

Indigenous Student Success Program 2021 Financial Acquittal

Organisation

La Trobe University

1. Financials – income and expenditure

Table 1a ISSP income available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)¹

| Item | (\$) |
|--|--------------------|
| A. ISSP Grant | |
| ISSP Grant 2021 (flexible component) | \$1,520,126 |
| ISSP Grant 2021 for preserved scholarships | \$0 |
| Subtotal ISSP Grant 2021 | |
| B. Other ISSP Related Income | |
| Rollover of ISSP funds from 2020 (and earlier years) | \$254,514 |
| ICECS preserved scholarships | \$2,992 |
| Interest earned/royalties from ISSP funding ² | |
| <i>If no interest has been earned briefly state why</i> | |
| Sale of ISSP assets | |
| Subtotal other ISSP related income | |
| Grand total for 2021 | \$1,777,632 |

Table 1b Other funding available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)³

| Item | (\$) |
|---|------|
| A. Other non-ISSP funds⁴ | |
| Other funding provided under HESA ⁵ | |
| Other Commonwealth Government funding | |
| ATO cash flow boost voluntarily allocated by you to this activity | |
| Funds derived from external sources ⁶ | |
| Total of other non-ISSP funds for 2021 | |

Table 1c Expenditure on support for Indigenous students during 2021 (excluding GST)⁷

| Item ⁸ | Actual ISSP (\$) ⁹ | Estimate other funds (\$) ¹⁰ | TOTAL (\$) ¹¹ |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Preserved scholarships | | | |
| Scholarships from flexible ISSP funding | \$188,842 | \$0 | \$188,842 |
| Salaries for staff working on ISSP activities (excluding JobKeeper payments) ¹² | \$726,012 | \$543,973 | \$1,269,985 |
| Tutorial Assistance, Pastoral Care, Outreach activities, cultural competency strategies etc (non-salary components) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Travel – domestic (airfares, accommodation & meals) | \$1,527 | \$1,866 | \$3,393 |
| Travel – international (airfares) ¹³ | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Travel – international (accommodation and meals) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Conference fees and related costs ¹⁴ | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| ISSP Asset purchases made during 2021 ¹⁵ | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Other (including other ATO cash flow boost expenditure not included in above figures) | \$332,122 | \$9,884 | \$342,006 |
| A. Total Expenditure 2021 | \$1,248,503 | \$555,723 | \$1,804,226 |
| B. Unexpended 2020 ISSP funds approved for rollover into 2021 & 2022 grant year¹⁶ | \$254,514 | | |
| C. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – flexible component | \$271,623 | | |
| D. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – preserved scholarships | \$2,992 | | |
| 2021 ISSP funding committed (A + B + C +D)¹⁷ | \$1,777,632 | | |

For NIAA information only

JobKeeper payment/s received and expended on this activity (value \$)

2. Rollovers

Table 2 Rollovers ¹⁸

| | Rolled over (\$) (A) | Expended/committed ¹⁹ (\$) (B) | Excess to be returned to the NIAA ²⁰ (\$) (C) (C = A – B) |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
| 2019 funds rolled over into 2021 | | | |
| 2019 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable) | | | |
| 2020 funds rolled over into 2021 | \$254,514 | | |
| ICECS preserved scholarships) | \$2,992 | | |
| 2020 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable) | | | |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|--|--|
| 2021 funds approved for roll over into 2022 | \$271,623 | | |
|---|-----------|--|--|

Please provide details of rollovers outlined in Table 2:

- The grants approved and the expenditure of 2019 ISSP funds rolled over into 2021.
- The grants approved and the expenditure of 2020 ISSP funds rolled over to 2021

[Please delete this box if no roll-over was approved]

3. Goods and Services Tax

Table 3 Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January – 31 December 2021²¹

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. GST received by you in 2021 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Program funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> ²² | \$ |
| 2. GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below) | \$ |
| Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / / | Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / / |
| | Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / / |

4. ISSP Assets

Table 4a ISSP Assets inventory²³

| Asset Description/ category | Adjustable Value ²⁴ | ISSP contribution ²⁵ |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

Table 4b ISSP Assets - purchases during 2021²⁶

| Asset Description/ category | Purchase Value | ISSP contribution |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

Table 4c ISSP Assets - disposals during 2021

| Asset Description/ category | Adjustable value | Disposals/ Sale Price ²⁷ | ISSP component ²⁸ | Disposals Age ²⁹ |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

5. Endorsement of the Financial Acquittal³⁰

2021 Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by:

Name:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Signed:

Date:

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM 2021 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2021 Performance Report and 2021 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Program.

I certify that:

- (i) the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and
- (ii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution's use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and
- (iii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2021 under the Indigenous Student Success Program; and
- (iv) Indigenous Student Success Program funds, and any interest earned or royalties/income derived from these funds, was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

I understand that:

- (i) the Minister or the Minister's delegate may seek further information to support this certification; and
- (ii) the information contain in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and
- (iii) in the event that I have not remitted GST paid under the Agreement to the Australian Taxation Office, that it is my obligation to remit those amounts, as required under the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*; and
- (iv) it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Certification recommended by the university's Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name:
Title:

Signed:
Date:

Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate³¹:

Name:
Title:

Signed:
Date:

Additional information for completing the template

- ¹ The financial tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2021 as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. The information in tables 1a, 1b and 1c helps NIAA recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. Please feel free to add additional “item” lines as required.
- ² Interest earned on ISSP is considered to be ISSP funding and must be used in accordance with the ISSP Guidelines.
- ³ Please estimate the funds available if exact amounts are not known.
- ⁴ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- ⁵ Please include funding provided under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program.
- ⁶ Examples of other funding are philanthropic donations, other student payments, business income etc.
- ⁷ Where applicable, figures provided in this table must be consistent with the figures provided in the institution’s 2021 Performance Report.
- ⁸ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- ⁹ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1a, not including the funding rolled over from previous years (this is detailed in Table 2).
- ¹⁰ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1b.
- ¹¹ Sum ISSP expenditure and other funds expenditure.
- ¹² If the staff member works on non-ISSP specific activities, only record the pro-rata amount that reflects the amount of time the staff member worked on ISSP-specific activities. Include expenditure on salaries for staff that provide tutorial assistance. May include pro-rata expenditure on salaries for staff time spent monitoring and recording tutoring and student withdrawals.
- ¹³ Note that only airfares for international travel for students can be funded under ISSP.
- ¹⁴ Costs may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, presentation fees, equipment costs etc.
- ¹⁵ Assets are defined in the *Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017*, and are items that have an individual value of \$5,000 or more.
- ¹⁶ This should match the figure in Table 2.
- ¹⁷ This figure should equal the Grand total in Table 1a
- ¹⁸ All rollovers have to be agreed with the NIAA and listed in a relevant determination, check with NIAA if you are unsure of your roll over information.
- ¹⁹ For 2019 funds rolled into 2021 and 2020 funds rolled in to 2021, the amounts included here should be the amount expended in 2021.
- ²⁰ This is the amount of the rollover not expended. NIAA will issue an invoice for any amounts listed in this column.
- ²¹ If GST is not paid to you, do not complete the table in section 3. If GST is paid to you, the amount of GST funding included in each payment is set out in a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) issued to you at the time of the payment. State whether these amounts have been remitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or committed for payment to the ATO.
- ²² This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).
- ²³ Record all active assets acquired using ISSP funding. Active assets are those that have not been sold or disposed of.
- ²⁴ Adjustable value means the cost of an asset less its decline in value determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office Guide to Depreciating Assets 2014.
- ²⁵ The ISSP contribution should be recorded in the same ratio to the ISSP funds used to purchase the item (this includes any sale of an older asset trade in of old assets purchased with ISSP funding).
- ²⁶ Include any assets purchased during 2021 using ISSP funding that are valued over \$5,000, any assets in this category should have been agreed with the NIAA prior to the item being purchased.
- ²⁷ Where an item has been stolen or destroyed, the words ‘stolen’ or ‘destroyed’ should be listed in the sale price column.
- ²⁸ The ISSP component should be the proportion of the sale price in the same ratio as the proportion of ISSP funding that contributed to the purchase of the asset.
- ²⁹ Where groups of assets are disposed of, an average age can be provided.
- ³⁰ Appropriate endorsement/authorisation is required to ensure compliance with the ISSP Guidelines and the 2022 Outcome Letter. If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this endorsement must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation’s internal audit function (e.g. an internal auditor). If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation’s auditor should sign this authorisation.
- ³¹ For the purposes of this certification, an equivalent delegate is either the Acting Vice Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Provost, or a relevant senior executive who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

Indigenous Student Success Program

2021 Performance Report

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Organisation | La Trobe University | | |
| Contact Person | Tanya Peeler, Senior Manager, Indigenous Strategy and Community Liaison | | |
| Phone | +61394791172 | E-mail | tpeeler@ltu.edu.au |

1. Enrolments (Access)

Supporting Indigenous applications

The principal mechanism to support Indigenous access to studies at La Trobe is the application of Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS). Up to 20 bonus points are available to Indigenous students to support their entry into nearly all La Trobe undergraduate courses. These additional points are available to students via VTAC, UAC and direct entry.

We provide a range of assistance for Indigenous applicants including the reimbursement of their VTAC application fee if successful in gaining admission to the University. Prospective students are provided with culturally safe assistance from our Indigenous Academic Enrichment Coordinators (IAEC) while undertaking the application process

Student Equity and Diversity Plan

Alongside SEAS, we also foster deep engagement with Indigenous communities and local secondary schools through our Indigenous Strategy and Education Division and its partnership with our Widening Participation Division. The recent adoption of our Student Equity and Diversity Plan underpins the joint work of these teams to expand access for underrepresented cohorts of students. The includes an expansion of our university-level curricula offerings in partner secondary schools and introduction of mentoring programs for aspiring tertiary education students across our regional campuses.

Rise with La Trobe

2021 saw the launch of two exciting initiatives to support ongoing improvement in access for Indigenous students at La Trobe. In July 2021, we launched our Rise with La Trobe Pathway Program. This program supports Indigenous High School students and mature age Indigenous prospective students in preparation for their future university studies, by providing them with a culturally adept academic pathway to La Trobe University. In addition, the program aims to build trusted relationships between prospective students and the university.

Participants of the program will have access to an array of activities, workshops, and events, which will encompass academic learning, cultural activities and connections, mentoring, academic assistance, introductions to university life and many opportunities.

Rise with La Trobe incorporates our ground-breaking, evidence-based pathway programs to provide all students with the opportunity to experience university and demonstrate their ability in a way that suits them. It also includes an academic pathway for mature age learners drawing on our Tertiary Enabling Program. Students can transition to a La Trobe degree via a combination of conditional offer, alternative entry score (LT Entrance Score) and/or an ATAR bonus:

Upon completion of the program students will be given a conditional offer to study with La Trobe University. Each graduate of Rise with La Trobe will also receive a \$5,000 per annum stipend scholarship.

