



Institutional Performance Portfolio
Information Collection (IPPIC) 2012

Submission to DIISTRE, August 2012

**Indigenous
Education
Statement**

4. INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATEMENT

2012

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND (USQ)

Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges

SECTION 1 OBJECTIVES FOR INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION

USQ remains committed to a comprehensive approach to improving higher education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians. This commitment involves:

- reaching out to prospective students, including through outreach with local high schools, through the provision of enabling/preparatory programs, including through the culturally-appropriate Indigenous Higher Education Preparatory Program (IHEPP);
- retaining students through the active involvement of student support officers and mentors within the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) and the faculties;
- embedding Indigenous perspectives in the curricula of the academic programs;
- enhancing and extending the opportunities for studying Indigenous cultures through an Indigenous Studies major; and
- increasing and enhancing the career and employment opportunities of Indigenous Australians at USQ.

Indigenous perspectives are embedded throughout the following key institutional documents:

- The USQ Strategic Plan 2009-2013 (<http://www.usq.edu.au/aboutusq/strategy/strategicplan>) includes as Goal 7: "Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion" that acknowledges the need to continue to improve higher education participation and employment participation by Indigenous Australians (USQ Strategic Plan 2009-2013, p.18). In particular:
 - Objective 2: "Equity embedded into all aspects of operations and practice at USQ" of Goal 7 requires that Indigenous Studies be promoted across the institution and that Indigenous perspectives be embedded in the curriculum; and
 - Objective 3: "Improved access, transition and support for groups from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds" of Goal 7 acknowledges the need to develop a comprehensive Indigenous Education Strategy.
- The USQ Learning and Teaching Plan 2009-2013 proscribes that Indigenous perspectives will be embedded in USQ courses and programs as a key element of the 'Vertical Integration and Support Materials Project'. Details of this are available via: http://www.usq.edu.au/extrfiles/ltsu/LTActionKit/study_modules/VerticleIntegration.htm#id9
- The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012 was developed under the auspices of the USQ Social Justice Committee and approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011. The Plan is available from <http://www.usq.edu.au/socialjustice/sjpolicy>. Key initiatives arising from this Plan in the area of Indigenous education include:

"20. That the DARE¹ mentoring program for Indigenous secondary school students be fully implemented in 2011 and 2012.

¹ DARE (Dream, Aspire, Reach & Experience) is a school-based mentoring and aspiration building program. DARE is discussed later in this statement. For further details see: <http://www.usq.edu.au/caik/dare>

21. That the development of Indigenous Studies courses be seen as a priority of the University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.

22. That the Social Justice budget funds an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012.”

SECTION 2 ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY (AEP) GOALS IN 2011 AND PLANS FOR FUTURE YEARS

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

During this reporting period, Indigenous staff were represented on a variety of Committees:

Director, Indigenous Education (= Director IEU; Academic Level D)

- Ex officio Chair, Indigenous Affairs Committee;
- Ex officio member, USQ Social Justice Committee;
- Member, USQ Staff Planning & Policy Committee;
- Member, Faculty Board; Faculty of Arts
- Member, Dean’s Advisory Group, Faculty of Arts;

In addition:

- An Indigenous academic staff member (Lecturer) is a member of Academic Board (the membership of Academic Board includes an Indigenous Australian staff member category)
- An Indigenous academic staff member (Lecturer) is a member of the USQ Learning and Teaching Committee
- An Indigenous academic staff member (Lecturer) is a member of the Faculty of Arts Academic Program Committee
- An Indigenous professional staff member coordinates the Fraser Coast Campus Community Education Advisory Committee
- Indigenous community representatives from the Toowoomba campus and Fraser Coast campus are members of the Indigenous Affairs Committee.

The IEU at USQ is titled the *Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges* (CAIK: www.usq.edu.au/caik). The Director Indigenous Education (DIE) manages CAIK and reports to the Dean, Faculty of Arts on Indigenous academic matters and the University executive on Indigenous affairs.

CAIK has two contiguous operating environments:

1. The provision of Indigenous student support services and delivery of a pre-enrolment enabling program titled the Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP). Indigenous student support services and IHEPP are managed by the Director, Indigenous Education. Indigenous affairs across the University are managed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Communities). In this regard, the reporting relationship is managed through the Indigenous Affairs Committee, reporting to the Social Justice Committee.
2. Teaching associated with the delivery of a core compulsory Australian Indigenous Studies course in the Faculty of Education’s Pre-Service Teacher Education undergraduate program, a minor in Indigenous Studies in Education, Arts, Business and Sciences, and a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Faculty of Arts. Apart from the core compulsory Education course, all undergraduate and postgraduate degree level academic matters are managed through faculty academic committee processes, under the auspices of the Dean Faculty of Arts. CAIK does not have a capacity to accredit Indigenous studies courses in its own right.

