

LEAP! (Learning, Education, Aspiration, Participation)

WIDENING PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2018–2023





PHOTOS: All photos by Chris Stacey unless otherwise noted.

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor

Education is transformational. It empowers us to strive and make our dreams realities. As a rural student growing up in Ivanhoe and Dubbo on the Western Plains of New South Wales, my education helped me to realise my potential.

Quite simply, my education has taken me around the world. As Vice-Chancellor of this very special university I remain wholeheartedly committed to diversity as one of our most important organising principles. Our strength at Macquarie lies in our diversity. We have always sought to target great minds, regardless of their background. Through our approach to widening participation we actively seek to attract and support new students who would not otherwise have access to higher education. These students benefit from this opportunity for the rest of their lives, but all of us here at Macquarie are also beneficiaries. Quality education is best achieved when students come from diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities, classes and genders. Further, our diverse student cohort helps sustain our teaching and research.

Finally, widening participation serves an important national purpose. It is a major factor in facilitating social inclusion for individuals and society as a whole. It leads to greater national competitiveness; social justice; societal inclusion and equity; employment opportunities; increased earnings; improved health outcomes, living conditions and life expectancy; and greater community engagement. Ultimately it helps make us better citizens who live in better communities.

The Macquarie University Widening Participation Framework sets out our vision for coming years. Please join us to help us make our dreams realities.

Professor S Bruce Dowton
VICE-CHANCELLOR



Message from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Macquarie University has always defied the traditional boundaries of academia – founded as an alternative to the classical pattern of higher education as it existed in the early 1960s. Indeed, one of our founders was insistent: Macquarie would open university education to those denied it and to those who had never dreamed of it.

More than 50 years later, Macquarie remains a nurturing culture where our students are openly encouraged to be the best they can be. A culture where working together, seizing new opportunities, and connecting with the most diverse people and perspectives to effect real change is supported.

This attitude can be clearly seen in our commitment to widening participation, where we seek to nurture in our students a remarkable sense of hopefulness and confidence that life is full of possibilities, no matter their background or their financial status.

We have a strong reputation for our work with refugees and asylum seekers, have enviable networks within rural and remote communities, and we're currently experiencing increasing participation from diverse elements of the community.

While our successes are to be commended, more can always be accomplished. And so, backed by this strategic framework and its accompanying implementation plan, we seek to achieve institutional change in the widening participation space that is both coordinated and sustainable.

In meeting our ambitions for widening participation, we will realise the vision of Macquarie's founders, forged by today's staff and students, and reinvigorated for future generations.