Scholarships

The University recognises the critical role ISSP funding plays in supporting a range of bursaries and scholarships for Indigenous students. In 2021, the University committed to ensuring all commencing Indigenous students would receive a \$5,000 per annum stipend scholarships, from 2024. These scholarships will be supported from a mix of funding, including ISSP, HEPPP, Operating and philanthropic giving.

Analysis undertaken as part of the University's Transforming Scholarships Strategy indicated that Indigenous students in receipt of scholarships had a retention rate over 15% higher than those who did not receive support. Ensuring our entire commencing Indigenous cohort receives support is a key pillar of this revised approach to scholarships.

Pandemic impact

Due to the unfortunate events resulting from the pandemic, there are fewer opportunities to engage with prospective students as there have been in the past. All the above-mentioned programs, and outreach activities listed below, have moved to an online platform to maintain engagement with our partner schools, organisations and communities.

Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2021 payments¹

| | Education Costs | | Accommodation | | Reward | | Total ² | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----|---------------|-----|--------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| | \$ | No. | \$ | No. | \$ | No. | \$ | No. |
| Enabling ³ | | | | | | | | |
| Undergraduate ⁴ | \$147,405.75 | 44 | \$24,096.00 | 5 | | | \$171,501.75 | 46 |
| Post-graduate ⁵ | \$15,750.00 | 8 | | | | | \$15,750.00 | 8 |
| Other | | | | | | | | |
| Total | \$163,155.75 | 52 | \$24,096.00 | 5 | | | \$187,251.75 | 54 |

2. Progression (outcomes)

The University’s Student Success and Retention Plan underpin our efforts to drive improvements in student progression. Guided by our Indigenous Education strategy, several intentional strategies have been introduced across 2021 to drive better outcomes for our students.

As part of the University’s Transformation Program, we have extended our advising program for undergraduate students which has resulted in noticeable improvements in institutional retention. The transformation introduced two dedicated Indigenous Student Advisors whose positions align directly with those of the Academic Advisors. These staff are responsible for the proactive outreach and monitoring of Indigenous students on all La Trobe campuses as a ratio of 1:175 – a reduced ratio in recognition of the complexity supporting Cultural Safety training and provision of advice for staff looking to engage with community. The expansion of the Advising Program to Indigenous students, following the 2020 pilot, is a direct response to the declining retention amongst our Indigenous cohort. We see this primarily as a result of COVID-19, but are keen to seize the opportunity to reach parity between our cohorts.

Alongside the expansion of our Advising Program, in 2021, we offered Completion Scholarships, of \$5,000, for all Indigenous students entering the final year of their degree. These targeted scholarships are directly designed to support progression and completion rates amongst our Indigenous students by relieving financial pressures towards the end of their programs. These scholarships are funded from sources other than ISSP.

Unfortunately, there continues to be a gap between our provisional retention outcomes between our Indigenous and non-Indigenous cohorts (Figure A). This gap increased during 2020, which we attribute to the unique impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is pleasing to see a narrowing of this gap in provisional 2021 data, especially amongst our undergraduate Indigenous students (Figure B).

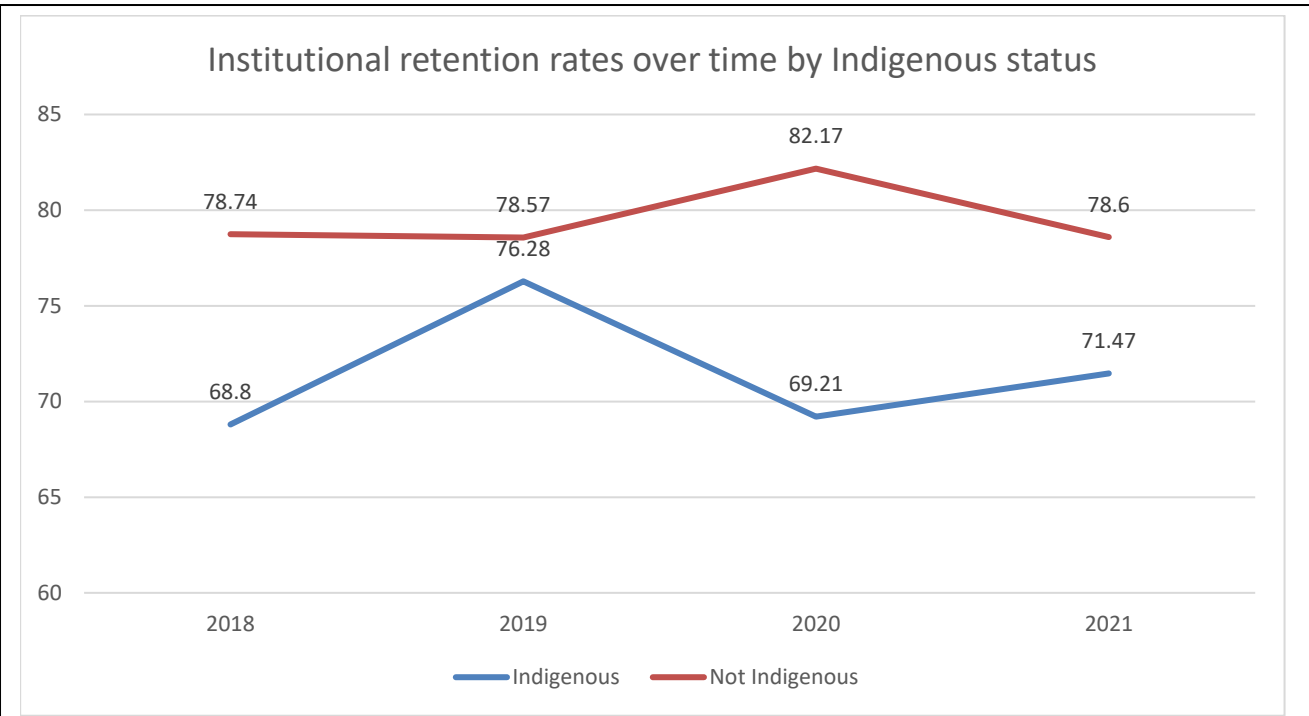


Figure A – provisional retention rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students