- **2.2 Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed, as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions**

USQ aims to increase the educational, employment, training and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The University has an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Pilot Program**, and employs an **Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator**. The **USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy** is currently undergoing review and will be made accessible on the University website at a later date. The current strategy can be found via the following link:

<https://policy.usq.edu.au/policy/files/indigenous%20employment.htm>

The current **USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy** was approved for implementation by USQ Council in November 2005. The current strategy was an outcome of enterprise bargaining negotiations in 2005, when a Representative Steering Committee to oversee the development and implementation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy was established. The Committee included representatives from University senior management, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, academic and professional employees, staff within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Unit, the NTEU, Human Resources and the Community Education Advisory Committee for each campus.

In 2011, the University formally endorsed the implementation of an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Pilot Program**. (www.usq.edu.au/about-usq/acknowledgement-of-first-peoples/indigenous-staff) This targeted recruitment initiative involves the recruitment of five Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander trainees to professional positions within the University for a period of 12 months. On successful completion of the program, each trainee will receive a nationally-recognised Certificate III level qualification and valuable workplace skills and experience. It is anticipated that the traineeship program will be made available on an annual basis, subject to approval and funding. In addition, USQ also utilises identified and specified positions as a strategy for increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic and professional workforce.

USQ also supports the recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff through the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Cultural Awareness Program**. This one-day professional development program is designed to provide USQ employees with a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The program also aims to assist staff to develop strategies that can be implemented within the workplace. Through discussion and activities, participants gain knowledge and skills to enable them to communicate effectively, and confidently support, work with, supervise or report to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. Information on this program is available at:

www.usq.edu.au/hr/equitydiversity/eopolproc/aboriginaltorresstraitislanderemp/crossculturalawareness

In 2011, there were two designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions at USQ which are detailed below. The following Tables are based on 2011 employment statistics.

Table 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific positions

Faculty/Division	Occupation	Level
Faculty of Sciences	Lecturer (Indigenous Support)	Level B
Human Resources	Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator	Level 5

Table 2 – Continuing and fixed term positions

Faculty/Division	Staff	Academic	Professional
Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges	10	4	6
Faculty of Sciences	2	2	
Facilities Management	1		1
Human Resources	1		1
Centre for Rural and Remote Health	1	1	
Totals	15	7	8

Table 3 – Traineeships (full time, fixed term)

Faculty/Division	Staff	Academic	Professional
Qld College of Wine Tourism Indigenous Wine Industry Trainee	2		2
Totals	2		2

Table 4 – Casual positions

Faculty/Division	Staff	Academic	Professional
Domestic Recruitment & Admissions	2		2
Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges	2	1	1
Fraser Coast Administration	1		1
Totals	5	1	4

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Unit does not have a direct role in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at USQ. However, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit actively utilises both fixed-term and continuing work arrangements to employ staff who lecture in Indigenous Studies or support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

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

How many commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were there for 2011 as compared to 2010?

Domestic & International

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	172	169
Non Indigenous	10951	11360
Grand Total	11123	11529

Domestic only

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	172	169
Non Indigenous	8244	8566
Grand Total	8416	8735

The following targeted recruitment strategies are employed by USQ

(1) Promoting higher education as an option to prospective Indigenous students

USQ provides a range of programs that are designed to promote Indigenous cultures and assist community members to achieve higher levels of education. These include:

The Indigenous Connections Project, developed by USQ, is aimed at assisting young Indigenous people in rural and remote communities in southern Queensland to have greater knowledge and understanding of opportunities available to them at universities. The Project also aims to encourage, support and motivate young Indigenous people to take up and sustain tertiary study. The project is targeted at Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working to improve education outcomes for Indigenous young people in regional communities in southern Queensland. In 2011 some 50 teachers, teacher aides and CECs in south-east Queensland participated in workshops on cross cultural training and Indigenous project development, including grant application writing and mentoring.

Deadly Motivators (DM) program is conducted as part of the Indigenous Connections events and is targeted at Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are working to improve education outcomes for young Indigenous people in regional, rural and remote communities in southern Queensland including Cunnamulla, Charleville, Roma, St George and Goondiwindi. The program provides school staff with information relevant to working with Indigenous students, their families and communities to enable them to increase their ability to motivate and encourage Indigenous young people to take up and maintain university study.

CAIK, in concert with an **Indigenous Marketing and Outreach Officer**, has developed a range of **outreach initiatives and activities** aimed at three target groups: years 9-12 school age Indigenous students; school leavers and mature age Indigenous men and women. These include: Uni-Tasters; School visits; Marketing Events; Careers Days and Expos; and in-situ student support (for school students studying 1 IHEPP course). At the USQ Springfield campus there is also the unique opportunity to develop a special relationship with the new Greater Springfield Hymba Yumba Community Hub opening in the World Knowledge Centre adjacent to the campus. The development boasts a crèche, vocational education services, accommodation and specialised curriculum including cultural lessons from Indigenous elders (<http://www.hymbayumba.qld.edu.au/>).

The USQ Faculty of Sciences has developed a DVD that encourages the participation of people from diverse backgrounds into the profession of nursing, with particular emphasis on Indigenous Australians and males. The DVD features a successful USQ Indigenous Nursing graduate. **The Department of Nursing and Midwifery has used a specifically designed brochure** for use with Indigenous student recruitment since 2006 – see Attachment 1.

