive social network and meeting place for students including a regular Tuesday lunchtime event; and
- the provision of a referral services.
- Provision of advocacy service and support for special consideration process.
- Industry engagement collaboration with Faculties.
- Career and graduate pathways events

Murrup Barak offer several paid positions each year for students to take on a leadership role and provide mentoring support to peers. Ambassadors provide support, mentoring and guidance with an increased focus on first-year students who have difficulty navigating University. Student Ambassadors have an increased success rate and are more likely to complete their studies whilst gaining professional employment experience.

University of Melbourne Student Union Support (*Partly funded by ISSP*)

University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) – Indigenous office bearers are employed through UMSU to provide advocacy and student support to Indigenous students. The Indigenous Office at UMSU run various student activities throughout the year to keep Indigenous students engaged via a social and cultural enrichment programs.

Faculty Support Activities (*Non-ISSP funded*)

All academic divisions have appointed an Associate Dean, Assistant Dean or a delegate of the Dean with an Indigenous focus. All of these roles are representatives on the Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates Indigenous, which is part of the University's Indigenous governance mechanism. The Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Business and Economics and the Melbourne Law School also have dedicated Indigenous Student Support Officers to support students to successfully navigate their degrees.

In addition to these programs, each faculty is required to develop its own Divisional Indigenous Development Plan that include their own context-specific Indigenous student support activities.

These include Indigenising the curriculum through targeted grants, workshops, expanding access to Indigenous knowledge subjects as breadth or elective subjects and On Country experiences for students.

5. Regional and remote students

The University of Melbourne remains a key destination for Indigenous students from regional and remote areas. With a substantial investment in supporting these students, the University has introduced the Narm Scholars Program, which enhances access to financial assistance for relocation and makes residential costs more affordable. In 2024, a total of 24 Indigenous commencing students were offered the Narm Scholarship and will provide ongoing financial support of up to \$10,000.

Regional and remote highlights

- 34% of commencing Indigenous students relocated from regional and remote areas.
- 35% of the total enrolled headcount comprised of students from regional and remote areas.

All Indigenous students are eligible to receive an Narm Scholarship in combination with Commonwealth Scholarships. Indigenous Accommodation Grant targets students who are moving from regional and remote areas and provides funding to their accommodation provider to relieve financial stress.

Diploma in General Studies (*Non-ISSP funded*)

The Diploma in General Studies (DiGS) provides an introduction to a range of Melbourne bachelors degrees. It supports students in their transition to university or employment and provides a pathway into a University of Melbourne bachelors degree. Students who successfully complete the DiGS and are eligible for the Access Melbourne scheme (see above) and are guaranteed entry into agriculture, biomedicine, commerce, design or science. Located at the University's Dookie Campus in the Goulburn Valley, the DiGS is designed to attract Indigenous and regional and remote students.

Dungala Kaiela Research Fellows Program (*non-ISSP funded*)

The Dungala Kaiela Research Fellows Program provides a pathway for emerging Indigenous researchers and leaders living in the Goulburn Valley and working in health to undertake a PhD through the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. Dungala Kaiela Fellows are supported to undertake their graduate research in the Goulburn Valley with a Research Fellow Level A salary with a three-year contract. Dungala Kaiela Fellows can apply for a further three-year Indigenous Post-doctoral Fellowship paid at a Research Fellow Level B salary upon completion of their PhD.

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students¹⁰

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2023 ³² Payments	140,000	50	36,000	12	123,000	71	299,000	133

B. 2024 Offers ^{vii}	276,500	87	206,000	43	12,000	14	494,500	144
C. Percentage ^{viii} (C=B/A*100)							165%	
2024 Payments	202,000	53	112,000	19	8,500	19	322,500	91

6. Eligibility criteria

6.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

Indigenous Education Strategy

The University of Melbourne's approach to advancing its Indigenous agenda has been to embed accountabilities across the University. This is reflected by the incorporation of the University's aims for Indigenous development throughout the hierarchy of its policy and strategy documents.