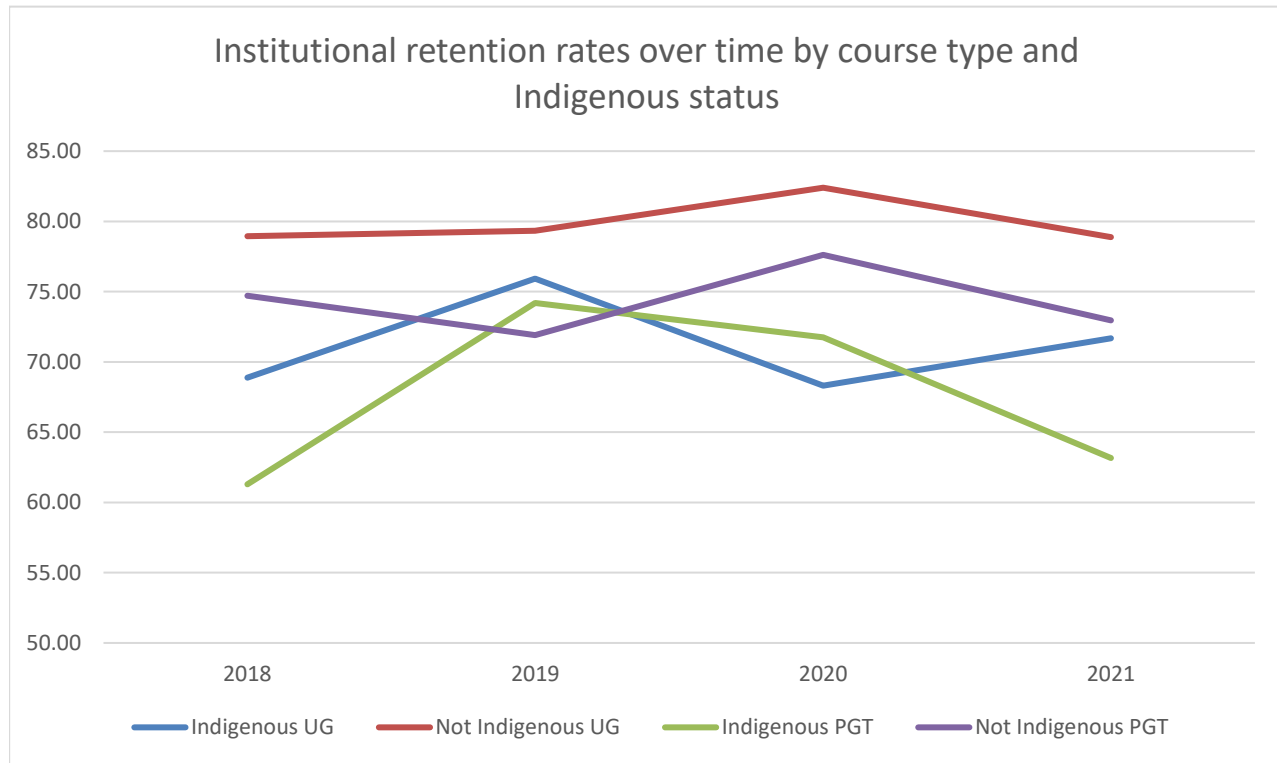


Figure B – provisional retention rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, by course type

