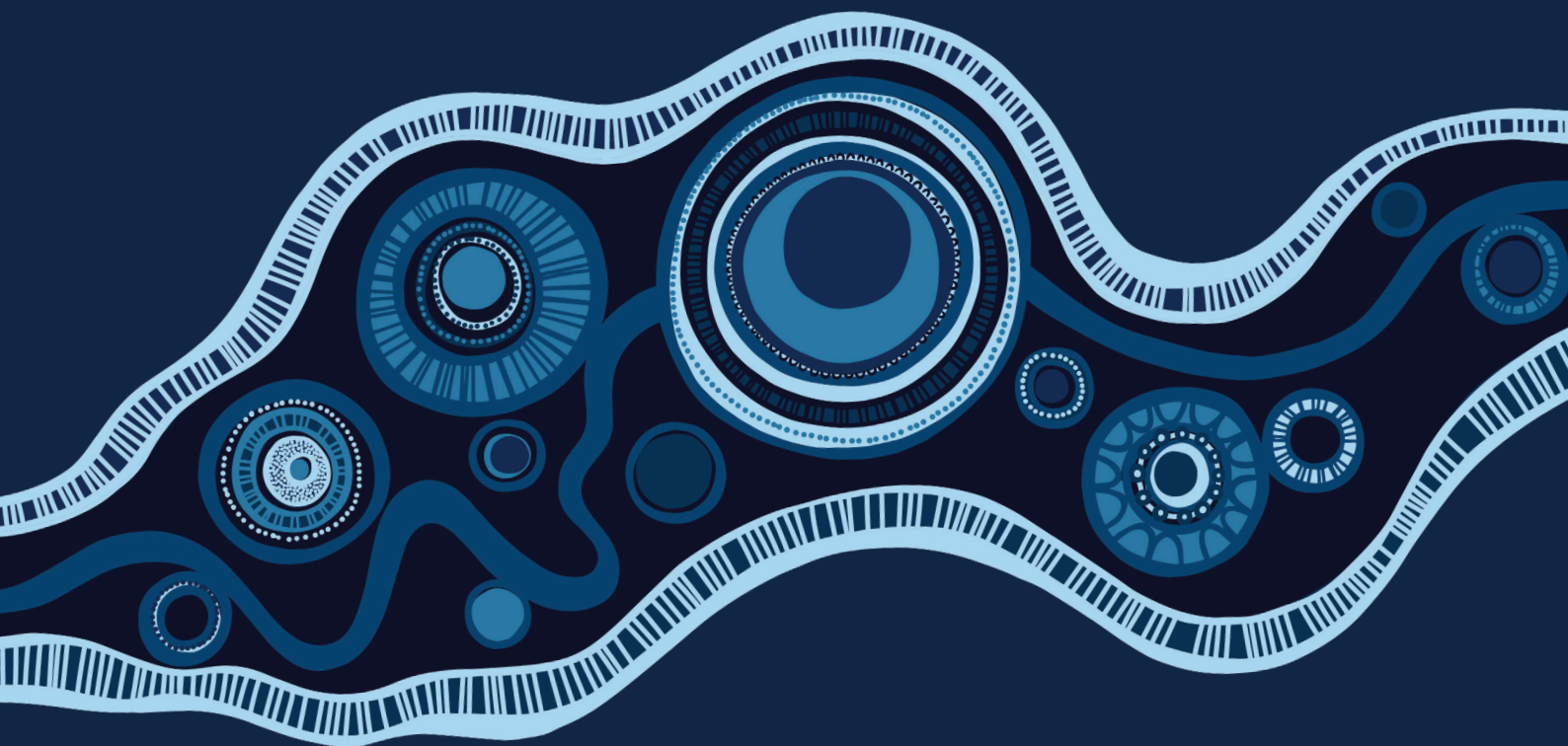


# SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STAFF EXCELLENCE AND SUCCESS



QUT INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY | 2023–2025



## QUT Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy

As a university, we recognise and value the significant contributions Indigenous Australian staff community make to our university community. They bring a wealth of cultural knowledge, expertise and perspectives into their various professional, research and teaching roles that greatly enrich the intellectual and cultural depth of our university and its community. This strategy sets out the university's commitment to increasing employment and development opportunities for Indigenous Australians at QUT. It aligns with the Connections priority of 'Recognising and fostering Indigenous Australian excellence' by playing a critical role in creating necessary conditions within our university to enable Indigenous Australians to achieve excellence and success. We thank everyone for their contributions to the development of this strategy and look forward to working collaboratively across the whole university to realise its vision and outcomes.



