

Indigenous Strategy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the broader university community returned to campus in 2023 with renewed energy in delivering Macquarie University Indigenous Strategy 2016–2025 outcomes. One of this year's highlights was rebranding of the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy (Ngarra Nuru) to demonstrate the expansion of Indigenous presence across Macquarie University.

The University continues to achieve great success in Indigenous learning and teaching, and research. In 2023, we nearly doubled the number of offers and acceptances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into Undergraduate programs compared to previous years, with 125 new graduates accepting offers to commence study at Macquarie University.

NGARAMURU PROGRAM

The Ngaramuru Program – for Year 7 to Year 12 students, comprises a CLS certificate (Years 7–10), the Rising Stars Leadership Camp (Year 10), the Critical Thinking unit and an early entry program (Year 11), and Camp Aspire (Years 11–12). In 2023, the Rising Stars camp attracted 60 students, and Camp Aspire attracted 70 students, with over 50 per cent from regional, rural and remote regions.

We continue to witness students' transition from the Critical Thinking unit; for example, 60 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received an early offer – based on receiving a credit or above in Year 11, 2023 – accepted offers to study at Macquarie in 2025.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS SCIENCE EDUCATION PROGRAM (NISEP)

The National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP) uses science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to place Indigenous secondary school students in STEM leadership positions at school, in the community and at university events so they gain the confidence, motivation and skills to complete school and pursue pathways to higher education.

In 2023, we engaged with more than 1600 school students from regions of low-socioeconomic status through NISEP's core events involving about 100 Indigenous school students as NISEP leaders. Evaluations of NISEP student leaders identified

63 per cent had an increased interest in completing Year 11 and Year 12, 64 per cent in going on to higher education and 78 per cent in studying science – with over 90 per cent identifying greater confidence, valuing the experience and finding it good or inspiring.

WUYAGIBA STUDY HUB

Our collaboration with the Wuyagiba Study Hub continued in 2023. As celebrated in internal and external media coverage, Alawa woman Mel Wurramarrba-Andrews graduated in October and is our first student from the Wuyagiba Study Hub to graduate, completing a Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Primary Education. Further, Community Leaders, Elders Kevin and Helen Rogers were awarded Honorary Doctorates due to their work in setting up and supporting the program. Twenty two students completed the two micro credentials offered through a collaboration between Macquarie academics and community Elders and Knowledge holders. All students who completed Macquarie's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Entry Pathway and have received offers to commence their studies in 2024.

WALANGA MURU

In collaboration with faculties and departments across the University, Walanga Muru continued to offer opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to ensure a transformational student experience through a culturally affirming and intellectually engaging environment.

One highlight was our Indigenous Deadly Awards attended by more than 130 staff, students and friends, and sponsored by the Student Representative Committee. Awards were presented for academic achievement, outstanding community service, leadership, sports, and creative arts. An overall 'Deadly Award' was also presented.

In 2023, 21 Indigenous higher degree research (HDR) students and staff from Macquarie Universities Indigenous Studies department attended a study tour in Wellington, Aotearoa (New Zealand) for a week with Māori scholars and HDR students. Students were inspired by this opportunity and emerged with an invigorated sense of determination towards their studies and future pathways, and with important networks.

A Final Year Indigenous Student Engagement role was established with a dedicated part of this role to focus on employability of students as they enter their final year of study. Many of our students seek roles that support community which align to national skill shortages, including in the health and community services spaces.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy) and the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) offered Indigenous Learning and Teaching Grants, a total of \$100,000, to encourage the development and delivery of innovative and engaging Indigenous curriculum. Project outcomes were presented at a symposium in November, 2023.

A suite of Manawari Cultural Awareness Training programs has been developed, with more than 2000 staff undertaking the training online and in person. In 2023, Manawari Corporate Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training was also offered to industry partners. An increase in the number of industry partners has resulted in exciting opportunities, including cadetships and scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Indigenous research collaborations and other customised programs.

Macquarie's Department of Indigenous Studies and the Centre for Global Indigenous Futures continued to undertake nationally and internationally recognised scholarships in learning and teaching, and research. Special articles were published in the Journal of Global Indigeneity, and new partnerships were developed with Indigenous international scholars. Distinguished Professor Bronwyn Carlson is the Chief Investigator and Deputy Director of the newly successful Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Monash University leads the centre with six other universities and 47 partner organisations.

Through the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy) work to progress industry partnerships continues with an agreement with Optus drafted that will provide ongoing cadetships and considerable other employability opportunities to Indigenous students. A partnership MOU is in place with Organon including student cadetships. Thales is offering workshops to our Indigenous students each session to provide resume, LinkedIn and interview skills.

An Industry Connect Program pilot is underway for Indigenous Year 12 Students to connect them to an industry of choice. It is an extension of the Critical Thinking Unit (CTU) currently offered to Year 11 & 12 students. The aim is to give students a better understanding of the organisation and when they transition into their degree, they become a cadet.

A free microcredential – An Indigenous Voice to Parliament was developed for staff, students, Industry partners, and the wider community, and was launched during NAIDOC week. The aim of the module was to provide a concise overview of the historical context that has brought us to a referendum, to explain the arguments presented by both sides of the debate, and to promote respectful discussion. The module is educational only and does not endorse a specific agenda or decision. The Module saw over 3500 enrolments from July to October.

Macquarie University farewelled Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy, Leanne Holt. Leanne contributed much to the Indigenous students, staff and community across the University and will be sorely missed. We wish Leanne well in her future endeavours.