Student success rates over time by Indigenous status

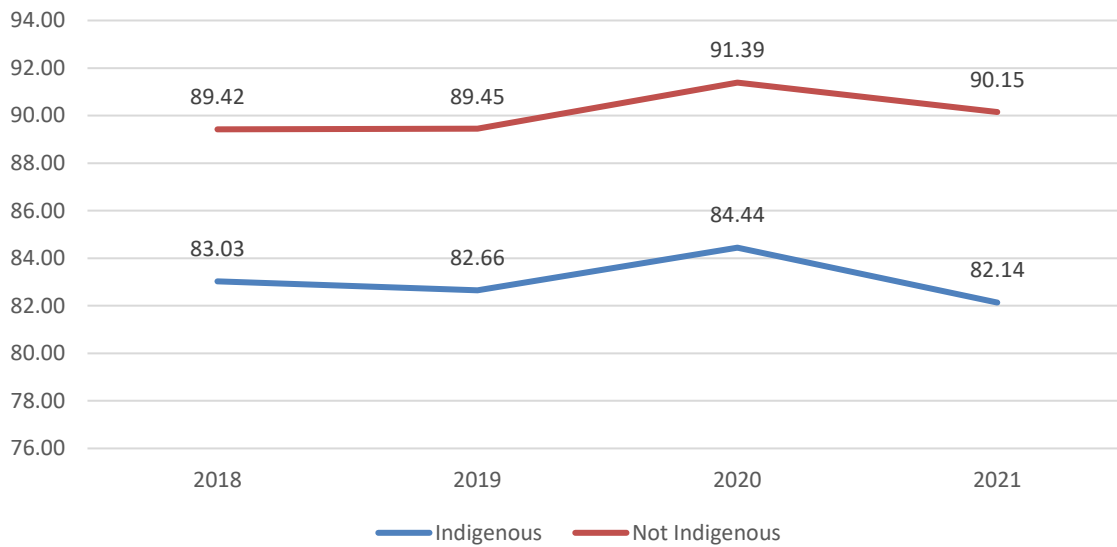


Figure C – student success rates over time by Indigenous status

Student success rates over time by course type and Indigenous status

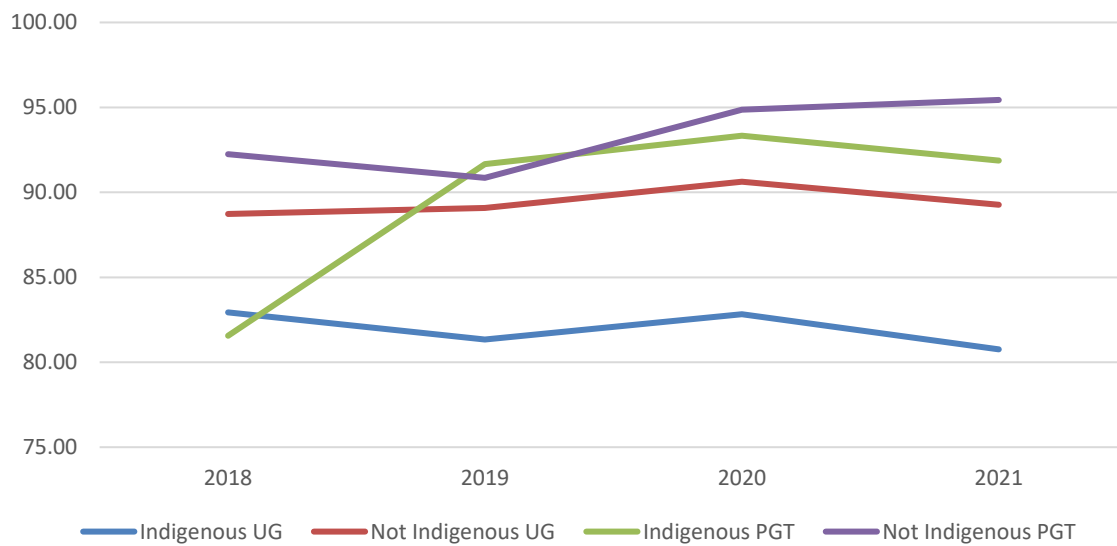


Figure D – student success rates over time by course type and Indigenous status

La Trobe has several strategies in place to improve success rates and retention of Indigenous Australian students; to improve the cultural competency of staff; and/or to ensure the university offers a culturally-safe and enriching environment. These include:

- Appointment of Indigenous student support staff at all campuses, who act as the contact point from initial inquiry through to graduation, and alumni relations.
- Provision of an Indigenous-specific Orientation Program for commencing Indigenous students across campuses.
- University-wide online module, called Wominjeka La Trobe, which is designed to develop a threshold understanding of Indigenous Australian insights, to prepare all commencing students to be able to engage in an informed and meaningful way in Indigenous Australian perspectives.
- Active maintenance of the University's long-established relationships with Elders of the traditional custodians of Country and Indigenous community organisations and groups, in all the regions where campuses are located.
- Ongoing membership of, and collaboration with, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECG) and Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs).
- Engaging Indigenous Elders and other Indigenous Knowledge holders on campus to participate in cultural events, in addition to continued participation in Indigenous community engagement activities within the areas where campuses are located.
- Development of a specific Indigenous Student Database used to monitor student performance, student experience, utilisation of University, and other services.
- Maintenance of network of college academic and professional staff that assist with student progression, support and advocacy.
- Offer a suite of bursaries (complimentary to scholarship support) to Indigenous students, including funds to support their participation in subject placements, fora, conferences, and other events related to their studies, to encourage progression and exposure to leaders in their respective disciplines.
- Develop academic support workshops for Indigenous students in conjunction with college academic skills advisors.
- Facilitate academic opportunities to promote scholarly excellence of Indigenous students across colleges and campuses, including publication of work, convening of seminars/fora for dissemination of research, and promoting Indigenous cultural protocols and values to the academic community.
- Develop an Indigenous-specific library orientation and access program to familiarise commencing students with library services and facilities.
- Consolidate Indigenous Student Services professional development around academic and other support areas to ensure information disseminated to students is comprehensive and up to date.
- Implementing the Indigenous Student Services Charter.
- Evaluate events and programs delivered to Indigenous students and the broader community, including feedback and advice for quality improvements and best practice.

We also see a similar gap across our success rates (Figure C and Figure D), with a relatively increased reductions in outcomes during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. We can point to the challenges around fostering connection with our Indigenous students throughout the pandemic and introduction of virtual learning.

Pandemic support

The widespread COVID pandemic required ISS to reimagine our service delivery as we moved to a virtual world. As much of our work was often conducted face-to-face, the ISS team implemented initiatives to engage with students, so they felt connected, supported and encouraged. This included:

- Emergency Aid – all students in financial distress are eligible for at least one \$250 emergency payment. This addresses immediate needs amongst our students.
- Engagement – Ongoing engagement via phone calls, emails, newsletters and virtual meetings to provide support for our students.
- Connectedness – To combat the feeling of isolation and disconnect, the Indigenous Division hosted a range of virtual social and cultural events to allow for connection with peers and our communities. These pastoral activities were augmented by a suite of dedicated workshops hosted by the library and our peer learning advisors.
- Wellbeing workshops – To help students navigate through a time of uncertainty we held virtual wellbeing workshops to provide them effective strategies, techniques and coping mechanisms to manage stress and mental health.

