

Indigenous Student Success Program

2024 Performance Report

Organisation	La Trobe University		
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1. Declaration

In providing this Performance Report, it is acknowledged that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

2. Enrolments (Access)

EMBEDDED ISSP STRATEGIES Supporting Indigenous applications La Trobe University (LTU) employs the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) to facilitate Indigenous access to studies. Indigenous students can receive up to 20 bonus points to enhance their entry chances into almost all undergraduate courses at La Trobe. These extra points can be accessed through VTAC, UAC, and direct entry. LTU offers various supports, alternative pathways, and aid for Indigenous applicants, including the creation of specific course entries tailored for Indigenous students in high-demand bachelor's degrees. Prospective students are guided through the application process with culturally sensitive assistance from our Indigenous Student Services Team. These SEAS are reviewed on a periodic basis, with appropriate oversight from Education Committee. La Trobe Indigenous Strategy La Trobe actively cultivate meaningful connections with Indigenous communities, Aboriginal Controlled Organisations, and Secondary Schools across Victoria. This engagement is facilitated by both the Indigenous Strategy and Education division and, where appropriate, with the University Widening Participation Department. The collaborative efforts of these teams are guided by our La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030 and our Indigenous Strategy, 2023 – 2030, which serve as the foundation for expanding access to education for underrepresented student groups. This initiative involves broadening the availability of university-level curricula in partnered secondary schools and implementing mentoring programs for aspiring tertiary education students across our regional campuses. In addition, the strategy sets out La Trobe’s dedicated to establishing culturally safe and inclusive campuses. RISE with La Trobe This Indigenous-specific pathways program continues to play a crucial role in expanding access for potential Indigenous students, offering a range of culturally safe and inclusive opportunities, workshops, and programs to provide comprehensive support throughout their educational journey into Higher Education. In 2024 RISE welcomed 154 students to the program and maintained valuable relationships with the previous year’s cohort. We continue to see strengthened articulation to further study, including universities across Victoria.

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Indigenous Indicator (main)	Enrolment Year	Student Count
Indigenous	2019	292
Indigenous	2020	325
Indigenous	2021	288
Indigenous	2022	322
Indigenous	2023	299
Indigenous	2024	414

Table A. Indigenous student count 2019-2024

NEW STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Indigenous Exclusive Pathway Program

Part of the RISE program, this exclusive six-week pathway program was implemented in both Term 1 and Term 6 of 2024, providing students with a guided and supportive pathway into higher education. The program is designed for students who have completed year 12 but did not receive an ATAR score, or did not meet the entry requirements for their chosen degree. It is also open to our mature-age RISE participants. The pathway offers an alternative entry opportunity, functioning as a further opportunity to engage in tertiary studies. La Trobe supplies the students with laptops and tutoring support throughout the duration of the program. On average, 66% of participants attain a score equivalent to direct entry into their desired degree. Those who do not meet the required entry requirements are supported in transitioning into a diploma program, which subsequently provides a pathway into their preferred undergraduate degree.

SCHOLARSHIPS, BRIDGING & ENABLING SUPPORT AND OUTREACH TO IMPROVE ACCESS

The University acknowledges the important role played by ISSP funding in supporting various bursaries and scholarships for Indigenous students.

In 2024, La Trobe continued to provide commencing students who had entered their undergraduate degree through RISE with La Trobe an option of either a \$5,000 per annum Access scholarship or an Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship.

In 2024 we increased the number of Indigenous students in receipt of a commencement Access scholarship by 20%, which resulted in 60% of our commencing Indigenous students being allocated a scholarship. These scholarships provide commencing students with financial support across the length of their program. Students in receipt of these scholarship are identified as +6.9 % more likely to be retained and continue their studies. In addition, we continue to offer financial assistance through \$1000 bursaries for students in financial hardship. This program of support led to 80% of commencing Indigenous students receiving either a bursary or scholarship in 2024. La Trobe continues to progress towards 100% of commencing students receiving a scholarship or bursary to support their academic aspirations.

In 2024, LTU launched the La Trobe Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship, which guarantees on-campus accommodation (across all La Trobe campuses) for Indigenous students and closes the gap between ABSTUDY rent assistance and accommodation fees. In 2024, 36 students received an Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ACCESS AND ENROLMENTS THAT DO NOT RELY ON ISSP

La Trobe University (LTU) employs the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) as the primary mechanism to facilitate Indigenous access to studies. Indigenous students can receive up to 20 bonus points to enhance their entry chances into almost all undergraduate courses at La Trobe. These extra points can be accessed through VTAC, UAC, and direct entry. LTU offers various supports, alternative pathways, and aid for Indigenous applicants, including the creation of specific course entries tailored for Indigenous students in high-demand bachelor's degrees. Prospective students are guided through the application process with culturally sensitive assistance from our Indigenous Student Services Team. The team ensures that all enrolment avenues are thoroughly explored, including the possibility of customised Preparation Pathway options for individuals who have not yet met the entry requirements. Student Admissions and the Indigenous Strategy and Education division have collaborated closely to enhance the alignment between the two departments, aimed to bolster support for Indigenous students and streamline the process of acceptance of offers.