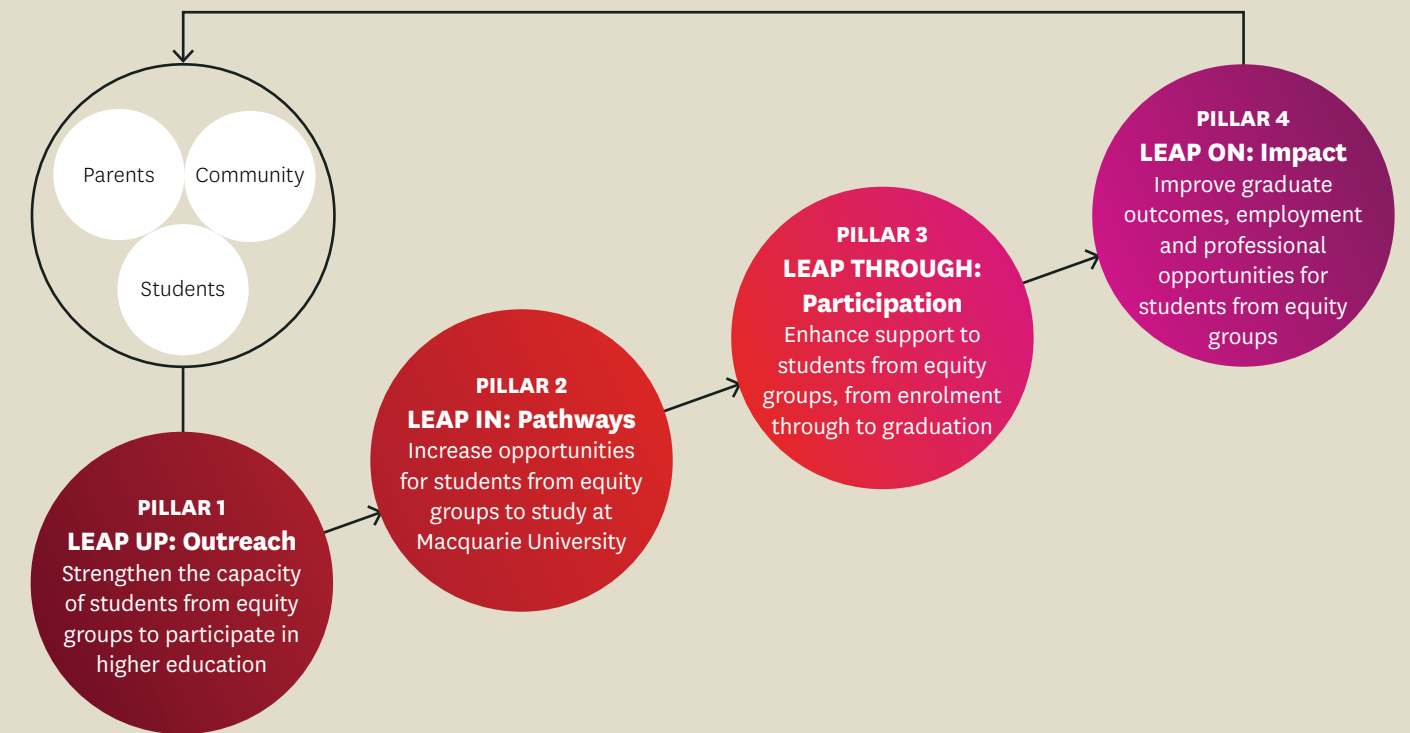
Professor Kevin Jameson
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)



‘Everyone has the right to education
... higher education shall be equally
accessible to all on the basis of merit’
Article 26, Universal Declaration
of Human Rights



Introduction



The term, widening participation, is used around the world to describe initiatives that support students from groups that have long been under-represented in higher education. Widening participation strategies seek to attract such students to university and then provide the necessary support to ensure they are successful.

The issue of access to a higher educational experience which is both affordable and worthwhile is not only a challenge for poorer countries. Wealthy countries also need to confront the growing inequality and as governments withdraw from the funding of public higher education a greater burden falls upon those who wish to study.

Attracting students from a wide range of economic, social, cultural and educational backgrounds has been a long-term ambition of the Australian Government and the university sector (Parker and Gale 2013).

As a university of service and engagement that aspires to be a destination of choice for students who share our values and who want to contribute towards a better world, widening participation is a core element of Macquarie’s strategic direction and demonstrates our commitment to inclusiveness and to offering experiences that change the lives of our students. We seek to create opportunities for those who have previously been denied opportunity and we affirm that what matters is where a student finishes, not where they start.

Our University: A Framing of Futures identifies our enduring commitment to provide opportunities for students from diverse and varied cohorts. Strategic Priority 3, which aligns the nature and size of the University for the future,

notes: ‘our focus will be on building on our commitment to inclusiveness through targeted and sustainable collaborative programs.’ (Macquarie University 2013, p 15.) Such a focus sits at the heart of this strategic framework.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines socio-economic advantage or disadvantage in people’s access to material and social resources, as well as their ability to participate in society. Government initiatives to increase participation in higher education by students who experience socio-economic disadvantage are based on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD), one of the ABS’s Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). People in the lowest quartile are identified as having low socio-economic status (low SES).

Macquarie’s historical performance in this space is shown in table 1 below. While the data over the period 2011–15 shows

TABLE 1 Proportion of total cohort of domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds, full-year data 2011 and 2016

University student cohort	2011 (%)	2016 (%)
Nationally	16.8	16.0
NSW	17.8	16.9
Group of Eight	10.6	8.8
Macquarie University	7.0	9.2

Source: Department of Education and Training (2017)

improvement, we still have much work to do. This strategic framework, with its ambition to develop a coordinated and sustainable approach to widening participation, will help realise our ambition to further increase representation at Macquarie from our identified equity groups.