The plans, strategies and frameworks that articulate our key performance indicators, goals and targets for Indigenous student outcomes include:

University level:

- [Advancing Melbourne 2030](#)
- [Murmuk Djerring: The University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy 2023 – 2027](#)
- [Indigenous Student Plan 2023 – 2027](#)
- [Indigenous Employment Plan 2023 – 2027](#)
- [Indigenous Research Framework 2023 – 2027](#)
- [Indigenous Internationalisation Plan 2020 – 2024](#)
- Indigenous Student and Staff Headline Targets
- Indigenous Outcomes Measurement Framework

Divisional level:

- Faculty Indigenous Development Plans

Taken together, these documents provide information on the ways in which the University will:

- increase the number of Indigenous students enrolling in, progressing in and completing courses leading to higher education awards;
- facilitate, monitor and improve upon the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in curricula, touchstones (which replace previous graduate attributes), and teaching practices; and
- include activities for students and employees of the provider that promote cultural competency in Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories and the diversity of circumstances of Indigenous people in Australia.

Responsibilities for implementing the initiatives detailed in our suite of Indigenous strategies, plans and frameworks sit with the portfolio leads of the appropriate faculties and administrative divisions, with oversight in 2024 provided by the Indigenous Strategy Reference Group (ISRG). The faculties and Chancellery are represented on ISRG. The Indigenous Strategy team in the Office of the Provost has significant responsibility for implementing and monitoring progress on Murmuk Djerring (the University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy), and works with the faculties and administrative divisions to develop, implement and monitor local-level plans and strategies. Operational oversight of activities within the University's 9 faculties is also provided by the Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates Indigenous (CADDI).

Throughout 2022 and 2023, the University reviewed its suite of Indigenous strategies, frameworks and plans and in 2023 released:

- Murmuk Djerring: The University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy 2023 – 2027¹
- Indigenous Student Plan 2023 – 2027
- Indigenous Employment Plan 2023 – 2027
- Indigenous Research Framework 2023 – 2027

The University will review its Indigenous Internationalisation Plan and Indigenous Student and Staff Headline Targets during 2025.

Murmuk Djerring: The University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy 2023 – 2027

The University launched its new Indigenous strategy, Murmuk Djerring 2023 – 2027, in 2023. With our University-wide and Faculty-level Indigenous frameworks and plans firmly embedded in our planning and operations, Murmuk Djerring, has a focus on 21 Signature Projects articulated through five themes:

- Leadership
- Place, Heritage and Culture
- Partnerships
- Indigenous Knowledge
- Truth-Telling and Justice.

The impact of Murmuk Djerring will be transformational. Each of its five themes contain Signature Projects that enhance Indigenous student access and outcomes by developing their capabilities, providing education pathways, increasing their opportunities and improving their lived experience.

The approach taken in Murmuk Djerring builds on the University's third 'elevate' Reconciliation Action Plan, April 2018 – December 2022, which detailed 14 substantial Signature Projects arranged under four themes:

- Leadership for Change;
- Our Place;
- Purposeful Partnerships; and
- International Engagement.

While acknowledging the support of Reconciliation Australia and the invaluable framework that the RAP program has provided with respect to progressing the University's Indigenous priorities over more than a decade, we now seek to progress these outside the parameters of the RAP framework in a bold new Strategy that is unconstrained by the limitations of a RAP, and which can respond in a timely way to changing University and national priorities. This decision was first made in 2021 by our Indigenous leadership, governance committees and University Executive and Council. The decision was revisited in 2022 and, after extensive consultation, was reconfirmed both by these groups and, importantly, our Traditional Owners Advisory Group.

Targets, Measurement and Reporting

The Indigenous Student Plan 2023 – 2027 is the key strategy for enhancing the recruitment and retention, progression, success and completions of Indigenous students at the University. It sets out the University's headline student targets to increase access and outcomes for Indigenous students. In 2024, these targets were:

- Indigenous student headcount to reach 1000 by 2029;
- Undergraduate to graduate student ratio to be equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 2025; and

- Undergraduate and graduate success ratio between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students of 1 by 2025.