The Indigenous Coordinator of the Department of Nursing and Midwifery Faculty of Sciences is active in making personal contact with potential students and providing recommendation from current or recently graduated Indigenous nurses. The Indigenous Coordinator believes that this is the most effective encouragement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to enrol, and the strategy has met with considerable success. USQ has also found that its success in Indigenous Nursing (see below) has proven to be a boon to recruitment. The level of University support for Indigenous students and its successful outcomes in Nursing have been recognised and disseminated not only through the Murri grapevine but through media to Indigenous support personnel in regional secondary schools. It has been the resultant level of enquiries that have lead to the recognition of and desire to develop an overarching and inclusive program into the secondary school system to encourage and support academic interest at school as well as transition Indigenous students into higher education.

This project objective is also reinforced by the **Faculty of Sciences appointing a senior Academic Liaison Officer** to facilitate and support schools in the Darling Downs and Southwest region through a range of outreach activities. The range of activities have involved academics, researchers and current USQ students in face-to-face workshops and presentations for school staff and students as well as community members, including Indigenous Community Education Counsellors (CEC) and Indigenous Education Workers (IEW), within their own school and community environment. The role of the Academic Liaison Officer also incorporates the facilitation and management of a range of on-campus school activities such as the student experience days specifically for Indigenous students, PICSE events and teacher professional development days.

The School of Creative Arts supports the **Cherbourg Project in the Creative Arts** to raise educational aspirations of Indigenous school students. An Equity Incentives Grant initiated through the Stage Management Studio (Theatre Discipline) and Queensland TAFE provides a variety of creative arts workshops in purpose-built theatre and art-workshop spaces at TAFE in Cherbourg. This project links creative arts aspects of Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, Toowoomba's Empire Theatre and the USQ School of Creative Arts in a unique tertiary education partnership that aims to improve access, completion and retention of Indigenous participants in creative arts initiatives.

The USQ Faculty of Education collaborates with the Senior Recruitment Officer (Education Queensland) in the **Identified Indigenous Schools program** for Identified Indigenous Schools to secure placements in the Torres Strait, North Queensland and Indigenous communities for trainee teachers to provide them with experience with Indigenous schools in rural and remote areas and to help raise the educational aspirations of students in these schools.

In addition, USQ sponsored **the Young Indigenous Leadership Day**, held in Toowoomba in May 2012 and the 2012 Senior Education (over 18) NAIDOC Award for the Toowoomba community. This award

acknowledges a local Indigenous person who has achieved outstanding results in any post-secondary study between June 2011 and June 2012.

The Fraser Coast campus conducts an **Indigenous Student Experience Day** that aims to give Year 10 Indigenous students from the local region a positive and fulfilling university experience that raises their aspirations to complete their high school education and consider further and higher education thereafter. In 2012, around 40 school students engaged with current USQ students, experienced a tutorial and lecture, and received information on careers and University services.

In terms of planned initiatives, as mentioned earlier, *The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* includes the fully implementation of the DARE mentoring program. This **Dream, Aspire, Reach & Experience (DARE) Indigenous Secondary School Mentoring Program** is a mentoring program that involves Indigenous Australian students in Years 9-12 from low socioeconomic status (LSES) secondary schools located in the catchment areas of the University's Fraser Coast and Toowoomba campuses. The program has been designed to help Indigenous students Dream, Aspire, Reach and Experience and aims to help Indigenous students overcome difficulties associated with participating in higher education. The DARE program focuses on developing the aspiration of students through face to face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and the Indigenous community and also includes an Indigenous Games Day. The program involves:

- cross cultural awareness training for mentors;
- on-campus activities and tours;
- three day camp focusing on leadership, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, career guidance and planning; and
- award ceremony with guest speakers.

(2) Pathways programs for Indigenous students

CAIK (IEU) continues to administer the **Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP)**: www.usq.edu.au/caik/programs/ihepp) which is a pre-enrolment level, mixed-mode delivery program of 12 months 'full-time' study. IHEPP is a bridging program designed to give Indigenous students, particularly those students who are in first in family to higher education and who have not previously considered higher education as an option, the necessary skills to succeed in undergraduate programs offered by USQ. The Program operates essentially as a distance education program supplemented by a total of four compulsory residential schools over a standard enrolment pattern. Successful completion of the Program permits a student to apply for direct entry in the degree program of their choice (apart from Engineering and a number of Sciences degree programs which have specific pre-requisites).

USQ's Open Access College offers a fully by-distance Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP). This is undertaken by some Indigenous students who are unable to attend the on-campus component of IHEPP. TPP also conducts a significant offenders-in-custody program that enables access to study by Indigenous offenders in custody.