The ultimate ambition of any widening participation strategy in the higher education sector is to encourage individuals who come from identified equity groups to enrol in and successfully complete a tertiary education program of study. We will seek to ensure this ambition through the implementation of a strategy that aims to increase the enrolment, retention and success of students from our equity groups.

SERVING THE NEEDS OF EQUITY GROUPS

Macquarie University serves the needs of the following equity groups:

- students from low SES backgrounds
- students from humanitarian backgrounds (refugees and asylum seekers)
- students from regional and remote areas
- students with disability
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- women in non-traditional areas of study in higher education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

As Indigenous students are recognised as an equity group, the strategic framework and its implementation does engage with aspects of Indigenous access, participation and

success. This said, a more nuanced and detailed approach to Indigenous disadvantage and Macquarie’s approach to the issue is outlined in our comprehensive *Macquarie University Indigenous Strategy 2016–2025*.

In recent years, Macquarie University’s Office of Widening Participation (WP@MQ) has enjoyed significant community success and recognition through our ‘LEAP’ programs. LEAP stands for ‘Learning, Education, Aspiration, Participation’ We have taken this popular acronym associated with our activities and applied it to the identification of the four pillars which underpin this strategy framework (see above figure).

With a strong commitment to meeting the needs of our equity groups by being collaborative and socially responsive, LEAP will take a whole of institution life-cycle approach to widening participation at Macquarie University. While the Widening Participation function is a small team reporting to the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways), the ultimate success of WP@MQ and its function relies on the support of our internal and external stakeholders and partners. We celebrate the continuing support we receive from our current partners and look forward to building new relationships and partnerships over the life of the strategy.

Bonnie Faulkner
MANAGER, WP PATHWAYS

Professor Sean Brawley
INTERIM PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (PROGRAMS AND PATHWAYS)

Sonal Singh
MANAGER, WP PLANNING

In 2008 the Bradley Report (2008, p. xi) pointed out that Australia was ‘losing ground’ in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rankings with regard to the proportion of the population holding higher education qualifications.

Change for good

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments set the target that by 2025 40 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds should hold at least a bachelor degree (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009).

To achieve such an outcome, Australian universities were compelled to increase their engagement with the wider Australian community (Parker and Gale 2013). Such an approach was strongly endorsed by the Commonwealth through the setting of another national target. This target sought to see Australians from low SES backgrounds representing 20 per cent of the student population at university by 2020. Simply getting low SES students into the system, however, was only the first step. Further, the Commonwealth desired that these students would enjoy a completion rate that was at least 95 per cent of the rate for high SES students (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009).

Such ambitions for the nation pose significant challenges for Australian universities. There is a strong correlation between social background and educational achievement. Despite a commonly held view that equal opportunity exists in Australia, research by the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has shown that student background has a stronger impact on educational attainment in Australia than any other OECD country (Gonski et al. 2011). Students from low SES backgrounds remain under-represented in Australian higher education and their retention and success rates remain a source of concern (see table 2 at right).

To support the sector’s work attracting and retaining low SES students, the Australian Government created the Higher

Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) in 2010. HEPPP continues to dominate sector spending in the widening participation space. As part of its 2017–18 educational reforms, the Australian Government planned to alter HEPPP but after the failure of the general reform package in the Senate in late 2017, it was announced via the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) statement of 18 December 2017 that Government would no longer be proceeding with proposed changes to the structure of HEPPP and that the level of funding would be maintained at previous levels. The forward estimates for the HEPPP budget from 2017–18 to 2020–21 is currently set at \$592.2 million. Since 2010, Macquarie has received nearly \$19 million in HEPPP funding based on a formula informed by the number of students enrolled from low SES backgrounds. In 2018, Macquarie’s allocation rose modestly from \$2 598 977 to \$2 711 408.

In 2008, Macquarie University Council endorsed the *Strategic Directions 2008–2012* document. Within the document was a clearly stated commitment to social inclusion. In response to the new HEPPP scheme, the Macquarie University Outreach Strategy 2011–14 was developed. Included in this strategy was creation of a dedicated Widening Participation Unit to lead the University’s efforts in this space.