These targets were developed in recognition of the changing student demographic brought about by the implementation of the Melbourne Model such that our domestic graduate student numbers are roughly equivalent to our domestic undergraduate numbers (51.5% and 48.5% respectively). These Headline Targets are currently being reviewed and aligned to the suite of updated Indigenous strategies launched in 2023.

The current Indigenous Student Plan 2023 – 2027 was released in 2023 and is publicly available from the following link:

https://about.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/414354/Indigenous-Student-Plan-2023-2027-FINAL.pdf

The University has established robust mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on its performance over time. The annually published *Indigenous Outcomes Performance Report* (IOPR) is a key tool for tracking and reporting on progress. The reporting in the IOPR is guided by the three-tiered *Indigenous Outcomes Measurement Framework* (IOMF), which identifies a range of measures and their reporting frequency under the following headings:

- educational attainment and outcomes (Tier 1);
- predictors and precursors of outcomes (Tier 2); and
- educational system performance measures (Tier 3) that support these.

Reporting on progress towards our targets in Murmuruk Djerring and against University-wide and faculty-level frameworks and plans is also undertaken on a regular basis.

The University has made excellent progress towards achieving its Indigenous student headline targets. The numbers of Indigenous students at the University have more than doubled to 528 since the targets were first adopted, and Indigenous students made up 1.23% of the domestic student cohort in 2024. The University acknowledges it will need to accelerate its efforts if it is to reach the ambitious target of having 1000 Indigenous students by 2029.

There are currently 0.95 domestic postgraduate students for every undergraduate student at the University. The number of Indigenous postgraduate students has exceeded the number of undergraduate students such that this ratio is now 1.52 for Indigenous students, increasing from 0.87 in the last five years. Chancellery continues to work with the faculties to ensure this progress is maintained.

The University of Melbourne has, over many years, performed well above the national average with respect to Indigenous students' academic success, with success rates above 80% over the last seven years. Success rates for Indigenous postgraduate students are higher and closer to parity with other domestic students than they are for undergraduate students. Success rates were declining at the University for domestic students across all course levels in recent years, but particularly for Indigenous students. However, success rates markedly improved over the last three years. The University is currently exploring ways it can provide enhanced support to Indigenous students, particularly undergraduates, to further improve Indigenous success rates to meet our target of success rate parity.

6.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The University of Melbourne's approach to advancing its Indigenous agenda has been to embed accountabilities across the University. Our commitment to increase the number of Indigenous people working at the University is articulated in Murmuk Djerring and our Indigenous Employment Plan 2023 - 2027.

The Indigenous Employment Plan 2023 – 2027 is the key strategy for enhancing the recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff at the University. It sets out the University's Headline Staff Targets to increase employment participation and outcomes for Indigenous staff. These targets are regularly reviewed, and, in 2020, they were amended to be:

- Indigenous staff numbers to reach 350 by 2025.
- An Academic to Professional staff ratio to be equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff by 2025.
- A senior (Level 8 and above) to junior Professional staff ratio to be equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff by 2025.

The Indigenous Staff Headline Targets all expire at the end of 2025 and are currently being reviewed.

The current Indigenous Employment Plan 2023 – 2027 was released in 2023 and is publicly available from the following link:

https://www.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/4852221/Indigenous-Employment-Plan_20231130.pdf

In addition to the Indigenous Employment Plan, each faculty and Chancellery have incorporated their own context-specific goals to support increased Indigenous employment at the University in their Divisional Indigenous Development Plans. All of these are being redeveloped and aligned with the updated suite of Indigenous strategies.

Progress towards meeting the University's Indigenous targets and measures, overall and at the level of faculties and graduate schools, is reported in the annual Indigenous Outcomes Performance Report (IOPR). The IOPR reports on a range of Indigenous Student, Staff, Teaching and Learning and Research data. Our performance across the institution is also reported in the annual, internal Advancing Melbourne Performance Report and discussion of divisional level performance also occurs as part of the Vice- Chancellor's annual planning round.