(3) Scholarships targeting Indigenous Australian students are published at:

www.usq.edu.au/scholarships/indig/

- All enrolled Indigenous students are able to apply for one of USQ's Equity Scholarships which consist of \$3,000, a new laptop computer or a \$750 Book Bursary. All Scholarships are managed through the University's Scholarship Office.
- USQ offers two *John Ross Clancy Indigenous Student Book Bursaries* (\$750 each) for Indigenous students commencing full-time, on-campus study at Toowoomba campus.
- USQ offers two Scholarships a year to the value of \$2,000 each for Indigenous students commencing full-time study at any of USQ's three campuses.
- The *Faculty of Engineering and Surveying* offers one scholarship (\$8,000) to a full-time on-campus Indigenous student enrolling in any undergraduate degree program offered by the Faculty.
- USQ offers one Bursary for Indigenous Psychology students (\$750) for an Indigenous student who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Sciences (Psychology), Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), Bachelor of

Sciences (Honours) in Psychology, or Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies programs.

- Students are also encouraged to enrol for the full range of USQ-wide scholarships and Indigenous scholarships offered by government and professional bodies.

(4) Transition and support strategies for Indigenous students

All enrolled and commencing students are advised by **CAIK Student Relationship Officers** at the beginning of each semester of available scholarships. Apart from the Faculty of Engineering & Surveying Scholarship, all USQ scholarships were taken up in 2011.

CAIK publishes the ***The Indigenous Family Guide to USQ*** which provides information about studying at university, the student experience and support services available at USQ – recognising the important role that the family and supporters play in assisting Indigenous students through study (www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/2007/indigenoufamguide).

As noted above, CAIK is responsible for the provision of Indigenous student support services. In addition Indigenous students also, of course, have access to the full range of student support services provided by USQ.

(5) Exemplar

The Helping Hands Indigenous Nursing Student Support Model has been developed specifically as a retention tool to provide intense support to retain and graduate Indigenous Nurses from USQ. The model has been implemented by Indigenous Nursing academics within USQ Faculty of Science's Department of Nursing and Midwifery since 2007.

USQ has experienced particular success with Indigenous participation in its Nursing program. In 2011 and 2012, USQ has graduated an increased number of Indigenous nursing students at undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree research levels – see Appendix.

The nationally recognised achievements of USQ's Indigenous Nursing Student Support Scheme has prompted the USQ Faculty of Sciences to work towards implementing similar programs in the other health, science and technology-based disciplines of the Faculty.

While the initial recruitment of Indigenous nurses into university programs is not difficult; the problem is retaining them until they graduate and qualify as a registered nurse. To address this challenge, the Indigenous Health academic within the Nursing and Midwifery Department of the Faculty of Sciences has implemented a number of support retention strategies, notably the "Helping Hands" retention tool, to keep their cohort of Indigenous nursing students progressing in their nursing program until they graduate. (A description of these retention tolls is included in Stuart, L., Nielsen, A.-M. & Horner, V. (2008). 'Support strategies that graduate Indigenous nurses – a dreaming journey', *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 95-100 – see Attachment 2.

The Indigenous Nursing Program team were awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in 2011.

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

What is the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments for 2011 as compared to 2010?

Domestic & International

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	365	371
Non Indigenous	25717	26050
Grand Total	26082	26421

Domestic only

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	365	371
Non Indigenous	19242	19934
Grand Total	19607	20305

- **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**

What is the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completions at a bachelor level and above in 2011, as compared to 2010?

Domestic & International

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	33	23
Non Indigenous	4480	3969
Grand Total	4513	3992

Domestic only

Indigenous Indicator	2010	2011
Indigenous	33	23
Non Indigenous	2403	2321
Grand Total	2436	2344

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

CAIK currently offers five undergraduate courses in Australian Indigenous Studies that can be taken as electives in four of the five faculties and a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing for non-Indigenous health practitioners. EDC2200 Indigenous Perspectives (www.usq.edu.au/course/synopses/2011/EDC2200.html) is a core course for all pre-service teaching students.

USQ's Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had an Indigenous nursing academic lecturing position within the nursing program on a continuing basis for over a decade. In addition to lecturing, this position encompasses a support role to provide academic and cultural support for Indigenous nursing students enrolled in the nursing programs. The lecturing component of this position is to teach an Indigenous Health & Cross Cultural Care Course for all undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program at USQ. The content of this course focuses on three main areas: Indigenous health, Indigenous history; and cross-cultural care for Indigenous Australians within the healthcare setting. Within this framework teaching resources, discussions and assessment are selected and designed to give students a deeper understanding which facilitates respect for Australian Indigenous and contemporary cultures.

The Faculty of Education collaborates with the Senior Recruitment Officer (Education Queensland) to support pre-service teachers to secure placements at Identified Indigenous Schools in the Torres Strait, North Queensland and Indigenous communities. These opportunities require a commitment for seeking employment in Indigenous communities as this placement process involves expensive airfares and the availability of accommodation.

The School of Creative Arts conducts an Indigenous Art Exhibition every two years to promote Indigenous cultures and support Indigenous youth taking pride in their rich cultural heritage. Programs are held at USQ Toowoomba every two years. In 2012, the Undiluted Exhibition, curated by Jason Castro Dooley, will feature Indigenous artists: Vernon Ah Kee, Jennifer Herd, Laurie Nilsen and Chris Mills-Kelly. The Undiluted project will also include two free workshops, led by an Indigenous educator, for local Indigenous artists and Indigenous high school students.