La Trobe continues to prioritise the development of enduring community partnerships and connections with Elders. An example of this is our strengthened relationship and collaboration with the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence on Yorta Yorta Country, through a memorandum of understanding, with a commitment to invest \$1 million over three years. The Centre has the ambition to become a hub for education and training and to strengthen First Nations people's place in the Goulburn Valley region and workforce. As part of this partnership, all Indigenous students enrolled at our Shepparton campus receive a scholarship for the duration of their studies.

In addition to tailored programs aimed at supporting Indigenous students, our Indigenous students are provided with access to all services and opportunities available within the University. This approach ensures that all Indigenous students can fully engage with and benefit from the wide array of resources, facilities, and opportunities offered by La Trobe University. From academic support services to extracurricular activities, Indigenous students are encouraged to explore and utilise all avenues that contribute to their holistic development and success. This commitment to equitable access underscores La Trobe's dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all its students, regardless of background or identity. We support Indigenous students to access higher education through VTAC pathways (First Nation Australian Entry). In addition, our Alumni and Advancement division actively advocates for First Nations support when working with philanthropic donors.

The majority of funding for the Indigenous Strategy and Education Division is provided from sources other than ISSP funding.

Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2024 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ²	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ³								
Undergraduate ⁴	\$424,250	180	\$212,640	31			\$636,890	211
Post-graduate ⁵	\$57,750	31					\$57,750	31
Other								
Total	482,000	211	212,640	31			694,640	242

Progression (outcomes)

EMBEDDED ISSP STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS TO COMPLETE UNITS

The Student Advising Program and Academic Progressions Policy are the institutional responses to supporting student progression. This program includes an Indigenous-specific advising program, which provides culturally safe and appropriate developmental advising support to our cohort of Indigenous students. The establishment of the 'At Risk' Trigger system within our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) alerts Student Advising Program staff to students who are either at risk of failing or falling below a weighted average mark of 60 (informed by early low-stakes assessment across all courses). The strategy has allowed for Indigenous Student Support (ISS) and broader Advising Program staff to intervene and provide additional Indigenous Academic Enrichment Program (IAEP), tutoring and additional academic supports to students who fall into either of these categories. The IAEP continues to serve as our cornerstone academic and educational support initiative, aiding students in successfully completing their units. Through this program, students have the opportunity to receive personalised tutoring for up to 2 hours per subject per week. Strategic enhancements to this program in 2024 included the introduction of a First Year Coordinator role, mandatory tutoring for RISE entrants, and appropriate induction process to better inform tutors of cultural understandings to better match students with tutors.

La Trobe also provides First Nations students with an Indigenous-specific Orientation Program. Indigenous Kick-Off Workshops connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with peers and support services, complemented by Traditional Welcomes at campus events, reflecting the University's Indigenous Strategy.

In 2024, Indigenous student satisfaction with orientation and welcome activities increased by 6%. All Indigenous students are able to access a culturally safe study space through Indigenous student services centre located on each campus. It is important to note that our online, regional and remote can access these centres as well. These spaces were refurbished in 2024 (detailed in section below).

NEW STRATEGIES OR PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS COMPLETE UNITS IN 2024

Student Advising

In 2024 LTU implemented a social work and case management method to Advisor-student engagement. This method aims to proactively identify student challenges and potential academic decline prior to it impacting their academic progression. This approach is designed to facilitate early supportive conversations regarding the range of resources available to students, such as financial assistance, well-being services, and accommodation support. By fostering early intervention, the method seeks to address issues before students reach a point of significant distress. In 2024, 50% of Indigenous students engaged with a Student Advisor.

Student Study Centres

In 2024 three of our regional Indigenous Student Study Centres (Bendigo, Mildura and Shepparton) received a full refurbishment, creating a more accessible, culturally safe and welcoming place of belonging for students. These improvements directly increase accessibility for First Nations students. In addition, we have opened these spaces, and others, as bookable spaces that community members and community groups can now use, thus further increasing access to our local First Nations communities. See photo below.



Image 1 – The recently re-opened Shepparton Campus, including informal study spaces available to students.



Image 2 – The recently redeveloped Indigenous Student Study Space at La Trobe's Bendigo Campus.