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2021

| Level of study | Number of unique students assisted ⁶ | Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷ | Total hours of assistance ⁸ | Expenditure ⁹ (\$) |
|----------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Enabling | 2 | 47 | 94 | \$7,420.75 |
| Undergraduate | 41 | 1123 | 1657 | \$130,808.73 |
| Post graduate | 7 | 352 | 443 | \$34,974.85 |
| Other | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Total | 50 | 1513 | 2194 | \$173,204.33 |

3. Completions (outcomes)

In 2021, La Trobe had an overall drop in completions by 12% from the previous year. Anecdotal evidence suggests the decline as a direct result of COVID with higher numbers of students taking a LOA or becoming AWOL during these unprecedented times. The ISS team continue to contact these students to encourage a return to study.

Strategies deployed to achieve improvements in completions are outlined in 2 above - “Progression (access and outcomes)”.

La Trobe’s internal six-year completion rate is approximately -20% for our Indigenous cohort compared to our non-Indigenous cohort. Completion rates compiled by DESE will vary due to their view of student movements across the sector.

4. Regional and remote students

Strategies to improve access to university study

La Trobe has a strong focus on recruitment from regional and remote areas. The regional IAECs work in collaboration with community partners and schools from which they recruit into the I-Aspire program. Once enrolled into I-Aspire, prospective students were supported through mentorship, academic workshops and camps. Students relocating from regional and remote areas are assisted by the ISS team to find suitable accommodation and advised of accommodation scholarships. The launch of Rise With La Trobe will strengthen access for regional and remote students.

Activities to support students during their studies

With four regional campuses, La Trobe has employed an IAEC at each site and the provision of dedicated, culturally safe learning spaces. The IAECs provide ongoing student support from enrolment to completion through face-to-face, phone and emails. Tutorial assistance is offered by matching a suitable tutor to meet the study needs of the student and academic workshops are held regularly. In addition to scholarships, financial support is provided through a suite of student bursaries throughout the year.

Scholarships

Table 4 outlines the scholarships awarded to our remote and regionally based Indigenous students. We have seen a decline of approximately 19% compared to 2020. We attribute this to the reduction in student numbers of 14% (mostly focussed in our commencing cohort who are eligible for the majority of our scholarships) and the impacts of COVID-19 on reducing the possibility of students accessing our residential accommodation places due to Victorian pandemic restrictions. All regional and remote Indigenous students who applied in 2021 were offered a scholarship. As part of our revised Scholarships Strategy, the University has committed to ensuring all commencing Indigenous Students receive a \$5,000 scholarship by 2024. Where ISSP is used to fund scholarships, the University will take care to ensure that ISSP funds continue to provide valuable support to our regional and remote students.

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students

| | Education Costs | | Accommodation | | Reward | | Total | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| | \$ | No. | \$ | No. | \$ | No. | \$ | No. |
| A. 2020 Payments | 109,754 | 44 | 62,744 | 12 | 15,000 | 6 | 173,998 | 63 |
| B. 2021 Offers ¹⁰ | 132691.75 offered (97691 awarded) | 38 offered (31 awarded) | 8184 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 140875.75 offered (105875.75 awarded) | 32 |
| C. Percentage ¹¹ (C=B/A*100) | | | | | | | 81% | |
| 2021 Payments | 97691.75 | 31 | 8184 | 2 | | | 105875.75 | 32 |

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

Gamagoen Yarrbat

La Trobe's Indigenous education strategy, 'Gamagoen Yarrbat', has five distinct domains: students, university alignment, Indigenous employment, knowledge/research and community engagement. Gamagoen Yarrbat is designed to align with the University's Strategic Plan 2020 - 2030, through two strategic goals:

To position La Trobe as the higher education destination of choice for the Indigenous Australian community; and enhance the learning experience for all students.

'Gamagoen Yarrbat' is designed to create a whole of University approach to Indigenous Australian education both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at La Trobe.

A key enabler of 'gamagoen yarrbat' is our dynamic and authentic relationship with the Victorian Indigenous Australian community. 'Gamagoen yarrbat' crafts the future through aspiration – linking the university's very rich heritage and educational assets in place-based innovative delivery and balanced support and enrichment.

The University is currently developing an overarching Indigenous Strategy (and associated Implementation Plan). Consultation is underway and we anticipate releasing this new strategy in Q3 2022. Following the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have seen enrolments of Indigenous students decline (Table A.). The focus of our emerging strategy will be to reverse this decline.

| Enrolment Year | Student Count |
|----------------|---------------|
| 2018 | 313 |
| 2019 | 281 |
| 2020 | 320 |
| 2021 | 276 |

Table A. Indigenous student total headcount 2018—2021

It is intended that the Indigenous Strategy will combine the following themes: Teaching and learning, and curriculum; Indigenous student recruitment and support; Indigenous workforce strategy; Indigenous research strategy, ethics and protocols; Community engagement; and, Governance and leadership.

Whilst we continue to consult and develop this new strategy, our focus will remain on the below:

- increased awareness of La Trobe, its staff, courses and programs by members of the Indigenous Australian communities
- increased presence on all campuses of Indigenous Australian community members which includes opportunities for participation in educational decision making
- increased diversity in the roles undertaken by Indigenous Australian staff and the levels of appointment
- increased research contribution made by La Trobe staff resulting in tangible benefits to Indigenous Australian communities and active connection to teaching practice within existing and new subject offerings
- changes in curriculum, where necessary, to reflect and advance historical and contemporary cultures, lives and stories of Indigenous Australian people
- increased reputation for La Trobe researchers as valued contributors to community development within Indigenous Australian communities and organizations
- explicit and ongoing recognition and appreciation for Indigenous Australian cultures and people as part of the University experience for both staff and students reflecting the University's commitment to reconciliation

The current version of the strategy can be located at: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/indigenous/education>

Through the pillars of strategy, policy, student support, student recruitment and employment we deliver high quality projects, develop strong relationships and make a difference with and for community.