There is no existing mechanism within USQ to evaluate 'cultural competencies' for staff or students. CAIK has been awaiting the recommendations from the IHEAC administered pilot projects regarding 'cultural competencies' in the higher education sector. However, steps are taken to ensure that the importance and uniqueness of Indigenous Australian culture is promoted. For example:

- Under the leadership of the Director, Indigenous Education, USQ employs a range of strategies to engage with the local Indigenous communities: (Refer to www.usq.edu.au/caik/community/) In particular:
 - The Faculty of Arts Butchulla 'On-Country' learning program for International full-fee paying students enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts commenced in June 2010. Many of the same group involved in teaching in the 'On-Country Learning Course' are active members of the Fraser Coast Campus Education Advisory Committee established under the auspices of CAIK and reporting directly to the Provost at Fraser Coast with additional input from Aboriginal community members from that region. Unfortunately, there were insufficient enrolments from Study Abroad students to offer the program this year and it is supposed that the stronger Australian dollar made the program too expensive for the target cohort of mainly North American students.
 - The Jarowair and Giabul Traditional owners of the country in which the Toowoomba campus is situated provide a 'Welcome to Country' at significant USQ events and assist interested students and staff in understanding the traditional history of the Toowoomba region. This is supplemented by CAIK's attempts to engage with historical elders in the Toowoomba region and the establishment of an Elders Room at CAIK.
 - The traditional elders and custodians for the Springfield campus region are significant participants in all campus events and outreach engagement activities with elders is a continuing focus for Springfield based CAIK Student Relationship Officers.
- Acknowledgement of country is practiced routinely at the opening of events.
- USQ's communities celebrate NAIDOC Week each year.
- At the Toowoomba campus the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag are flown every day in the University's central quadrangle.
- USQ is building a bush tucker and medicine garden at a prominent location on its Toowoomba campus. The Gumbi-Gumbi Gardens Project aims to promote, amongst other things, an improved understanding of Indigenous women and health issues
- The Fraser Coast Campus hosts Indigenous Corporate Breakfasts in the Wide Bay-Burnett region designed to alert the community to the barriers Indigenous Australians face regarding education and employment and to encourage strategies to overcome these barriers.
- USQ's own Art collection, which is maintained for socio-cultural, educative and aesthetic functions, is well represented for significant Indigenous artworks (<http://policy.usq.edu.au/portal/default/detail/university-art-collection/University%20Art%20Collection.pdf>)
- USQ Marketing and Recruitment staff regularly receive *Koori Mail* and *National Indigenous Times* to keep up-to-date on Indigenous news and issues.

In terms of planned initiatives, *The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011 includes the following initiative:

21. That the development of "Indigenous Studies" courses be seen as a priority of the University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.

SECTION 3 EXPENDITURE OF INDIGENOUS SUPPORT PROGRAM GRANT

Enquiries regarding this section should be directed to the Office of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janet Verbyla, via Toni.Bryon@usq.edu.au.

SECTION 4 HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Please nominate contact officers for all policy and operational matters regarding your Indigenous education statement, including name(s), position title, phone number and email address.

Where your IEU has been consulted in the development of this Indigenous Education Statement, please provide the contact details of the relevant IEU staff member.

University Officer

Name: Professor Peter Goodall

Position Title: PVC (Social Justice)

Phone Number: (07) 4631 1092

Email: helen.ingram@usq.edu.au

Indigenous Education Unit Officer

Name: A/Prof John Williams-Mozley

Position Title: Director CAIK

Phone Number: (07) 4631 1991

Email: williamm@usq.edu.au

SECTION 5 PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT

In accordance with the permission provided by the Commonwealth, USQ routinely publishes the Indigenous Education Statement on the USQ website and on publication will provide the Department with a link to the statement.

Appendix

Indigenous Completions at USQ, 2000-2005 versus 2006-2011, by Faculty

Total of Indigenous completions at USQ for 11 years from 2000-2005

Faculty of Sciences	26	(Nursing Programs =18)
Faculty of Education	43	
Faculty of Business	27	
Faculty of Arts	23	
Faculty of Engineering	1	
OFFRE	0	
Total	120	

Total of Indigenous completions at USQ for 6 years from 2006-2011

Faculty of Sciences	63 (+37 from pre -5 yrs)	(Nursing Programs =51)
Faculty of Education	33 (-10 from pre -5 yrs)	
Faculty of Business	22 (- 5 from pre -5 yrs)	
Faculty of Arts	22 (- 1 from pre -5 yrs)	
Faculty of Engineering	7 (+ 6 from pre -5 yrs)	
OFFRE	1 (+ 1 from pre- 5 yrs)	
Total	148(+28 from pre-5yrs)	

Total of Indigenous completions at USQ for 11 years from 2000-2011

Faculty of Sciences	89	(Nursing Programs =69)
Faculty of Education	76	
Faculty of Business	49	
Faculty of Arts	45	
Faculty of Engineering	8	
OFFRE	1	
Total	268	