NEW STRATEGIES OR PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENT RETENTION IN 2024

La Trobe's initiatives to support and retain Indigenous students saw the overall retention rate of Indigenous students increased significantly from 65.7% in 2022 to 77.3% in 2023 (Figure A). This is particularly noteworthy given the retention rate for non-Indigenous students over the same period increased 0.1% (78.7% in 2022 compared to 78.8% in 2023). Figure B shows that the biggest increase in retention was seen in postgraduate students (increase of 17.1 percentage points) and undergraduate students (increase of 11.4 percentage points). Retention outcomes for 2024 are the closest to reaching parity of outcomes that La Trobe has seen for at least six years, and represent a significant achievement for our students, the staff involved in the programs, and the broader institution.

In addition, Indigenous participation rates increased to 1.3% of the overall university student cohort. While this figure does not yet reflect our strategic goal of national population parity of 3%, the notable increase represents a higher percentage than the Indigenous population of Victoria (approximately 1% at the last census)

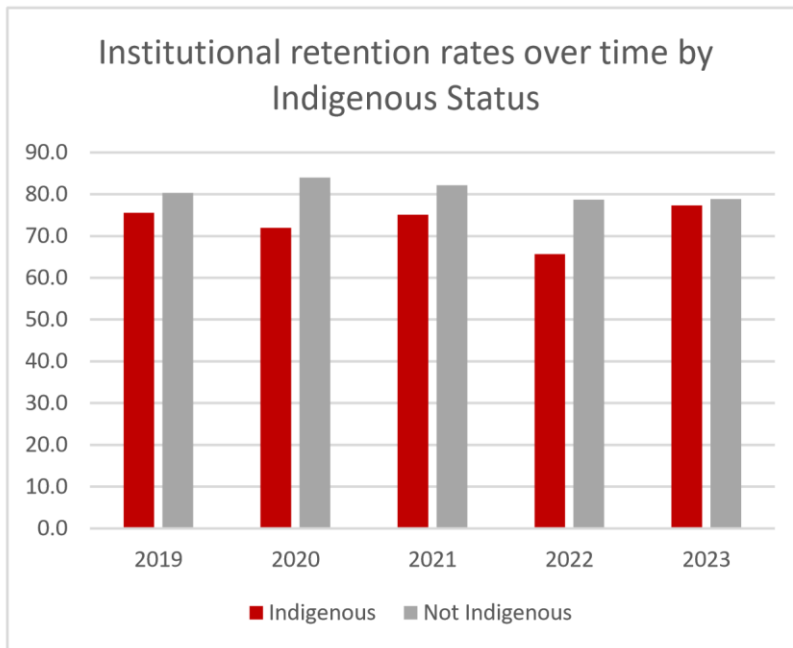


Figure A – Indigenous and non-Indigenous retention rates over time

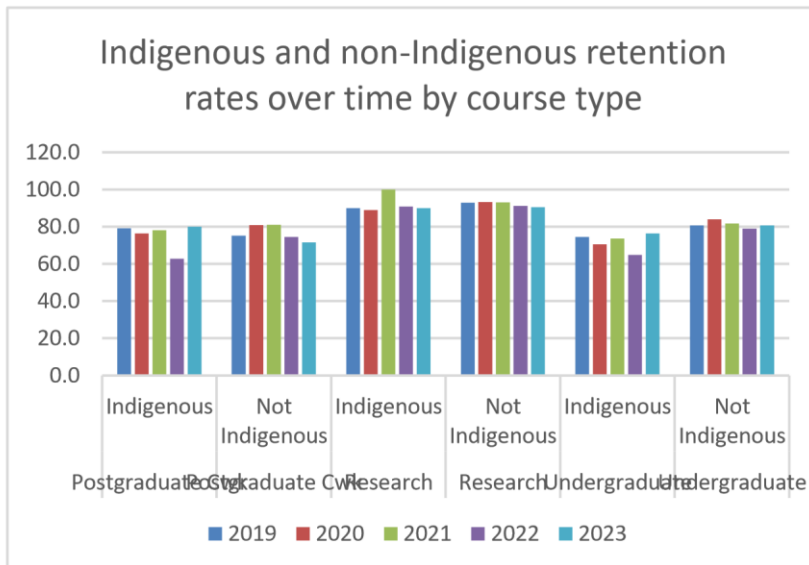


Figure B – Indigenous and non-Indigenous retention rates over time by course type

La Trobe supported a team of 13 students to participate in the 2024 Indigenous Nationals held at the University of Wollongong. It was La Trobe's most successful Nationals event to date and the team were awarded the 2024 Spirit of the Games award.



There was a slight improvement in the success rate of Indigenous students between 2023 (78.6%) and 2024 (79%). As can be seen in Figure D, this is due to an improvement in success rates for Indigenous Research students (37.6% in 2023 to 41.5% in 2024). Success rates for Undergraduate Indigenous students remained steady at 78.6%, whilst the success rates of Postgraduate Indigenous students declined slightly (86.3% in 2023 to 84.4% in 2024).