The University is progressing towards meeting its Indigenous Staff Headline Targets. Since the implementation of the University's second Indigenous Employment Framework in 2014, Indigenous staff numbers in ongoing and fixed-term positions at the University more than tripled from 42 to 229 in 2024 as at the March 31 snapshot date and has reached 234 as at 28 February 2025. The marked growth in Indigenous staff numbers since 2014 has seen the proportion of Indigenous staff reach 2.0% at the 31 March 2025 snapshot date (also 2.0% at February 28 2025). There are currently 26 Indigenous Academic staff in level D and level E positions, which the University believes is the highest in the country.

Melbourne Indigenous Professional Employment Program

The rapid growth in Indigenous professional staff numbers at the University is largely due to the success of the Melbourne Indigenous Professional Employment Program (MIPEP), which replaced the Indigenous Australian Employment Development Program (IAEDP) in 2017. MIPEP is a 2-year Indigenous traineeship initiative for the recruitment of early entry professional staff members at The University of Melbourne. MIPEP was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. MIPEP resumed in 2022 and there were 6 staff engaged in MIPEP during 2023.

In 2022 and 2023, two full-time Indigenous staff were employed to administer MIPEP. MIPEP was comprehensively reviewed, and a revitalised offering developed for the 2024 cohort. The new offering has broadened the employment levels offered to MIPEP participants to cater to applicants with a wider range of skills and prior professional experience. In January 2024, 15 staff commenced in MIPEP in positions across the main Parkville campus and at the Royal Children's Hospital, and all of these staff remain currently employed at the University.

Office of Indigenous Employment and Development

A Signature Project in Murmuk Djerring, the Office commenced operating as a HR function in late 2023 and was fully staffed by one HR Director and two HR Business Partners and operational as of January 2024.

The Office for Indigenous Employment and Development, after 12 months of operation, the office has transitioned its operational model to become a Centre of Excellence (CoE), with a focus on developing specialised expertise, driving innovation, and delivering strategic value across the University. Since its establishment, the scope of the work has significantly expanded and this shift to a CoE structure will enable a more proactive and consultative approach, placing a strong emphasis on talent development, organisational design, and best practices for Indigenous employment. These changes are pivotal as we work toward achieving our Indigenous employment goals and creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all staff. The current focus of the office remains on is on implementing our Indigenous Employment Plan 2023–2027, along with other University policies, programs and initiatives relating to Indigenous staff recruitment, retention, professional development, and building connections and networks.

Table 5.2 Indigenous workforce data (2024 breakdown) [\[iii\]](#)

Classification	Headcount
Academic Continuing	47
Academic Fixed Term & Casual	52
Professional Continuing	87
Professional Fixed Term & Casual	43
Total	229

6.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), Professor Barry Judd, Associate Provost, Professor Marcia Langton, and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) Tiriki Onus led the University's Indigenous agenda in 2024. Cultural authority and leadership are also provided by our Traditional Owners and Elders through the Traditional Owners Advisory Group.

The University's Indigenous Governance Mechanism is comprised of the Traditional Owners Advisory Group (TOAG), the Indigenous Strategy Reference Group (ISRG) and the Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates Indigenous (CADDI). Together these have a significant role in advising on University-wide Indigenous priorities which guide Murrup Barak on effective allocation ISSP resources.

The Traditional Owners Advisory Group (TOAG) is the advisory mechanism to support the governance of Indigenous programs with respect to Indigenous community engagement and cultural protocols and the implementation of University Indigenous strategy. Our Traditional Owners and Elders have served for many years.