Financial assistance to help you study

There is financial assistance available to indigenous nursing students to help meet the costs of study as follows:

Abstudy

Centrelink: 13 2317
www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/abstudy

USQ Indigenous Scholarships

www.usq.edu.au/scholarships/indig

Indigenous Nursing & Midwifery Cadetships (Queensland Health)

Register: www.ics.deewr.gov.au
Contact: 07 3224 8742
Email: OCNO_Cadetships@health.qld.gov.au
For further information: www.thinknursing.com

Royal College of Nursing (RCNA) Scholarships

Puggy Hunter Scholarship:
www.rcna.org.au/scholarships/puggy_hunter

Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme:
Undergraduate

Contact: 1800 688 628
www.rcna.org.au/scholarships/nahssug

**Indigenous Nurses are “Deadly”
and we need more!**



I am the first in my immediate family to complete a degree – it is really important to me to be a role model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for them to follow in my steps and have more people as health professionals. USQ was an easy choice, it's close to home, has great facilities and small class sizes. There is a lot of support at USQ – right throughout the university – they were so supportive of my goal that is no longer a dream, it has actually happened and it feels great!

Randall Taylor
Bachelor of Nursing 2009

For more information

USQ Admissions: 1800 269 500

Indigenous Nursing Academics: 4631 1613

Email: indigenousnursing@usq.edu.au

Website: www.usq.edu.au/sciences/nursing

Indigenous support:

CAIK: 1800 005 137 / 4631 2133

INDIGENOUS NURSING

FACULTY OF SCIENCES



**Indigenous Nurses are “Deadly”
and we need more!**

USQ

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN QUEENSLA

Looking for a career where you can make a difference?

It is a national priority to increase the number of indigenous people in the nursing field and USQ is dedicated to providing support for indigenous students to become nurses.

Programs range from the Bachelor of Nursing to the following postgraduate nursing programs:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Nursing Practice (Rural & Remote)
- Master of Midwifery
- Master of Mental Health Nursing
- Master of Nursing
- Master of Science (Research)
- PhD Studies

For further information:

www.usq.edu.au/handbook/current/sci/sci.html

Why study nursing at USQ?

There are well equipped laboratory facilities and simulated hospital wards at both Toowoomba and Fraser Coast campuses providing students with hands on practical experience.

USQ's partnerships with health services means our nursing students gain practical clinical experience in hospital and community-based health services, making our graduates 'work ready' on graduation.

USQ is well known for its small classes and supportive teaching staff.

Flexible study pathway progressions are available, including on-campus full-time or part-time study, accelerated study and distance education options (postgraduate study only) are available.

How do I apply to do Nursing?

If you finished Year 12 with a University admissions score (OP, TER, UAI) you can apply via Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC).

QTAC Website: www.qtac.edu.au

If you finished school without a University admissions score you may be eligible for entry via QTAC providing you have prior recognised learning. Some examples of this may be Indigenous health workers, nurses aids, enrolled nurses and various other Certificate III TAFE courses.

Indigenous students interested in a career in nursing should contact the Indigenous Coordinator in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at indigenousnursing@usq.edu.au for information on guidance and support and to discuss entry pathways.

For further information:

USQ Admissions – 1800 269 500

Support services at USQ

Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK)

USQ supports its Indigenous students through the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK).

The primary purpose of this Centre is to offer personal and cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students during their studies. The Centre also acts as an advocate for students support matters in relation to social and economic and accommodation issues whilst in the University setting.

Ph: 1800 005 137 or 46 312 133

Email: knt@usq.edu.au

Pathways to University study

Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP) operated from CAIK

The Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP) has been developed to prepare Indigenous students for tertiary studies.

Further information on the program is available at:

www.usq.edu.au/future-students/am-i-eligible/ihepp

Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) operated from USQ's Open Access College

The Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) provides the opportunity for students to prepare for successful University study.

TPP is offered via distance education.

Further information on the program is available at:

www.usq.edu.au/future-students/am-i-eligible/tpp



Support Strategies That Graduate Indigenous Nurses – A Dreaming Journey

*by Lynne Stuart, Anne-Maree Nielsen and Vicki Horner**

Abstract

The University of Southern Queensland's (USQ) Department of Nursing and Midwifery is leading the way in the recruitment, retention and graduation of Indigenous students into both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs. The Indigenous nursing academics within the Department are proactive in providing academic and cultural support to help Indigenous nursing students advance toward graduation. The team of three Indigenous nursing academics has implemented strategies from the Indigenous Nursing Support (INS) model Helping Hands to support the retention of Indigenous nursing students. This retention tool is a highly successful and proven means of intervention, as demonstrated by USQ's national leadership in enrolments and graduating students. Indigenous nursing enrolments at USQ have grown from 10 to 60 over a two year period, and USQ is now preparing to host the largest graduation (to date) in 2010, of 13 Indigenous registered nurses.