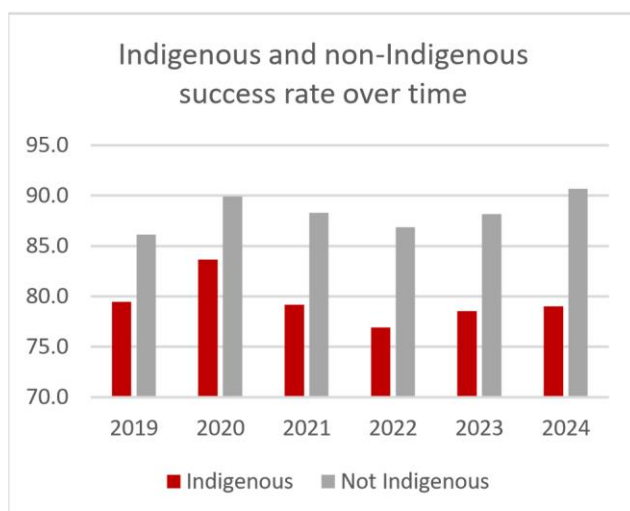
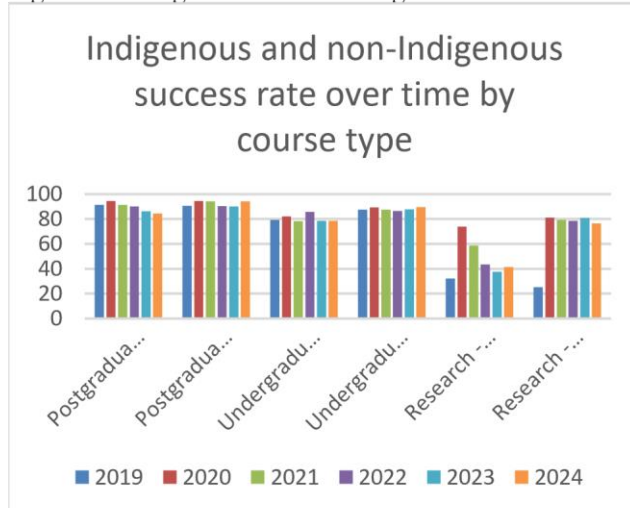


Figure C – Indigenous and non-Indigenous success rate over time



HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT OF STRATEGIES ON PROGRESSION. WHAT ARE OUTCOMES?

To measure the effect that these strategies have on student progression, we leverage focused analytical data and are able to systematically map course completion rates at the conclusion of each semester, comparing them with previous years to identify any implemented changes that may account for variations in the data. In addition, the annual La Trobe Experience Survey seeks feedback from students around their satisfaction with Indigenous Student Support. 43% of students were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the support and 55% were neutral.

Education Committee considers a number of annual papers on student success outcomes and student support, including the effectiveness of the Academic Progress Policy (and broader suite of services) for Indigenous students.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT THROUGH TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE AND MENTORING AND OTHER MEASURES PROVIDED THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY?

The Indigenous Academic Enrichment Program (IAEP) offers tutoring and other academic assistance to at risk students, aiding students in successfully completing their units. Through this program, students have the opportunity to receive personalised tutoring for up to 2 hours per subject per week. The unique number of students the program assisted increased from 39 students in 2023 to 56 in 2024. The total number of tutorial sessions also increased from 934 in 2023 to 1248 in 2024 demonstrating increased engagement with the program. The following changes, introduced in 2024, contributed to the increased engagement with the program:

- Introduction of a First Year Coordinator role to guide and assist first-year students.
- Implementation of mandatory semester 1 tutoring for students entering La Trobe via RISE.
- Targeted marketing campaign to raise awareness of the program.
- Prioritisation of Indigenous Alumni and high-achieving students for IAEP tutoring positions to increase access to Indigenous tutors and mentors.
- Overhaul of administrative processes to streamline operations and improve data retrieval capabilities.

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2024

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ⁶	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷	Total hours of assistance ⁸	Expenditure ⁹ (\$)
Enabling	12	52	83	7300
Undergraduate	42	1086	2172	189050
Post-graduate	2	110	110	9570
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	56	1248	2366	205,920

HOW DOES THE UNIVERSITY INVEST IN THE CULTURAL COMPETENCY OF STAFF AND STUDENTS? HOW IS IT MEASURED AND WHAT IMPACT HAS IT HAD?

Strengthening cultural safety is at the heart of La Trobe's Indigenous Strategy 2022-2030. La Trobe is deeply committed to raising aspirations and supporting Indigenous students to access higher education and achieve success during their studies. Through our culturally safe and inclusive Indigenous Student Support Centres on all campuses, and our work in community, we build a supportive community for students to develop their knowledge and experiences. We believe in helping students to achieve their best by encouraging them to become independent learners with the confidence and capacity to express their beliefs and share their professional knowledge and experiences in ways that will shape our society for the better and give back to community.

