

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



SCHOOL OF
SCIENCE



Indigenous Strategy

2022-2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

COVER IMAGE:
CHRIS EDWARDS
SWIMMY CREEK
MIXED MEDIA ON LATVIAN LINEN
100 CM X 145 CM
2010
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION
IMAGE REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF ARTIST

INTRODUCTION

The School of Science Indigenous Strategy 2022-25 reflects the School's commitment to building and strengthening our connections with First Nation Communities in Greater Western Sydney, across teaching, research, employment, and engagement. This Strategy supports the University's Indigenous Strategy 2022-2025, and details our initiatives over this period.

Indigenous peoples exemplify what Science is about – exploring, understanding and deriving solutions to challenges and complex problems. In Australia, our First Nation communities have thrived for tens of thousands of years through their understanding of astronomy, ecosystems, and sustainable management of our environment.

Through this Strategy, we aim to increase participation of Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students in Science; to develop and embed subject content to inform all students about Indigenous culture, and to form stronger collaboration with Indigenous Communities in Greater Western Sydney. We also aspire to increase Indigenous representation in our staffing profile across Indigenous Traineeships, academic employment, and Governance positions. We aim to offer Scholarships and Awards to both attract and encourage Indigenous participation within the School across Higher Degree Research and Early Career Researcher positions – creating a pathway from study to employment within the University.

The School of Science is wholly committed to delivering the initiatives detailed in this document, and would like to express its' appreciation to the School's Indigenous Advisory Committee, as well as Professors' Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page and Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews from the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, for their advice and contributions to this Strategy.

Associate Professor Gary Dennis
Interim Dean

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Provide opportunities for Indigenous Australian students to learn and succeed in an environment that promotes Indigenous excellence.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Continue to build the proportion of enrolled Indigenous domestic students in the School of Science. As of 2021, Indigenous enrolments are 1.72%, with an aim to increase to 3% in the next 4 years. Growth will be achieved by increasing engagement with Indigenous primary and high school students, providing them with unique hands-on science experiences that highlight the research and industry-linked strengths of the School of Science.
- 02** Develop and implement strategies to increase domestic Indigenous student retention. Strategies include the embedding of Indigenous student employability into undergraduate and postgraduate Science degrees through internship and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities for Indigenous students both within the School and with industry, and a pathway to industry-linked postgraduate research degrees via a new Advanced Science

degree with an integrated postgraduate program.

- 03** Establish an Indigenous Science student network within the School and provide Hubs on each campus for students to meet and connect. Provide opportunities to engage with other Indigenous student networks across the University.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

3% of all enrolled domestic students are Indigenous by 2025.

Established internship and WIL opportunities for Indigenous students with industry.

Established a multi-campus Indigenous Science student network.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Position Western Sydney University as a place of choice for Indigenous Australians to work in an environment that supports and nurtures their careers.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Build the proportion of Indigenous staff within the School to 3% over the next 4 years.
- 02** Appoint Indigenous identified academic staff and/or industry positions. This will be achieved through Indigenous Professional traineeships and the targeted appointment of academic positions in discipline areas including but not limited to: Environmental Health, Zoology, Animal Science and Ecology.
- 03** Ensure professional development opportunities, mentorship and support are available for Indigenous staff.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Employment population of Indigenous people in the School is increased to 3% by 2025.

Indigenous academic and/or industry positions are created within the School by 2025.

Two Indigenous Professional staff trainees are appointed by 2025.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

Develop the breadth and depth of Indigenous Research with a vision to promote research that empowers Indigenous Australians.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Build Indigenous research capacity and capability in staff, postdoctoral candidates and HDR students through workshops, and industry community and academic collaborations.
- 02** Promote the Indigenous Research Network within the School.
- 03** Support Indigenous applicants for HDR research through internal and industry scholarships.
- 04** Increase number of Indigenous HDR students and Postdoctoral candidates and develop strategies to ensure their success. Strategies include obtaining funding for scholarships for Indigenous candidates through competitive funding bodies, co-development of projects, progress tracking and mentoring for supervisors.
- 05** Engage Indigenous Elders and industry associates to advise and shape research foci within the School and cross-institutionally.

- 06** Establish an Indigenous Research Award in the School Awards program.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

At least three (3) Indigenous HDR students commenced within the School by 2025.

School staff contribute to Indigenous ERA and SDG rankings by 2025.

Three (3) Indigenous HDR Science student Scholarships co-funded by the School are established by 2025.

At least one (1) externally funded Indigenous Postdoctoral position is established by 2025.

Two (2) new Indigenous industry partnerships are established by 2025.

All grant applications for research projects on Indigenous topics have allocated funding to Indigenous HDR or Postdoctoral scholarships.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

Ensure all students develop understanding and knowledge about Indigenous Australians through the Graduate Attribute.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Introduce an Indigenous Learning and Teaching Award within the School.
- 02** Promote the Mangamai'bangawarra: Indigenous Science subject as a desirable elective in all Science programs.
- 03** Engage Indigenous industry experts and community members on external advisory committees to advise on curriculum design and delivery
- 04** Ensure Indigenous Knowledge is embedded in curriculum across all academic programs in the School
- 05** Develop an Indigenous Learning and Teaching workshop within the School to build capacity of academic staff.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

An Indigenous Learning and Teaching Award is established.

All students have the opportunity to engage with and learn from Indigenous Knowledge.

All academics have the opportunity to develop their understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and apply it to their teaching practice.

Teaching and Learning External Advisory Committees with Indigenous community and industry members are established.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FIVE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Promote Western Sydney University as a place that works with and for the Indigenous Australian community.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Establish partnerships with Indigenous industry and community to inform on and shape teaching, research and engagement practices within the School.
- 02** Promote and participate in Indigenous events across the University and broader community.
- 03** Develop a protocol for procurement of goods and services from Indigenous businesses
- 04** Improve methods of communication with Indigenous staff, students, alumni and community
- 05** Continued support and participation in Indigenous Engagement such as Heartbeat and Pathways to Dream.

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

There is at least one (1) external Indigenous industry or community member on panels for the assessment of research and teaching excellence.

The School work closely with the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education to improve communication across staff, students, alumni and community.

Indigenous Elders and community members are invited to speak at School events.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SIX

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Provide leadership opportunities for Indigenous Australians across staff, students and community throughout Western Sydney University.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Indigenous School Strategy Advisory Committee established to coordinate Indigenous strategic initiatives across the School.
- 02** Provide opportunities for Indigenous students to undertake leadership roles within the School.
- 03** Provide opportunities for Indigenous staff and students to undertake leadership roles

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Indigenous Advisory Committee meets at least four times a year.

There is increased student participation in leadership activities and roles.

There is Indigenous representation on School governance committees.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SEVEN

CULTURAL VIABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE

Build Indigenous viability and knowledge across Western Sydney University.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL ACTIONS

- 01** Incorporate visual Acknowledgement of Country identifiers within School areas across the University.
- 02** Ensure Acknowledgement of Country is performed at the start of each formal meeting and gathering within the School.
- 03** Ensure Acknowledgement of Country is performed in each unit at the start of each session.
- 04** Engage with Indigenous Elders and partners to inform Indigenous introduction to the School and campuses through art and storytelling

KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

Key School buildings on Hawkesbury, Parramatta and Campbelltown campuses include Indigenous artworks and multimedia projections relevant to students in high traffic areas.

Acknowledgement of Country performed at the beginning of formal meetings, gatherings, and each teaching session.

Acknowledgement of Country is included on all vUWS sites.

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