The beginning of the USQ Dreaming Journey

The University of Southern Queensland's (USQ) Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had a significant increase in Indigenous nursing enrolments recently, as a result of targeted recruitment drives and strong partnerships with Queensland Health, Aboriginal Medical Services, regional high schools, and the Indigenous Higher Education Preparation Program (IHEPP) located within the Centre of Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) at USQ. The recruitment of Indigenous nursing students is a vital first step for, as Goold (in *Dragon 2007: 23*) states, "it is important to recruit and retain more Indigenous nurses to provide the most appropriate care for Indigenous people".

However, recruiting Indigenous nurses into nursing programs at any university is not the most difficult task. Across the board, the most common problem is retaining them within the nursing program until they graduate and gain their qualification as a registered nurse. Goold and Usher (2006) note that there are large numbers of Indigenous nursing students in schools of nursing, but to retain these students until graduation is difficult.

To address this challenging retention problem, a number of support retention strategies have been implemented by the Indigenous nursing academics within the USQ's Nursing and Midwifery Department. The results have been outstanding, with 13 Indigenous registered nurses due to graduate in 2010. This paper describes the strategies used by USQ's Nursing and Midwifery Department to retain Indigenous students and support them as they advance toward graduation and matriculation into postgraduate studies.

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USQ's Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had an Indigenous nursing academic lecturing position on a continuing basis for over a decade. In addition to lecturing, this position encompasses a supportive role to provide academic and cultural support for Indigenous nursing students enrolled in the nursing programs. Because of the burgeoning numbers of Indigenous nursing students enrolling at USQ, the Department has recruited two additional part-time Indigenous nursing academics to meet the cultural and academic support needs of this rapidly growing cohort. It must be acknowledged that the initially employed Indigenous nursing academic, Odette Best, was the main instigator of the USQ Dreaming Journey over a decade ago. Odette is now a USQ PhD candidate who holds the position of Indigenous Nursing Advisor to the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer, Queensland Health. This pioneer Indigenous nursing academic made in-roads where there were none and established the foundation of an Indigenous nursing support model advancing the first cohort of Indigenous nursing students to become registered nurses. The three nursing academics who currently sit in these Indigenous nursing academic positions at USQ are derived from the first student cohort.

The Indigenous nursing support (INS) model in use at USQ, Helping Hands, was conceived and developed by Odette Best. Through using this model, the USQ Department of Nursing and Midwifery is now a national leader in recruiting, training, educating and graduating Indigenous registered nurses. Over the years, the model has been extended and refined into a working student support model that caters to the ever changing needs of Indigenous nursing students (Stuart 2009).

Helping Hands consists of a custom-made concept map which has been developed at USQ and is specifically designed for face-to-face teaching to support Indigenous nursing students in their USQ Dreaming Journey. This method of learning works well for Indigenous students. As Goold (2004: 1) states, "we are an oral people and we are face-to-face learners". The Helping Hands model has taken into consideration that Indigenous nursing students' learning styles are different from mainstream nursing students and has, therefore, adapted support strategies for Indigenous nursing students to remain enrolled, make progress and graduate from higher education. This approach is congruent with Bush and Van Holst Pellekaan (1995: 224) who state "traditional societies, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), emphasize observation, memory, calculation of such concepts as distance, and most important, use knowledge of the natural world to learn".

Five major issues emerged at USQ as influencing the retention of Indigenous nursing students within the Bachelor of Nursing program:

1. Students need financial, academic and program support to progress
2. Students need to know that there is a way back when they go off track, without being judged
3. Students need time management guidance
4. Students need to make a commitment to themselves and a mentor to stay motivated

5. Student need to know that someone cares whether they succeed or not.

To counteract these issues, Helping Hands contains a series of support tools for Indigenous nursing students. This paper focuses on one of these tools, the Helping Hands retention tool, and the five strategies that are used in conjunction with it. The Helping Hands retention tool has been tested and measured, and is highly effective in retaining Indigenous nursing students within the Bachelor of Nursing program until they graduate.

The Deadly Dilly Bag

The Deadly Dilly Bag is a survival kit which addresses three key areas: (a) students need substantial financial support, (b) students need academic support in the form of an ITAS (Indigenous tutorial assistance scheme) tutor, (c) students need to know how to progress with their studies. The Deadly Dilly Bag addresses these issues through three related strategies. (a) Indigenous nursing academics assist students in applying for financial assistance until they are successful recipients of financial support in the form of a scholarship or cadetship. The Indigenous nursing academics source the scholarships and cadetships, help with the completion of applications, and advocate for the students' selection. (b) The Indigenous nursing academics ensure culturally appropriate ITAS tutor services are engaged to support students academically, and provide back-up support. (c) Progression direction is mapped out for each individual student to provide them with an academic progression timetable so they know how to progress with their studies. We believe that, if every Indigenous nursing student has this basic survival kit, they can remain and progress within the nursing program.