Traditional Owners Advisory Group

Membership

Chair

Professor Barry Judd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous (Chair)

Victorian Registered Aboriginal Party Representatives

Aunty Karen Jones, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (also a partner organization)

Ms Kelly Lehman, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

Uncle Graham Atkinson, Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation – Currently vacant

Elders and Respected Persons

Aunty Lorraine Padgham

Aunty Sandra Smith

Other Elders and Respected Persons as appropriate

Partners Organisations

Kaiela Institute – Currently vacant

Ms Denise Bowden, Yothu Yindi Foundation

Aunty Karen Jones, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (also a RAP)

University Representation

Professor Duncan Maskell, Vice-Chancellor

Professor Nicola Philips, Provost

Professor Marcia Langton, Associate Provost; Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor; Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies

Sonia Harvey, Director, Office of Indigenous Employment and Development

Will Carter, Director, Indigenous Partnerships

Inala Cooper, Director, Murrup Barak: Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development

Tiriki Onus, Head, Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development (commenced as Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous) in March 2024)

Terms of Reference

The Traditional Owners Advisory Group is a forum for providing advice and insights to the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive on matters of interest to the members of the Advisory Group.

The Group will:

- Discuss matters raised by Traditional Owners in support of the University's teaching and learning, research and engagement activities and priorities
- Provide cultural oversight of the University's Indigenous strategies
- Provide cultural oversight of the University's engagement with Indigenous knowledge
- Advise the University on appropriate engagement with Traditional Owner groups
- Advise the University on appropriate cultural and community protocols
- Report to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group and University Executive after each meeting
- Meet at least twice annually, or as otherwise agreed by the Advisory Group

Indigenous Strategy Reference Group

Membership

Prof. Marcia Langton, Associate Provost

Prof. Aaron Corn, Director, Indigenous Knowledge Institute

Inala Cooper, Director, Murrup Barak: Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development

Brittney Henderson, Indigenous Office Bearer, University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU)

Prof. Su Baker, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Community & Cultural Partnerships)

Prof. Adrian Little, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

Prof. Kate Smith-Miles, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability)

Nick Blinco, Vice-President (Advancement)

Sean Hogan, Acting Chief Human Resources Officer (or nominee) (Alexis Beckwith commenced as Chief Human Resources Office on ISRG in 2024)

Chair, Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA) (TBC)

Terms of Reference

The Indigenous Strategy Reference Group advises the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) on the University's key high-level Indigenous partnerships and strategic initiatives. The group will:

- Provide advice on the implementation and progress of the University's key strategic initiatives and other key initiatives.
- Ensure there is appropriate alignment and synergies across multiple projects and portfolios.
- Consider emerging possibilities in relation to the University strategy, Advancing Melbourne.
- Support the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in strategic decision-making.
- Formulate new initiatives for consideration by the appropriate bodies within the University, including the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) and University Executive.
- The ISRG will meet monthly.
- This ISRG will report to the Provost via the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous).

Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates Indigenous

Membership

Chair

Rotating Chair during 2023

Members

Associate Professor Shawana Andrews, Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Dr Eddie Cubillo, Melbourne Law School

Professor Sandra Eades, Associate Dean (Indigenous), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Associate Professor Michelle Evans, Faculty of Business and Economics

Dr David O'Brien, Nominee, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning

Professor Melitta Hogarth, Faculty of Education

Professor Barry Judd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

Tiriki Onus, Head, Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

Dr Cameron Raw, Associate Dean (Indigenous), Faculty of Science

Professor Frank Vetere, Deputy Dean (Engagement), Faculty of Engineering, and IT

Inala Cooper, Director, Murrup Barak: Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development

Kirsten Emes, Director and Chief of Staff, Indigenous Portfolio , Office of the Provost

Terms of Reference

The Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates (Indigenous) is a forum for consultation and coordination between the academic divisions, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Indigenous Strategy Reference Group on the University's ongoing efforts to improve Indigenous higher education, research, engagement and employment outcomes.

The Committee will support academic divisional alignment with University-wide Indigenous strategies and plans through implementing these at the academic divisional level and advising on:

- Issues that impact Indigenous student participation, success and completion rates at the divisional level and Indigenous student support needs and services;
- Indigenous academic and professional staff numbers, classification, distribution and career trajectories in their faculties/schools; and
- Academic divisions' research performance related to Indigenous matters.