Since 2011, *WP@MQ* has enjoyed some success. In the outreach space we have engaged with 37, 922 school students from low SES backgrounds including those in regional and remote areas and from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

TABLE 2 Participation, retention and success rates for domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds, full-year data 2014 (retention) and 2015 (participation and success)

University student cohort	Nationally	NSW (%)	Sydney (%)	Group of Eight (%)	Macquarie University (%)
Participation rate ¹ for domestic undergraduate low SES students	17.7	17.9	13.4	10.5	8.6
Retention rate ² for domestic undergraduate low SES students	78.2	80.2	84.8	86.2	81.8
Retention rate for all domestic undergraduate students	84.4	86.9	91.3	92.6	90.0
Difference between all students and low SES students	6.2	6.7	6.5	6.4	8.2
Success rate ³ for domestic undergraduate low SES students	82.9	83.1	86.1	88.7	81.0
Success rate for all domestic undergraduate students	83.7	84.4	86.6	89.4	83.8
Difference between all students and low SES students	0.8	1.3	0.5	0.7	2.8

Source: Department of Education and Training (2016)

¹ Students from low SES backgrounds as a percentage of total domestic undergraduate student cohort

² Students who commenced but did not complete a bachelor course in 2014, and continued in 2015, as a percentage of all students who commenced but did not complete a bachelor course in 2014

³ Percentage of actual student load for units of study that are passed divided by all units of study attempted (passed + failed + withdrawn)

Summary of milestones in equity policy in higher education, 1988–2009

1988

HIGHER EDUCATION: A POLICY STATEMENT (WHITE PAPER)

Released by the Minister for Education, the Hon. John Dawkins MP, the paper stated that the Australian Government intended to promote greater equity in higher education by developing a national overview of equity problems; developing national objectives; facilitating the identification, implementation and monitoring of progress towards institutional equity goals; providing additional funds for equity programs; guiding institutions; and reviewing Commonwealth programs.

1994

EQUITY AND GENERAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ('MARTIN INDICATORS') IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Included the development of operational definitions of the six equity groups described in 'A Fair Chance for All' and the creation of indicators used to monitor the performance of these equity groups (access, participation, success and retention).

2003

BACKING AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

Introduced a range of new equity-related funding streams and programs including scholarship programs, the Indigenous Support Fund and the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council.

1990

'A FAIR CHANCE FOR ALL'

This discussion paper defined the overall national equity objective for higher education, identified six equity groups requiring particular support, set national equity objectives and targets for each of these groups, presented a range of strategies to assist institutions and set out the responsibilities of the Commonwealth and institutions.

1996

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND EXCELLENCE: ADVANCING THE NATIONAL EDUCATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Report requested by then Minister for Employment, Education and Training (the Hon. Simon Crean MP) to assess progress towards 'A Fair Chance for All'. The report set out 26 recommendations but a change of government impacted on implementation.

2008

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Australian Government initiated a review of higher education ('Bradley Review') to examine the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting community and economic needs, and the options for ongoing reform. The Bradley Review was conducted by an independent expert panel, led by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC. The government's response was Transforming Australia's Higher Education System.

1991

REPORT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS RESEARCH GROUP

Established in 1989, the Higher Education Performance Indicators Research Group reported that the collection and analysis of data required to generate indicators should be undertaken by the Commonwealth in cooperation with higher education institutions, and that the indicators should be published annually.

2002

CROSSROADS REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The review's main finding for equity policy was that students from disadvantaged backgrounds remained under-represented in higher education. Led to a package of policy reforms announced by then Minister for Education, Science and Training, The Hon. Brendan Nelson MP.

2009

TRANSFORMING AUSTRALIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

As part of the 2009 Budget, the Australian Government announced it would provide an additional \$5.4 billion over four years in a comprehensive response to the Bradley Review, with reforms to impact on the scale, potential and quality of the nation's universities. The reforms put participation in the centre, with an equity target for 20 per cent of higher education enrolments at the undergraduate level to be from people of low SES background by 2020.

The conversion of such outreach⁴ activities to actual participation in university is the big challenge. Currently, five indicators are frequently used to track change in outcomes for equity groups:

1. ACCESS

The number of equity group students commencing university as a proportion of all commencing domestic undergraduate students.