Throughout the year, the Indigenous Strategy and Education division (ISE) coordinated university-wide cultural activities, including Welcome to Country Ceremonies, Smoking Ceremonies, and sessions for sharing cultural knowledge. In addition, LTU coordinates NAIDOC week celebrations and activities as an opportunity for people to come together in a positive and cultural context and encourage families, community and elders to recognise the enormous contribution that Indigenous Australians make to the community. LTU also come together to commemorate National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week.

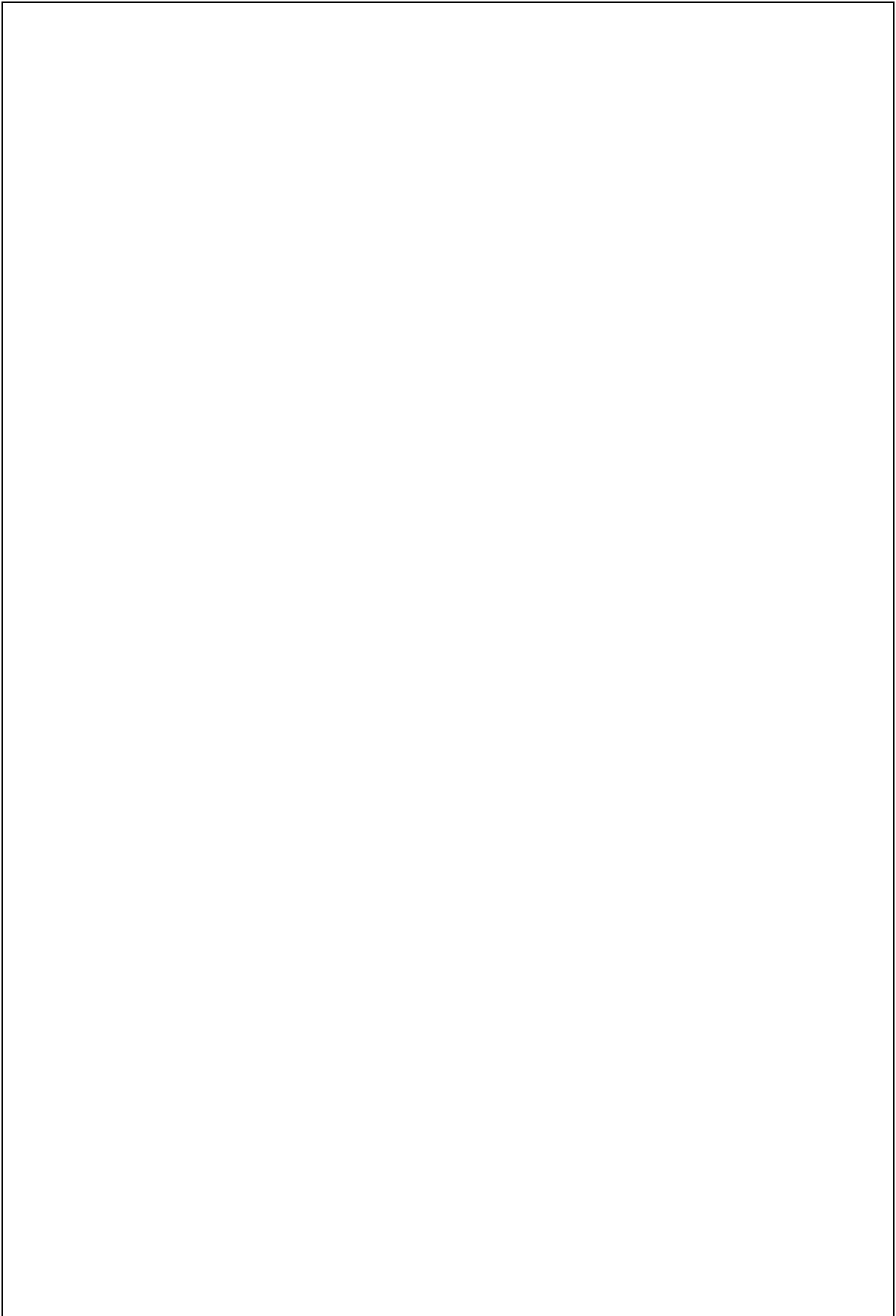
As part of their academic requirements, all students are required to complete the Wominjeka module – an online Cultural Competency program exploring Indigenous history, culture, values, and contemporary issues. In December 2024 this module was made mandatory for all staff, with completion rates currently at 76.2 %. This initiative underscores the University's commitment to advancing Indigenous cultural awareness across our community to strengthen our culturally safe environment, as outlined in our Indigenous Strategy 2022-2030. This initiative is the first phase in a broader program led by the Indigenous Strategy and Education Division, aimed at developing a comprehensive suite of Indigenous cultural awareness training sessions and resources.