**Gillian Bromley**  
Vice-President (People)  
and Chief People officer



**Angela Leitch**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(Indigenous Australians)

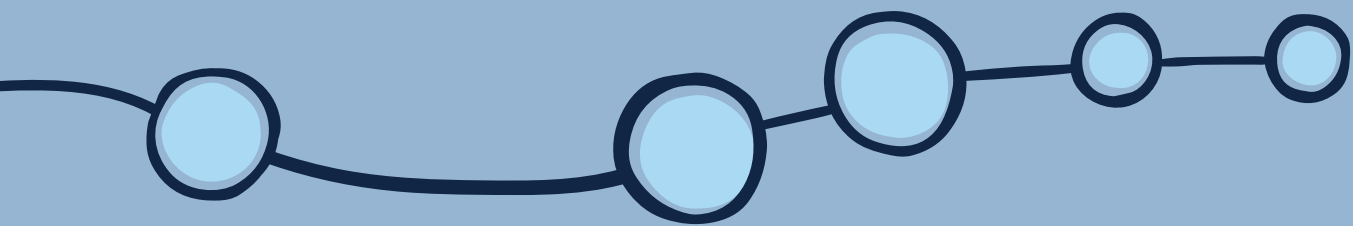
QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning. QUT acknowledges the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.

# Our vision

Supporting Indigenous Australian staff excellence and success.

# Our goal

QUT is an attractive and culturally affirming employment destination for Indigenous Australians that supports and develops their personal and professional aspirations.



## Focus areas

To achieve our goal, we will focus on:

### Workplace culture and environment

Providing a culturally safe, inclusive and rewarding working environment in which Indigenous Australian staff can thrive, succeed and excel.

### Wellbeing and engagement

Providing a culturally affirming, intellectually engaging place of connection for Indigenous Australian staff that promotes their wellbeing and engagement.

### Attraction and recruitment

Increasing the representation of Indigenous Australian staff across all areas of the organisation, stages of the employee lifecycle and employment categories, with a particular focus on 'growing our own'.

### Development and support

Supporting Indigenous Australian staff to achieve success and excellence by developing their personal, career and leadership goals on their terms.

### Strategy and leadership

Building organisational capability to support Indigenous Australian staff success and excellence by strengthening our policies, systems and governance structures.

## Our outcomes

- Increased representation of Indigenous Australian staff.
- Culturally safe and inclusive workplace environments that is free from racism.
- Highly skilled and qualified Indigenous Australian staff.
- Improved Indigenous Australian employee engagement and experience.
- Culturally competent workforce and organisation.

# QUT Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy 2023–2025

## OUR VISION

Supporting Indigenous Australian staff excellence and success

## OUR APPROACH

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

### Respect

Respect for and consideration of the unique and diverse cultural, social and spiritual belief systems practiced by Indigenous Australians.

### Acknowledge culture

Acknowledgement of the wealth of cultural knowledge, skills, experiences and expertise that Indigenous Australians bring to the workplace and the value created when Indigenous knowledges are embedded into all aspects of university life.

### Excellence and equity

Implementation of policies and contemporary workplace practices that respect and enable Indigenous Australian employees to reach their full potential, and achieve equitable outcomes in recruitment, retention and career development.

### Opportunity

The creation of meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians across the full range of academic, professional and senior staff positions within the University.

### Sense of place and belonging

The provision of a supportive environment that allows Indigenous Australian staff at all career and life stages to grow.

## OUR FOCUS AREAS

Workplace culture and environment

- Develop and implement an Indigenous Australian-specific anti-racism strategy that promotes, respects and protects the rights of Indigenous Australians to study and work in a racism-free environment.
- Support university staff to develop their competencies to integrate Indigenous Australian perspectives in their practice.
- Reflect Indigenous Australian culture and history into infrastructure design and the fabric of university campuses through implementing the QUT Campus to Country strategy.
- Provide cultural safety/capability training to staff that includes addressing the impacts of the dominant culture, Indigenous Australian dispossession, and racism.
- Celebrate and promote all significant Indigenous Australian dates and events across the University and provide opportunities for all staff to be engaged.
- Promote and encourage staff to use Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country resources at QUT hosted events.
- Implement QUT’s Indigenous Australia visual identity and brand to communicate key messages about QUT’s engagement with and presence of Indigenous Australian culture, knowledges, people and Country.