2. PARTICIPATION

The number of equity group students enrolled as a proportion of all domestic undergraduate students enrolled.

3. RETENTION

The number of equity group students re-enrolling at an institution in a given year as a proportion of the domestic undergraduate students who were enrolled in the previous year, minus those students who have completed their course.

4. SUCCESS

For the equity group, the number of units passed within a year as a proportion of the total units in which they were enrolled.

5. COMPLETIONS

The number of students in an equity group who complete a program in a given year as a percentage of completions by all domestic undergraduate students.

The participation of students from identified equity groups has increased at Macquarie University over the past six years (as shown in table 3, page 12). The rates of growth have been healthy.

However, lest too rosy a picture of our efforts be painted, we are acutely aware that while certain programs have enjoyed great success (and local and national recognition) we still have work to do.

Student equity groups as a proportion of the MQ student undergraduate population are shown in table 4 (page 12).

⁴ Outreach: primary objective of the outreach activity is to increase access to higher education for students from equity groups

Since 2011, the key challenges for Macquarie in the WP space have been:

- providing sustained student access with short-term funding
- dealing with the inefficiencies that impede program effectiveness due to the current Commonwealth funding model
- discontinuities in staff produced by staff turnover as a consequence of project-based 'soft money' funding
- leveraging our recruitment activities from outreach opportunities.

Addressing these challenges is the main focus of the strategic framework and speaks to two main approaches.

1. REALISING GREATER INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

The wealth of our reputational credentials, hard-earned across our many and varied individual engagements, is neither capitalised on nor leveraged far beyond specific partnerships.

We can do more to build our reputation in this space both within and beyond Macquarie University.

With a stronger focus on coordination, the success enjoyed by any stakeholder will be celebrated by all partners. At the centre of our new approach is better integration of our activities that builds enduring relationships with all stakeholders.

2. REALISING GREATER INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE WP SPACE

The current funding model works against the development of a sustainable vision for the space.

HEPPP funding is both a blessing and a curse for the WP function at Macquarie. It is a blessing because the funds over the last eight years have allowed us to embark on a range of activities that have benefitted students, the University and the broader community. It remains a curse, however, because this annually allocated Australian Government 'soft money' distorts our ambition and scope.

It is well documented that long-term community engagement in the widening participation space requires sustained and consistent resourcing (Thomas 2005; Reed, King & Whiteford 2014). Staffing is a central concern in this regard.

The need to invest in qualified staff was acknowledged by the Executive's actions in late 2016, when it converted three staff to continuing roles. Aligned with this strategic plan is the advocacy of the PVC (P&P) to secure greater employment certainty for the staff of the WP team.

Greater employment certainty for staff in the WP unit will aid the successful realisation of this strategic framework.

In 2016, a Widening Participation Strategic Framework green paper was developed and endorsed by the University Executive Group. However, a range of internal and external pressures and events brought an organisational structural change to WP@MQ in 2017. This change provided an opportunity to re-examine the framework in an environment very different from that in which the document had been created.

Rather than simply develop an implementation plan for the framework, it was decided to revisit the strategic framework itself to test whether it remained fit for purpose. While many aspects of the framework remained viable and the basic direction of the strategy remained sound, it was decided that the opportunity existed to reconsider aspects of the framework.

In summary, the current higher education landscape is filled with uncertainty and the fiscal environment requires a coordinated, effective and efficient approach towards widening participation.

This strategic framework sets out how we will improve coordination of our activities and thereby reduce duplication of activities and align specialised skills and activities from across the campus.

Through a more sustainable approach to resourcing we will escape the HEPPP straightjacket and be able to better expand our focus beyond the outreach pillar of our vision. This will be achieved through efficient service delivery that is both innovative and adaptive.

The essence of this strategic document therefore is straightforward. With better coordination and a more sustainable funding model, we can build a more inclusive University.