Several University documents reflect its ongoing commitment to advancing Indigenous aspirations and achievements including:

La Trobe University Act 2009

Indigenous Australians are mentioned in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Authorised Version No. 007):

5. Objects of the University

The objects of the University include:

- (f) to use its expertise and resources to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia in its teaching and learning, research and advancement of knowledge activities and thereby contribute to:
 - (i) realising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations; and
 - (ii) the safe guarding of the ancient and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage

La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2020 - 2030

Our Strategic Context

We are Victoria's only true state-wide university. We are deeply embedded in our communities in Melbourne's north and in central and northern Victoria. We proudly educate more first-in-family and disadvantaged students than any other university in the state and have formed strong partnerships with Indigenous communities to lift rates of Indigenous student participation and success. (Pg. 6)

Our Vision and Strategies

Students: Reshaping to better meet student needs

We will continue to work with our communities to raise the aspirations and achievement levels of students from low income, regional, Indigenous and first-in-family backgrounds. (Pg. 10)

Teaching: Improving quality and accessibility

Continue our efforts to decolonise the curriculum and support embedding of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives across our courses. (Pg. 11)

Research: Focusing on our strengths, impact and global challenges

Implement a La Trobe Indigenous Research Strategy, in consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous (Pg. 12)

Our regions: Transforming our communities

Continue to consult with our students and communities, including Indigenous communities, about the student and workforce needs of our regions. (Pg. 14)

Our people: An empowered workforce inspired by our values

Improve strategies for the recruitment, retention and career development of Indigenous Australian employees within the University. (Pg. 16)

La Trobe University Research 2030 Plan

Meeting graduate researcher needs

Increase graduate research participation among equity groups

Develop flexible scholarship offerings that support the participation and experience of Indigenous candid and other underrepresented groups. (Pg. 28). The establishment of the Academic Director (Indigenous Research) will also provide additional capacity for the leadership of Indigenous scholarship, with a focus on nurturing the emerging generation of Indigenous researchers.

Transforming our communities

Indigenous researcher and Indigenous research support

Develop a plan for supporting Indigenous researchers and researcher collaboration with Indigenous communities in partnership with the Office of Indigenous Strategy & Education. (Pg. 29). The establishment of our Indigenous Research Advisor will be a critical force multiplier in supporting our cohort of Indigenous PhD students.

La Trobe University globalisation plan 2018 – 2022

Our Strategic Priorities

Globally enabled students – Global and Intercultural Experiences

Importantly, student mobility at La Trobe isn't limited to overseas experiences. We'll also offer opportunities for our students to experience and enrich their understandings of Australian culture, including a strong focus on Indigenous cultures. (Pg. 12)

Cultural competency in Indigenous cultures

All commencing students at La Trobe undertake Wominjeka La Trobe: Indigenous Cultural Literacy for Higher Education. This is a one-hour compulsory online subject that introduces all La Trobe students to Indigenous Australian history, culture and customs. A rich and relevant cultural heritage education is important for everyone. This topic highlights the link between Indigenous knowledge and values and broader cultural literacy. It asks students to think critically about their own attitudes, values and beliefs.

Following the inclusion of additional resources to strengthen facilitation of Indigenous Cultural Competencies in our University Transformation Program, we'll be introducing a refreshed suite of modules for staff and students.

5.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

Our revised Indigenous Workforce Strategy, Toom bal ang, was launched in 2020 implementing n initiatives to ensure the steady increase of the LTU Indigenous workforce. Most importantly, the colleg committing to work in collaboration with the Indigenous Workforce Advisor to develop and implemen proactive recruiting strategies for academic and professional roles; and agreeing to include Indigenous vacancies and targets in their business plans. As initiatives such as these gain momentum across th university, we will be well placed to meet our ongoing employment targ

The objectives of the Indigenous Workforce Strategy include

- (a) to maximise staff development along with the transfer of job skills and information in order to increase Indigenous Australian employees' knowledge, independence, remuneration, job security and self-sufficiency
- (b) to increase, encourage and foster Indigenous Australian employees at all levels of work activity, including, specifically, academic roles, within the University;
- (c) to facilitate and encourage the direct involvement of Indigenous Australian employees in determining their own career strategies, goals and objectives;
- (d) to seek to increase the number of Indigenous Australian staff. Without limiting the ways in which this may be achieved, the parties will take reasonable steps to meet an indicative target of employing nine (9) new, full-time equivalent, ongoing Indigenous Australian employees per annum;
- (e) to facilitate the participation of Indigenous Australian employees in cultural and ceremonial activities where practical;
- (f) assisting colleges to set targets by identifying or targeting vacancies for Indigenous applicants;
- (g) developing a 'grow our own' strategy by tracking students through their studies and matching them into positions once graduated;
- (h) utilising 'special measures' accommodations;
- (i) profiling La Trobe nationally; and
- (j) electronic expression of interest recruitment strategy.

In response to the challenges posed by COVID-19, the University underwent a whole of institution Transformation Program in 2021. These changes increased the number of Indigenous identified roles by six (approx. 25% increase). We also established a number of senior academic appointments to lead our learning and research domains, including the appointment of our inaugural Academic Director (Indigenous Research) in January of 2022. These academic directors are further supported by the establishment of an Indigenous Research Advisor (HEO8) and Level B Senior Educational Development Advisor.