The University actively maintains its long-standing relationships with Elders of the traditional custodians of Country and Indigenous community organisations and groups in all regions where campuses are located. In 2024, the PVC Indigenous reported twice to the Yoorrook Commission on Indigenous student support and Indigenous university leadership. Professor Julie Andrews AO reported to the Yoorrook Commission on Indigenous historical engagement and associated continuing effects.

La Trobe has also worked to increase Aboriginal community consultation across various communities and organisations, and increased participation in wider Indigenous Victoria activities. OISE Engagement Officers (on each La Trobe campus) build strong community connections through professional and personal relationships informing Indigenous community members and organisations about pathways, opportunities and support mechanisms that La Trobe can provide to support to Indigenous students. Including tertiary preparation programs through to short course professional development and research. The research directed partnerships are supported through Gabra Biik Wurruwila Wutja where we meet with Indigenous community organisations across La Trobe's Victorian footprint discussing community needs and discussing how we can build partnerships to support education and research desires within community. To extend La Trobe's recognition of Indigenous Australia the OISE team holds an Indigenous Week that is outside of regular NAIDOC events due to NAIDOC generally falling in student mid-year break. This week organises events that highlights Indigenous culture, performance and knowledge sharing for all students and staff and recognising Indigenous identity as important aspect of La Trobe. Other student and wider community events that OISE develop include Welcome events to all students to La Trobe, culture days involving local Aboriginal knowledge holders, and cleansing ceremonies for students and community such as Sorry Day events.

In addition, community attendance at La Trobe facilitated events has seen a significant increase at our regional campuses. With each campus reporting a minimum 30% increase in community participation and attendance. Mildura and Bendigo saw the largest increases with 52% (Mildura) and 41% (Bendigo) increases reported.

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WHAT OTHER BROAD STRATEGIES DOES THE UNIVERSITY IMPLEMENT TO SUPPORT STUDENT PROGRESSION THAT DOES NOT RELY ON ISSP FUNDING? (ONLY ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS ARE REQUIRED)

La Trobe University supports all students through our Student Advising Team, which provides proactive and reactive interventions to support student retention and success. The team leverages predictive analytics informed by at-risk modelling to proactively engage with students at risk of failing/disengaging from their course. The team also support students in need of academic recovery by leading our progression processes. All students identified as being at 'high-risk' and 'medium-risk' receive proactive developmental support from the Student Advising Division ahead of the census date in the teaching period they are identified in. This involves an SMS, email, and phone call to invite to a personalised appointment offered by a Student Advisor. Students who report non-academic issues that put them at risk of not successfully completing their units are offered the opportunity to apply for adjustments or are referred to specialist services.

In 2024, La Trobe University targeted a multi-tiered intervention strategy to identify and manage nonparticipating enrolments (NPE), ensuring ongoing improvements in student outcomes. The identification process leveraged predictive analytics and early engagement monitoring systems to predict students as potential NPEs. Students were identified as potential NPEs based on general risk factors determined by machine-learning predictive models and if they were found to have not logged in to the Moodle Learning Management System prior to and during the early stages of the study period. Analysis has confirmed that while it is difficult to identify all students who will be recorded as a genuine NPE student, this cohort is at considerable academic risk with a high probability of recording subject failures, late withdrawals from subjects and failing to be retained in the following study period. Analysis showed that for the 344 commencing students identified as potential NPEs, engagement with a student advisor led to a retention rate that was 16.3 percentage points higher than for non-engaged students, and a course withdrawal rate that was 8.4 percentage points higher than for non-engaged students.

In addition, and embedded in University policy, early assessment activities are scheduled in every subject, and outcomes are used to identify students who are academically at risk and require support, or where curricula emphasis may be required.

3. Completions (outcomes)

EMBEDDED ISSP STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT COURSE COMPLETION

In 2024, there was an improvement in the 6-year completion rate for Indigenous students. The 6-year completion rate increased from 49.7% in 2018-2023 to 51.2% in 2019-2024.

A key initiative, established in previous years, includes the awarding of Completion Scholarships for Indigenous students in their final year of studies. These scholarships are designed to defray the cost of living and any additional costs associated with the final year of studies (e.g. placement costs).