TABLE 3 Equity group participation at Macquarie University, 2011 and 2016

Equity group	Students 2011	Students 2016	% change
Low SES	979	2366	+142
Regional/remote	648	1379	+112
Disability	631	1879	+197
Indigenous	136	274	+100

Source: Department of Education and Training (2016)

TABLE 4 Equity Groups as a proportion of the total student undergraduate population at Macquarie University, 2011 and 2016

Equity group	Students 2011 (%)	Students 2016 (\$)	% change over 6 years
Low SES	6.4	9.1	+2.7
Regional/remote	4.1	7.2	+3.1
Disability	4.2	5.3	+1.1
Indigenous	0.9	1.05	+0.5

Source: Department of Education and Training (2016)





Macquarie University's new approach to widening participation will be underpinned by the implementation of a new compact model.

The MQ WP Compact Model

A NEW APPROACH TO WIDENING PARTICIPATION

All existing and new partnerships will be forged through the completion of compacts. These compacts will be either one year (for pilot trials) or three years for existing activities or pilots that have been evaluated as successful. The new approach seeks to provide greater certainty for the continuation of WP activities at Macquarie through an expressed commitment by internal and external partners to develop and support the initiative.

For internal stakeholders, the first three-year cycle will see the financial contribution to the project increase each year until it reaches a 50/50 split with *WP@MQ* in Year 3. Such an approach will offer greater financial stability for WP activities at Macquarie and also ensure sustained stakeholder engagement. Further, internal partners will be able to more readily mainstream their support of WP activities and factor this support into future budget planning. Finally, the approach will free funds (be they HEPPP or otherwise) that can be utilised to support new initiatives.

The widening participation strategy provides a framework for action across our University community.

Objectives and principles

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



SUSTAINABILITY

Widening participation activities will be embedded within and across the University as part of our core business so that they are not jeopardised by short-term and uncertain funding cycles.

COORDINATION

WP@MQ will lead a coordinated approach to activities across the four pillars. It will unite multiple internal and external partners and their activities to ensure that resources are potentiated, rather than duplicated.

This new approach to widening participation will be underpinned by four principles.

COLLABORATION

Working in partnership with a diverse range of internal and external partners is pivotal to the success of activities that support students from equity groups.

AGENCY

Students from equity groups will be supported and encouraged to participate as co-creators of widening participation activities. All activities will incorporate the student voice in their design, operation and evaluation.

BEST PRACTICE

All projects/initiatives will be evidence based, drawing upon international research and best practice with robust evaluation and reporting mechanisms. Ongoing review of projects/initiatives will ensure that continuous quality improvement is embedded within them.

AGILITY

Activities will be agile and proactive in responding to changes within the sector and equity landscape, including identifying and meeting the needs of emerging equity cohorts.

The establishment of a WP Guidance Committee chaired by the PVC (P&P) will play an integral role in ensuring that widening participation activities across the University are aligned with our guiding principles. With representation from a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders, the committee will by its very nature encourage collaboration and coordination across the University. A business case (benefits and cost) of WP activities will be developed in consultation with internal and external partners to appropriately fund the initiatives.

A sustainable and coordinated approach to widening participation, underpinned by our guiding principles, will enable us to work towards achieving Macquarie University's overall commitment towards inclusivity.



Key indicators and strategies 2018–2023

	PILLAR 1 LEAP UP: Outreach	PILLAR 2 LEAP IN: Pathways	PILLAR 3 LEAP THROUGH: Participation	PILLAR 4 LEAP ON: Impact
Objective	Strengthen the capacity of students from equity groups to participate in higher education	Increase opportunities for students from equity groups to study at Macquarie University	Enhance support to students from equity groups, from enrolment through to graduation	Improve graduate outcomes, employment and professional opportunities for students from equity groups
Goal A	Build awareness of and broaden aspirations around higher education study for students from equity groups	Provide opportunities for equity groups to access University through our diverse range of admission pathways	Provide targeted and appropriate transition support to University life for students from equity groups	Enhance employability of students from equity groups by providing mentoring and professional development opportunities
Goal B	Establish Macquarie University as a study destination of choice among students from equity groups, their families/carers, teachers and communities	Provide a range of support services (including scholarships and financial support) to students from equity groups, their families/carers, teachers and communities	Synchronise the effective delivery of a range of University support services available to students from equity groups to foster their sense of belonging and maximise their potential for success	Encourage student lifelong learning and continuous engagement with Macquarie University for students from equity groups

‘I’d never really thought about university, but after working with the mentors and learning about Macquarie Uni, I’m keen to try and do something at university.’