The Committee will coordinate and review the implementation of Divisional Indigenous Development Plans.

Other Committees with Indigenous Governance Functions

In addition to TOAG, ISRG and CADDI, the below central committees guide and make decisions on a range of Indigenous matters. These include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Oversight Committee
- Indigenous Scholarships and Awards Committee

At the faculty level, Traditional Owners and a range of local committees guide Indigenous research, teaching and learning and engagement activities. These include:

- Reconciliation and Recognition Committee within the Melbourne Law School
- Connection to Culture Committee within the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning
- Individual relationships with Wurundjeri Tribe Council through the Melbourne Law School and the Australia Centre Collaboration within the Faculty of Arts

6.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

On behalf of the University's Indigenous Governance mechanism, I am pleased to endorse the ISSP Report. Of note with respect to the University's 2024 Indigenous activity are the following:

- 145 Indigenous students commenced in graduate programs during 2024. This brought the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled postgraduate degrees at the University to 60.3% compared to 48.5% of non-Indigenous domestic students.
- In 2024, 9 Indigenous students commenced with Melbourne Chancellor's Scholarships, bringing the total number of currently enrolled Indigenous Chancellor's Scholars to 42. These high-achieving students enjoy fee exemptions and are guaranteed a place in a graduate program of their choice if they satisfy eligibility requirements. Students also receive a living allowance for up to 3 years.
- Nine Indigenous Graduate Researchers graduated during 2024, the largest graduating cohort in the University's history.

- The University currently has an Indigenous professoriate of 26 (level E and Level D academic staff).
- By the end of 2024, the University reached 236 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, consisting of 110 Academic and 126 Professional staff. The University believes this is the largest cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at any university.
- The first major output of the University's Truth and Justice Project is the first volume of a book documenting the University's relationship with Indigenous Australians dating back to 1853 was launched on 28 May 2024 during National Reconciliation Week. The book was also submitted to the Yoorrook Justice Commission on 6 February.
- Professor Yalmay Yunupingu delivered the 2024 Narm Oration. Delivered in Yolngu Matha language, Professor Yunupingu emphasised the importance of Indigenous peoples remaining strong in their language and cultural practices. Drawing on her own educational journey, her family and many years as an educator at the Yirrkala school, she reflected on 'walking between two worlds' and shared her deep commitment to mentoring current and future generations of Yolngu leaders.
- In 2024, the University of Melbourne conferred an Honorary Doctorate on Yorta Yorta leader Uncle Paul Briggs AO, in recognition of his lifetime of community leadership and advocacy for Indigenous people's rights and advancement. The Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), the University's highest honour, was conferred on Uncle Briggs at a graduation ceremony in December 2024.
- The Indigenous-led educational centre, the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence, opened in August 2024 on Yorta Yorta Country, Shepparton, Victoria. The state-of-the-art building incorporates Aboriginal knowledge into its design and programs, symbolising decades of effort to place First Nations at the forefront of higher education. Munarra, which means thunder in Yorta Yorta language, resonates with the Centre's aspiration to significantly impact the empowerment and education pathways of Yorta Yorta communities and the broader Goulburn Murray region. The University of Melbourne is a founding partner in the Munarra Centre with the Rumbalara Football Netball Club and the Kaiela Institute.
- In 2024, the Dungala Kaiela Oration was presented by Australia's inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People Justin Mohamed on the topic 'Build locally, Connect globally'.
- In 2024, National Reconciliation Week consisted of program of 10 events located at the Parkville and Southbank campuses. Events ranged from Lighting the Wilin – a smoking ceremony by Boon Wurrung Traditional Owners to mark the start of National Reconciliation Week – to presentations, panel discussions and sporting events. The program provided a diverse range of events and opportunities which appealed to students, staff and the general public.

Additional information for completing the template

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2023. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2023 should be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

² This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

³ Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

⁴ Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁵ Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁶ Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

⁷ 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).

⁸ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

⁹ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

¹⁰ Only record amounts which required payment during the 2023 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.