WHAT OTHER BROAD STRATEGIES DOES THE UNIVERSITY IMPLEMENT TO SUPPORT COURSE COMPLETION THAT DOES NOT RELY ON ISSP FUNDING? (ONLY ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS ARE REQUIRED)

In 2024 LTU established the Yani Global Exchange which provides a unique opportunity for First Nations students studying at La Trobe to undertake an international exchange or study tour with one of our First Nations partner universities across the globe. Providing an immersive learning experience, Yani is designed to provide a culturally immersive experience that aligns with the University's intention of decolonising the curriculum and providing opportunities for Indigenous students. This is coupled with reciprocal wraparound educational, community and cultural supports that enrich and widen the educational journey. Yani's objectives dovetail with

the Learning Abroad strategy of boosting both the diversity and participation rates of international mobility programs with a view to improving outcomes in employability and global citizenship. Yani's objectives align with the commitments outlined in La Trobe's 2022-2030 Indigenous Strategy and the overarching University strategy. A huge amount of work has been undertaken to develop this program in 2024 and we intend to welcome our first inbound cohort of First Nations students next year.

4. Regional and remote students

In 2024 LTU employed a Senior Coordinator Student Engagement at our Shepparton campus, a role that was born due to our partnership with the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence. LTU also appointed an Indigenous Rural Health Student Advisor at our Bendigo campus highlighting our commitment to supporting regional and remote Indigenous students.

Students from regional and remote backgrounds receive an additional weighting when La Trobe assesses them for a scholarship. This ensures that students from these backgrounds receive greater support from our scholarships program.

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students¹⁰

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2023 Payments							\$175,001	
B. 2024 Offers ¹¹	\$320,500	123	\$38,465	6			\$358,965	129
C. Percentage ¹² (C=B/A*100)							205.1%	
2024 Payments	\$320,500	123	\$38,465	6			\$358,965	129

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

La Trobe University (LTU) is dedicated to decolonising the curriculum to empower Indigenous communities and ensuring cultural safety in our teaching and learning methods. We strive to enhance accessibility to higher education for Indigenous communities and to deepen the understanding of Indigenous peoples among all La Trobe students. By working to embed Indigenous knowledges into all facets of our educational programs, we aim to enlighten students about the richness of Indigenous knowledge relevant to their disciplines. In 2024, work commenced on reviewing La Trobe's existing Graduate Capabilities to more succinctly define what makes an LTU graduate unique or distinct. A new "Cultural Capability" was included which is defined as "using knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, contexts and understandings to enrich discipline knowledge and capacity to work in culturally sensitive, appropriate and ethical ways". The revised Graduate Capabilities will move through academic approval in 2025 and be implemented during the year.

In 2024, we secured an Indigenous Academic Director to develop targeted professional development to support academics to embed Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum and better understand Indigenous teaching and learning styles and Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Two workshops focused on embedding understandings were held in 2024, together with a presentation at La Trobe's Learning and Teaching Week Symposium. In addition, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous (PVCi) and the Academic Director presented to the La Trobe University Deans on embedding Indigenous understandings and the processes to achieve this target. In 2024, the PVCi and Academic Director sought to identify and organise a network of School champions for initial discussions on embedding Indigenous Knowledges across Schools and developing a Community of Practice. The first Community of Practice (CoP) meeting was held in mid-November 2024, and the CoP was formalised at the end of 2024. Going forward, CoP meetings will occur monthly.

To support this work, a full team of Indigenous Elders have been identified for the University's Elders Circle, with four members currently acknowledging their commitment to the Circle. In November 2024, La Trobe University convened the inaugural meeting of the Elders Circle, an advisory body established to guide the University's engagement with Indigenous communities and support the implementation of its Indigenous Strategy. The Elders Circle provides invaluable insights, ensuring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives shape La Trobe's future direction.

LTU boasts a well-established and highly esteemed array of Indigenous research initiatives. Under the Research 2030 Strategy, the University is poised to advance its research endeavours, focusing on key areas such as sustainable food and agriculture, resilient environments and communities, promoting health and wellbeing in individuals, families, and communities, understanding and preventing diseases, as well as fostering social change and equity. Indigenous research permeates across all research themes, owing to the holistic understandings, Indigenous knowledge, and methodologies employed by Indigenous Researchers. The Gabra

Biik Wurruwila Wutja Indigenous Research Centre was launched in 2024, marking a significant milestone in La Trobe's commitment to Indigenous-led research. The centre will host various research engagement activities and community discussions across campuses. In addition, the Ngargoonin Twarn Research Familiarisation Program for undergraduate students and the collaborative writing retreat for postgraduate students, in partnership with the University of Tasmania, will continue to support the development of Indigenous research capabilities and foster academic collaboration within and beyond La Trobe. Through Gabra Biik, Wurruwila Wutja, and guided by La Trobe's Indigenous Strategy, we will build capability to undertake research that matters to Aboriginal people, support researchers to engage with Indigenous communities, data and knowledge, and facilitate research guided by these partnerships that aims to provide impact.

La Trobe's Indigenous research efforts continued to be guided by a university-wide Indigenous research advisory committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) and Academic Director Indigenous Research. Specific activities across 2024 included the continued expansion of the Dennis McDermott Scholarship program. In 2025, a framework and supporting processes will be developed, addressing Indigenous data sovereignty and research ethics.