Year 12 high school student from low SES background

‘I have noticed a dramatic change in perception of the whole school community who now see Indigenous students as academic role models within the school.’

Deputy principal of participating low SES school

PILLAR 1

LEAP UP: Outreach

Strengthen the capacity of students from equity groups to participate in higher education

Widening participation programs engage people who have traditionally not considered university study, building awareness, informing aspirations and supporting students in overcoming the particular barriers to education that they may face because of their backgrounds.

These programs are in many cases a prerequisite to competitive marketing and recruitment activities that aim to promote the benefits of a particular institution to people who are already actively considering tertiary study.

This strategy builds on our successful LEAP programs and partnerships that support students from refugee backgrounds and those from regional and remote areas of New South Wales. Further work in this space is conducted by Walanga Muru through its Rising Stars program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We will continue to engage with these groups and expand support to other cohorts of low SES students.

OVERARCHING KPIS

- Increased profile of Macquarie University as a university of choice and opportunity
- Increased applications and enrolments from equity group students engaged in outreach programs
- Increased partnership networks
- Continuity and increased depth of partnerships that add mutual value to engagement strategies and programs
- Positive evaluation outcomes
- Positive growth to Macquarie University widening participation outreach activities
- Increased measurable reach and depth of media communications
- Increased parent and community engagement with Macquarie University outreach programs
- Contribution to sector growth and increased participation of equity groups in higher education

GOAL A

Build awareness of and broaden aspirations around higher education study for students from equity groups

Strategy

P1.A1 & P1.B1

Better coordination of outreach activities across the enterprise

P1.A2 & P1.B2

Launch Macquarie University ROADS initiative after successful pilot

P1.B3

Develop Macquarie University WP branding and marketing plan that aligns with current Macquarie University initiatives

GOAL B

Establish Macquarie University as a study destination of choice among students from equity groups, their families/carers, teachers and communities

Strategy

P1.B1

Strengthen existing internal and external partnerships and develop new collaborative alliances through a compact model

‘Having the scholarship meant I didn’t have to work 24/7 but instead I could study. It’s the value that is beyond money.’

First-year Macquarie University Finance student

‘There are so many pathways I didn’t know about, this information made me realise I can go to university. I can dream and achieve my dreams. I am now enrolled into the Degree Program, thank you helping us help ourselves.’

Macquarie University Diploma of Engineering graduate and current degree student

PILLAR 2

LEAP IN: Pathways

Increase opportunities for students from equity groups to study at Macquarie University

Access to higher education cannot be enabled by financial assistance alone, and Macquarie is committed to encouraging and shaping the minds of students to seek unconventional paths to reach their full potential (Macquarie University 2015, p. 17). Pathways to study at Macquarie will reflect the diverse backgrounds of our future students.

OVERARCHING KPIS

- Increased profile identity of Macquarie University as the university of choice and opportunity
- Increased measure of Macquarie University applications from students from equity groups
- Effective transition support to prepare students with appropriate understanding of the academic and non-academic support, as well as expectations, they will encounter in higher education
- Increased student awareness of alternative entry paths to Macquarie University

GOAL A Provide opportunities for students from equity groups to access University through our diverse range of admission pathways

Strategy

P2.A1

Ensure Macquarie University admission pathways are aligned with the needs of equity groups

P2.A2

Develop Macquarie University WP branding and marketing plan that aligns with current Macquarie University initiatives

P2.A3

Identify and strengthen cross-portfolio partnerships to effectively support students from our equity groups

P2.A4

Facilitate transition support to university for our equity groups

P2.A5

Through liaison, explore MUIC as a pathway for WP

GOAL B Provide a range of support services (including scholarships and financial support) to students from equity groups, their families/carers, teachers and communities

Strategy

P2.B1

Develop targeted scholarships/funding support to equity group students, based on a range of criteria measuring disadvantage

P2.B2

WP@MQ to take on a more active leadership role within the widening participation sector

‘The program has provided opportunities for participants to build their social and professional networks and develop connections. This in turn has led to a sense of belonging and a confirmation of personal goals.’