Wellbeing and engagement

- Foster Indigenous Australian staff connection, support and community to promote sharing of excellence, knowledge, experiences and innovation through:
  - developing an Indigenous Australian academic community of excellence network
  - implementing a biennial QUT Indigenous Australian Staff Forum
  - holding quarterly QUT Indigenous Australian staff networking meetings and
  - distributing monthly e-newsletter to Indigenous Australian staff.
- Prioritise strategies, based on findings from the annual QUT Staff Survey, to enhance the engagement and experiences of Indigenous Australian staff.
- Promote and support Indigenous Australian staff to apply for and be granted cultural leave.
- Celebrate and recognise Indigenous Australian staff excellence and success through the QUT award processes.
- Continue to grow and strengthen the University’s relationships with the local Indigenous Australian community and encourage community engagement on campus.
- Maintain the QUT Indigenous Australian Elder-in-Residence program to provide cultural mentorship, guidance, advice, and connection.
- Ensure onboarding/induction processes for new Indigenous Australian employees provide them with the necessary support they need to perform their required key responsibilities and assist them with their transition to the university sector.

Attraction and recruitment

- Partner with community, business and industry sectors to explore and pilot in Faculty of Health, opportunities for co-employment/joint positions.
- Identify, target and appoint qualified, skilled and experienced Indigenous Australian professionals into practice focused academic positions across a range of disciplines.
- Utilise Appointment by Invitation process to appoint suitably qualified and exceptional Indigenous Australians to senior professional and academic roles where appropriate.
- Each faculty/division will put in place multi-year plans (2023–2025) to:
  - set a numerical target for the recruitment of Indigenous Australian academics with a focus on recruiting Indigenous Australian academics at professorial level
  - appoint at least two (2) Indigenous Australian professional staff member at HEW5 level by targeting graduates to consider a professional career at QUT.
- Implement a series of post-doctoral fellowship opportunities to target talented Indigenous Australian early career academics.
- Commit research investment to build high-calibre Indigenous Australian research capacity and support recruitment of Indigenous Australian researchers.
- ‘Grow our own’ Indigenous Australian academic staff by supporting Indigenous Australians to gain doctoral research qualifications and pursue a pathway into academia.
- Ensure that relevant advertising, recruitment and selection practices and processes are culturally appropriate and in line with best practice approaches to recruit high-quality Indigenous Australian applicants.

Strategy and leadership

- Explore policies and procedures to maximise opportunities for indirect employment for Indigenous Australians by:
  - providing Indigenous Australian businesses with opportunities to supply to QUT and
  - prioritising employment opportunities in contractual requirements in capital works projects at QUT.
- Ensure academic promotion criteria appropriately recognise and reflect the unique contributions, skills and knowledge Indigenous Australians bring to the academy.
- Subject to enterprise bargaining, recognise the strengths Indigenous Australian staff bring to the university by undertaking an audit of additional cultural responsibilities to: understand the nature of issues at the institutional level; determine the impact on workloads; and develop appropriate responses to support and address.
- Maintain Indigenous Australian employment outcome as a key performance indicator with targets for the university to understand outcomes and inform action.
- Ensure data collection systems and procedures are in place to accurately report Indigenous Australian workforce outcomes and cultural competency training delivered to QUT staff.
- Support Indigenous Australian staff to influence and contribute to university decision-making processes through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Committee.

Development and support

- Prioritise Indigenous Australian staff in university coaching initiatives and programs.
- Fund the development of skills, knowledge and professional experiences of Indigenous Australian academic and professional staff.
- Allocate funding for Indigenous Australian professional staff to access appropriate development opportunities.
- Provide and support Indigenous Australian staff to take up secondment opportunities both internally and externally.
- Promote and target Indigenous Australian professional staff for University Leadership Development Programs.
- Provide mentoring to Indigenous Australian early career academics to support their development and career progression.
- Designate places for Indigenous Australian academics in university-wide leadership and research development programs.
- Support participation in international exchange and development opportunities for Indigenous Australian academics, supported by travel scholarships.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Indigenous Australian staff report a favourable rating that is greater than 75% in their overall experience and workplace culture (source: QUT Staff Survey)
- Indigenous Australian staff represent 3.6% of staff population (source: QUT Corporate Performance Reporting)
- Increase the number of Indigenous Australians academics by 50%.



# Building on our successes

QUT has made demonstrable progress in supporting Indigenous Australian staff success and excellence. Over the course of our previous Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy between 2018 to 2021 there have been many achievements and successes that provide a solid foundation for achieving our vision (refer Fact Sheet). Despite these achievements, we know there is much more for the university to do. Our new strategy seeks to learn from and build on these successes to continue our momentum.