Following this transformation, capability to support Indigenous recruitment and workforce was realigned to our Human Resources Division. This allows greater connection and improvement in current recruitment processes across the organization and ensure all opportunities to support Indigenous candidates to apply for roles is considered. The new Indigenous Stakeholder and Candidate Coordinator will promote all La Trobe University roles to attract and increase Indigenous applications and engage with a variety of external stakeholders, communities, agencies and media outlets to promote opportunities at La Trobe whilst working with the recruitment team to understand the type of roles that can be promoted to suit applicants. A new Candidate Onboarding, Compliance and Candidate Care Officer will support new staff entering the university and be key to supporting staff retention at the university. By creating these two roles the University has invested in increased capacity to support Indigenous recruitment and workforce support.

The University's Indigenous Strategy and Education Division was further strengthened through this transformation, increasing staffing resources by approximately 10%.

- The Transformation embeds a new Facilitator Cultural Capability with core responsibility for supporting Cultural Safety training, provision of advice for staff looking to engage with community.
- The introduction of the new advising program for undergraduate students has resulted in noticeable improvements in institutional retention. The proposal introduces two dedicated Indigenous Student Advisors whose positions align directly with those of the Academic Advisors. These staff will be responsible for the proactive outreach and monitoring of Indigenous students on all La Trobe campuses as a ratio of 1:175 – a reduced ratio in recognition of the complexity supporting Cultural Safety training, provision of advice for staff looking to engage with community.
- It is important that all La Trobe campuses have a contact for Indigenous students. The number of Indigenous students studying in our smaller regional campuses remains quite low. We are confident that these students will receive high quality advising support through the two dedicated Indigenous Student Advisors. However, it is imperative that we provide activities and programs that build a sense of community and belonging for our Indigenous Students. The Indigenous Student Engagement team is responsible for delivering engagement activities for Indigenous students on all La Trobe campuses. They work in close partnership with the Indigenous Student Advisors and also our Student Engagement team on their campus to develop a comprehensive engagement program.

As in 2020, we saw a number of Indigenous colleagues depart the institution via redundancy. Efforts are continuing to finalise recruitment across the institution, including for our Indigenous identified roles.

Alongside providing intensive support to colleagues displaced as a result of Transformation, our Indigenous Workforce Advisor supported the below activities, prior to their own departure:

- Being a support person for impacted staff of the restructure
- Assisting with resumes, key selection criteria, and providing interview support
- Onboarding staff to new roles and/or teams
- Referring to external support services such as EAP, cultural supervision, and counselling
- Discussing potential career pathways and/or secondments
- Hosting virtual meetings for regional staff
- Meeting HR Recruitment fortnightly regarding restructure progress
- Supporting development of PD's for Identified positions

Indigenous Staff Forum

Held annually, the Indigenous Staff Forum is coordinated and managed by the Indigenous Workforce Advisor. The Staff Forum's objective is to bring all Indigenous staff together from across our campuses to network, discuss professional development opportunities, participate in wellbeing activities and contribute to diversity and inclusion activities. Sessions are hosted by Human Resources staff as well as Indigenous Strategy staff. An Indigenous speaker is invited as part of the program. Due to the pandemic, it was decided to postpone the 2021 Staff Forum.

Senior Indigenous Academics

The University has recently appointed our inaugural Academic Director (Indigenous Research), who commenced their role in January 2022. The Transformation Program also established the position of Academic Director (Indigenous Education). We also continue to seek to recruit our Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous).

Table 5.2 Indigenous workforce data (2021 breakdown)

Data reflects 31 December 2021

| Level/position | Permanent | | Casual/contract/fixed-term | |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Academic | Non-academic | Academic | Non-academic |
| Coordinator | 0 | 3 | | |
| Advisor | | 3 | | 1 |
| Assoc. Professor/adjunct | 1 | | 1 | |
| Snr Lecturer | 3 | | | |
| Lecturers | 1 | | 2 | |
| Executive Assistant | | | | 1 |
| Casual | 1 | 11 | 18 (inclusive of adhoc lecturers) | |
| Senior Manager | | 1 | | |
| Family Therapy | | | | 2 |
| Retail | | | | 1 |
| Total | 6 | 18 | 21 | 5 |

5.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The annual ISSP budget is prepared by the University’s Senior Manager, Indigenous Strategy and Community Liaison. Whilst La Trobe finalises its recruitment of our Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), the Advisor, Indigenous Student Recruitment, serves as the second senior employee of the provider. In January 2022, the University appointed our inaugural Academic Director (Indigenous Research). This incumbent may be considered our most appropriately qualified senior academic employee, pending recruitment of the PVC (Indigenous).

The annual ISSP budget is noted by the University’s Senior Executive Group (and its sub-committees) so they can provide comment on the alignment of the expenditure with broader strategies.

The ISSP budget is managed by the Senior Manager, Indigenous Strategy and Community Liaison who has responsibility for advising on, reviewing, making recommendations about, and monitoring the use of ISSP grants. The University is further advised by our Indigenous Advisory Committee on the use of the ISSP grant. The incumbent is the most senior Indigenous professional employee of the provider and is a member of the executive leadership of the Students Portfolio (1 report removed from the Vice-Chancellor).

5.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

In accordance with subsection 17(2)(b) of the Guidelines, Advisor, Indigenous Student Recruitment confirms the ISSP grant funding for 2021 has been expended as shown in the financial acquittal; and that this performance report is an accurate reflection of decision-making processes and performance in 2021

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