Indigenous Workforce Strategy

In line with our Indigenous Strategy 2022-2023, La Trobe University acknowledges and thanks our Indigenous employees for their outstanding contribution and commitment to our university. We value the contributions that our Indigenous staff make to enriching the experience of our students and acknowledge the cultural load they hold on behalf of their community and the University. Priority Reform Area Six of our Indigenous Strategy; Indigenous Employment, sets out La Trobe's actions and goals in this domain.

The University is aspiring to achieve a 3% participation rate for Indigenous employment across both professional and academic workforces. Employment numbers for Indigenous staff progressed during 2024 with 19 additional Indigenous staff joining LTU. As of December 2024, LTU has a total of 50 Indigenous staff compared to 31 staff in December 2023. This brings the participation rate for Indigenous employment to 1.6%, an increase from 1.2% the previous year.

Following the adoption of La Trobe's refreshed Collective Agreement, all Indigenous staff receive a \$5,000 per annum (pro-rotta) loading to reflect the cultural load associated with their duties.

La Trobe is committed to creating a culturally safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for our staff by giving staff opportunities to start, develop and build their careers in ways that help them to achieve their aspirations for the future. La Trobe is committed to:

- Creating opportunities for Indigenous staff to develop their careers and progress within the University and beyond.
- Ensuring our recruitment, performance and promotions policies and practices are culturally safe and recognise the cultural skills, relationships, leadership, and community work undertaken by our staff.

To meet these commitments, La Trobe will:

- Increase employment opportunities across all levels of professional, academic, and executive classifications for Indigenous people.
- Review recruitment and selection policies and processes and ensure they better support Indigenous people to join the University.
- Review current staff retention activities and consult with Indigenous staff to implement comprehensive internal and external retention strategies and services to support the ongoing employment of Indigenous staff.
- Develop tailored opportunities and programs to support Indigenous staff to develop their professional and leadership skills.
- Review existing workload, career success and promotions processes and policies to embed recognition of the cultural work, community work, and leadership undertaken by Indigenous staff.
- Establish structures to support and build capacity with Indigenous staff to senior discipline levels.
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous staff to connect with each other, share their experiences and explore their culture.

5.2. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The University refreshes the charter underpinning our Indigenous Governance Mechanism (please see attached document) on an annual basis. This was most recently refreshed by our Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in

March 2025. This charter outlines membership of a committee (the ISSP Advisory Board), reporting into a sub-committee of the Senior Executive Group, that includes our Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and Deputy Director, Indigenous Student Success, as well as a number of other relevant staff who identify as Indigenous. Up to one non-Indigenous member is appointed to the committee in an ex-officio position. The PVC (Indigenous) and Deputy Director, Indigenous Student Success, are the University's most senior Indigenous staff with accountabilities for supporting Indigenous student outcomes.

The ISSP Advisory Group meets on an annual basis and provides advice to the Senior Executive Group to inform the allocation of the ISSP budget. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) is a member of the University's Senior Executive Group. University Council, per the La Trobe Act 2009, governs the institution's broader financial position.

As mentioned, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) is a member of the University's Senior Executive Group. This is La Trobe's peak management committee, with responsibility (as delegated by the Vice-Chancellor) for providing advice and making decisions on the full breadth of La Trobe's activities, strategy and engagement. A number of senior Indigenous academic staff are also members of the University's Academic Board, the peak governance body for academic quality and assurance.

In addition, Indigenous student representatives were appointed to key governance committees, including the Academic Board and the Research Committee, integrating Indigenous perspectives into academic and research decision-making.

The University recognises the significant expertise of our communities and the value of embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being into our governance and operational practices. We will work in partnership with our communities, students and staff to achieve the outcomes of this plan – an accountability shared at all levels from the National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities and Universities Australia's Indigenous Strategy 2022-2025.

5.2.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the guidelines, the Indigenous Governance Mechanism should make a statement with reference to the performance report and the acquittal report in this section.

La Trobe has prioritised its commitment to supporting Indigenous students to achieve their personal and community goals in higher education. Examples of this overarching collaborative process are highlighted throughout this report with many positive examples of improved outcomes for students. These have covered many aspects of engagement and success for Indigenous students and relationship building with Indigenous communities across Victoria. This has been done through the valuing of Indigenous peoples' input through Elders, community discussions with organisations on issues such as research needs, examining data and talking with Indigenous students. This leadership has been progressed through collaboration and support with La Trobe senior executive and across the university under the guidance of strategic policy and outcomes.

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Additional information for completing the template

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2024. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2024 should be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

² This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

³ Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

⁴ Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁵ Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁶ Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

⁷ Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

⁸ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time). ⁹ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

¹⁰ Only record amounts which required payment during the 2024 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.

¹¹ Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2024 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2024 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2023 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).

¹² This data confirms the university's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.