Like many Australian universities, QUT is committed to increasing the representation of Indigenous Australians across our entire workforce. Our current number of Indigenous Australian staff employed at the university is the highest it has ever been in the thirty-year history of the university. A key challenge for the university is to sustain and build on this success. Over the last decade, our growth rate of Indigenous Australian staff has been highly variable. It suggests that our employment enablers must not only focus on attraction and recruitment but also staff wellbeing, engagement, retention and the creation of sustainable careers.

QUT aspires to be an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians. To promote Indigenous Australian employment at the university, we must position QUT as an attractive and culturally affirming employment destination. The university must work diligently and deliberately to create conditions that enable Indigenous Australian employees to grow, develop and thrive. We must provide safe, and comfortable work environments that is free from racism and exclusion. The university must also demonstrate through concrete, visible actions the high value we place on Indigenous Australian knowledge, cultures and histories through our education, research and engagement.

Several actions within the strategy are dedicated to increasing the representation of Indigenous Australian academics at QUT, especially in senior levels. Their recruitment and retention remain an ongoing challenge for QUT and a key focus area for improvement going forward. The low supply and high demand for Indigenous Australian academics Australia-wide makes their recruitment and retention extremely competitive. As a university, we must look at new and innovative ways to 'grow our own' Indigenous Australian academics through identifying and supporting the supply pool of future Indigenous Australian academics, creating clear and viable pathways; and provision of

university-based financial and employment incentives. QUT has made some positive and deliberate progress on appointments of Indigenous Australians into key positions across the university to provide visible presences within the academy.

QUT recognises that our efforts to increase employment and development opportunities for Indigenous Australians must be a whole-of-university responsibility. It must be led and championed by senior leaders and embedded within institutional systems, structures, strategies and accountabilities. It must also involve a focus on building the cultural capability of the organisation including our people, policies and systems.

 **Universities need to employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and then work to support them to advance their careers.** 

**Universities Australia<sup>1</sup>**

## Key drivers

Our strategy is supported by a range of internal and external policies, strategies and initiatives that underpin, drive and authorise our approach and priorities. They include:

- *Connections—QUT Strategy 2023–2027*
- QUT's Academic Plan
- QUT's HR People Strategy
- QUT's *Indigenous Australian Research Strategy*
- QUT Enterprise Agreements
- QUT's Divisional Enabling Plans
- QUT's *Campus to Country Strategy*
- *Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2022–2025*
- UA Guiding Principles for Developing Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities
- Indigenous Students Assistance Grant Guidelines
- Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy.

# Delivering our strategy

The Human Resources Department, led by the Vice-President (People) and Chief People Officer, in conjunction with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Australians) will oversee the implementation of this plan under the strategy sponsorship of the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar.

To achieve the outcomes of this strategy, the implementation of the strategy will involve a whole-of-university approach with shared commitment, responsibility and accountability and include stronger roles for university executive and management to deliver successful outcomes.

Human Resources and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Australians) will jointly develop a university-wide implementation plan as a tool to effectively coordinate activity and monitor and report on progress of actions contained in the strategy. The implementation plan will cover the five focus areas of the strategy and outline implementation arrangements for each action including key results and outcome, responsibility, and timelines.

QUT's commitment to advancing employment and development of Indigenous Australians is strongly embedded within the university's strategic framework which in turn, flows down through the university's integrated planning framework within the Academic Plan, Divisional Enabling Plans and faculty plans.

At a university-wide level, QUT Council has endorsed the employment of Indigenous Australian staff as a key performance indicator for the university, with targets set at university, faculty and divisional levels. As part of corporate performance reporting, the university monitors its progress against this key performance indicator and prepares quarterly reports to various university committees.

The university's Indigenous Australian Advisory Committee (IAAC) whose role is to advise on recruitment, retention, and support of Indigenous Australian staff, will monitor the implementation of the strategy. Indigenous Australian employment is presently a standing item for the IAAC where the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar (or nominee) reports on progressive Indigenous Australian workforce data and outcomes. As part of this standing item, an annual progress report on the implementation of the strategy will be provided by HR to IAAC and the University Executive to monitor the deliverables and priorities of the strategy. IAAC membership is also inclusive of representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff committee that is established under the QUT Enterprise Agreement as well as Indigenous Australian non-government community representatives.

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## References

<sup>1</sup>Universities Australia, (2022) *Indigenous Strategy 2022–25*, Universities Australia, p.31