Third-year Macquarie University IT student

‘There are support services on campus that we didn’t know existed. I was surprised when I heard about the level of support available for students. I wish I knew this in my first year. I am now attending workshops and getting the academic support for my studies.’

Second-year Macquarie Education student

PILLAR 3

LEAP THROUGH: Participation

Enhance support to students from equity groups from enrolment through to graduation

Supporting students to succeed in their learning journey is one of our biggest priorities. Providing student support services is important for reducing attrition due to personal or financial hardship and for enhancing student wellbeing, skill development and overall engagement with the University.

Macquarie has a range of excellent support services but we need to ensure that the students who most need our services access them and that we provide the best possible support for all our students.

OVERARCHING KPIS

- Increased student participation in support activities
- Increased participation in student support networks
- Increased referrals between WP and internal as well as external support services
- Increased instances of support to students from equity groups
- Increased staff participation in related professional development activities
- Improved academic performance of students from equity groups
- Improved retention and success rates for students from equity groups
- Increased research funding
- Increased presence of Macquarie University in sectoral research and advocacy activities

GOAL A Provide targeted and appropriate transition support to University life for students from equity groups

Strategy

P3.A1
Embed transition in program-specific curriculum delivery

P3.A2
Develop a range of training packages that meet the needs of all frontline professional and academic staff

P3.A3
Strengthen existing internal and external partnerships with support services through a compact approach that develops new collaborative alliances

P3.A4
Develop a suite of targeted engagement initiatives to secure student engagement and success

P3.A5
Recruit a WP HEPPP/RO funded 3-year postdoctoral research fellowship

P3.A6
Ensure programs are evidence-based and reflect sector best practice

GOAL B Synchronise the effective delivery of a range of University support services available to students from equity groups to foster their sense of belonging and maximise their potential for success

Strategy

P3.B1
Ensure appropriate levels of academic support for students from our equity groups

P3.B2
Develop a range of support services, materials and opportunities to support student learning and wellbeing

‘I just got the full-time job I was applying for. Thank you for all your help. I want to continue my connections with the university.’

Macquarie University Law graduate

‘I have been going back to my high school and working with them to set up a program for young girls interested in studying journalism. Giving back to my school where my journey started is one of my goals.’

Macquarie University Media Studies graduate

PILLAR 4

LEAP ON: Impact

Improve graduate outcomes, employment and professional opportunities to students from equity groups

Universities are increasingly being measured on their graduate employment outcomes. The focus of federally funded widening participation activities nationally has been broadened to include programs that offer additional support to students from low SES backgrounds to be able to compete effectively in the marketplace.

Also, students from low SES backgrounds remain extremely under-represented in postgraduate coursework degrees and in higher degree research.

OVERARCHING KPIS

- Increased completion rate for students from equity groups
- Increased collaboration with internal and external stakeholders
- Increased external partnerships
- Increased number of students from equity groups progressing to postgraduate study
- Macquarie University identified by students and external stakeholders as a university for quality equity graduates

GOAL A

Enhance employability of students from equity groups by providing mentoring and professional development opportunities

GOAL B

Encourage student lifelong learning and continuous engagement with Macquarie University for students from equity groups

Strategy

P4.A1 & P4.B1

Develop and implement networks with our alumni and corporate partners to better prepare and connect students from equity groups for post-university transition



Implementation plan

The implementation plan shows how this strategic framework will be operationalised over the next few years.

The plan shows the pillars with new and continuing activities aligning with the strategies. It also identifies the current inhibitors, sets activity KPIs and leads, lists stakeholders and timings.

The implementation plan is the first of two operational documents that will be associated with this strategic framework. The first implementation plan will cover 2018-2020.



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Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
DVCA	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
HR	Human Resources
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage
LEAP	Learning, Education, Aspiration, Participation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MQ ROADS	Macquarie University ROADS program
MUIC	Macquarie University International College
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
PACE	Professional and Community Engagement
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PVC (LT)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
PVC (P&P)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways)
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	Socio-Economic Status
WP@MQ	Office of Widening Participation





MACQUARIE
University

Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia

T: +61 (2) 9850 7111

mq.edu.au/widening-participation

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