The Boomerang Tracker

The Boomerang Tracker is a strategy designed to help Indigenous students who go off track and don't understand the implications of their absence in relation to their study responsibilities. There are a variety of reasons why students may go off track, and the reasons are too complex to be addressed within this paper. However, it can have a severe impact on their study progression, and needs to be addressed. The Boomerang Tracker consists of a student contact protocol, which is a repetitive process of contacting students without judging them. The protocol consists of e-mails, phone calls, text messages, post, enlisting the support of the Indigenous student support person at CAIK, and involving other Indigenous nursing students, ITAS tutors, mentors and relatives of the student. This protocol is repeated every 48 hours until contact is made. This strategy has proven to be the most effective method of communication to which Indigenous students respond. This intense approach is designed to make students aware of their responsibilities towards their study obligations.

The Academic Footprint Tracker

The Academic Footprint Tracker is a strategy used by the Indigenous nursing academics to monitor a student's academic progress in order to pinpoint areas of concern for early intervention. The strategy is designed to address the issue that Indigenous students are often not aware of the importance of time management and time constraints in relation to assessment and compulsory attendance. Through the Academic Footprint Tracker, the Indigenous nursing academics initiate contact with students for student consultations to outline important assessment criteria and provide guidance as required. This involves formulating an individual assessment calendar and a compulsory attendance timetable factoring in ITAS tutor arrangements. In addition to this, mainstream nursing academics within the nursing department are notified of Indigenous students enrolled in their course so that their academic progress can be monitored. These nursing academics are then asked to advise the Indigenous nursing academics of any concerns with assessment pieces and compulsory attendance. During student consultation times, the Indigenous nursing academic assists the student's preparation for clinical placements and guides them in navigating the technical issues of the university environment. The intensity of the Footprint Tracker strategy is dependent upon the student's individual needs.

The Heartprint Handwritten Contract

The Heartprint Handwritten Contract is a strategy to enlist a commitment from the Indigenous nursing student, in conjunction with their mentor, to complete their university Dreaming Journey. It is designed to address the issue that commitment to university study wanes when assignment deadlines, exams stress and life and other pressures build. Entering into this contract at the beginning of their university studies helps Indigenous students to cope with building pressures and remain focused on their studies. The Contract is the single most effective strategy within the retention tool of the Helping Hands model. It ensures that students keep their university studies as a number one priority, which enables them to fulfil future aspirations and dreams. One Indigenous nursing student stated:

The Indigenous coordinator in the nursing department encouraged all of us to sign a heart print contract with her saying that this is the journey that we've undertaken and we're going to stick with it and seek the help that we need. The contract is up in a little box in her room, it's sort of a constant reminder that we've got a commitment here and the commitment is bigger than just ourselves. We've got community out there, we've got family, and we've got social stereotypes. There are a whole lot of things that have impacted upon every Indigenous student's decision to study and gain their qualification, whether it's nursing or whatever, every student is making a huge statement in the bigger world saying, "I'm an Indigenous person, I can make it and I can cope along with anybody else".

Another student also appreciated the value of entering into a Heartprint Handwritten Contract, and said:

In the first year I thought about that contract that we'd written and I thought, to me that is like entering into a mortgage or buying a car because I'd actually written it on paper. By making that promise it was putting my family's reputation at risk by doing that. So if I didn't do that, I'm letting down my family, my tribe, my whole culture and that's not good enough.

This student has now proceeded to update their Heartprint Handwritten Contract to include matriculating into postgraduate studies at a Master's level (Stuart 2010).

The Cockatoo Alert

The Cockatoo Alert is a strategy which instigates a fully unified call for support for the Indigenous nursing student. It is activated when an Indigenous student is at risk of falling through the cracks or has expressed an intention to withdraw due to a myriad of pressures affecting their study. The Cockatoo Alert is sounded!!! It involves support from the three Indigenous nursing academics, fellow nursing academics within the department, CAIK student support staff, the ITAS tutor, mentors, other Indigenous nursing students and family of the at risk student. This alert status does not stop until the at-risk student is stabilised and progressing once again. When students resume their studies following the Cockatoo Alert, they say they did so because they understood that others cared about whether they succeeded or not, and this made them feel that people believed in them and wanted to see them succeed. The outcomes of the Cockatoo Alert have been excellent. However, at times the student at risk has needed to take leave of absence for a period of time. In this case, a re-activation plan is initiated by the Indigenous nursing academics and the student is monitored during their absence until they are back on track and progressing once again toward graduation.

Conclusion

The Helping Hands retention tool is an essential component of the USQ Nursing and Midwifery Department's work as national leaders in recruiting, training, educating and graduating Indigenous registered nurses. But for USQ, there is a lot of work still ahead in matriculating undergraduates into postgraduate studies and beyond. Omeri and Ahern (1999: 151) state that "very few Aboriginals ever reach a position where they can realistically consider education at a higher level". However, we have exceeded this expectation by now having the highest number of postgraduate Indigenous nursing enrolments nationally from undergraduate nursing to postgraduate studies. Indigenous nursing students are enrolled in undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Nursing Practice (Rural and Remote), Masters of Nursing, Masters of Mental Health, Masters of Midwifery and PhD.

The future predictions for enrolments over the next three years for Indigenous nurses at USQ are astronomical, and our ability to support and graduate these Indigenous students as registered nurses is evidenced by our 'deadly' blueprint of success. And so continues the USQ Dreaming Journey ...

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