

2014 RMIT Indigenous Education Statement

31 May 2015

RMIT acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the University stands. RMIT respectfully recognises Elders both past and present.

This Statement responds to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's (PM&C) request for information relating to the 2014 outcomes and future plans of RMIT to meet ongoing responsibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student achievement in higher education.

This Statement has been written by RMIT's Indigenous Education Unit, the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (the Centre), and stakeholders across the University. Ngarara Willim means 'gathering place' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people.

Introduction

RMIT is a global university of technology and design and Australia's largest tertiary institution. RMIT operates as a dual sector institution, offering programs ranging from pre-apprenticeships through to PhD level. While the focus of this Statement is to report on higher education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, mention of this student cohorts' outcomes at pre-bachelor level will be highlighted throughout this report where appropriate.

The Strategic Plan of RMIT University, *Transforming the Future: RMIT 2015*, outlines a number of goals and core values that are directly applicable to the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

One of RMIT's core values is 'Fairness', encompassing explicitly, respect for Indigenous cultures. These core values inform the teaching and learning practice of the University in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students. The University also aims to position itself as both an employer of choice and preferred place of study for Australia's First Nations people. This approach is embedded through RMIT activities and strategies, including:

- RMIT's Act, which articulates RMIT's priority to use its expertise and resources to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in its teaching, learning, research and advancement of knowledge activities;
- The RMIT Academic Plan 2011-2015, which is based on the Strategic Plan and reflects the commitment of RMIT to implement the Wurreker Strategy¹ on Indigenous issues.
- The RMIT Indigenous Employment Strategy, which articulates objectives and approaches for increasing employment opportunities at RMIT, supporting retention and developing stronger links between RMIT and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- RMIT's Reconciliation Statement that expresses our commitment to cultural respect and promoting opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- RMIT's Equity and Diversity Plan explicitly commits RMIT to further focusing on Indigenous employment, research and education, including: prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

¹ The Wurreker Strategy was developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) in partnership with the State Government and Victorian education and training providers. It is a partnership to improve training delivery for Indigenous students in order to achieve quality education, training and employment outcomes.

students in all outreach and engagement work; supporting aspiration and access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; implementing commitments from our Reconciliation Statement and our Indigenous Employment Strategy; and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research candidates with explicit support for potential academic careers.

RMIT continues to achieve the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP). The AEP Statement offers a considered overview regarding our progress for achieving and maintaining the AEP goals for the 2014 period.

Summary of 2014 outcomes and performance

RMIT consolidated and sustained its efforts from previous years to achieve the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy in 2014. RMIT's core access, participation, and graduation services and strategies were maintained and this was borne out in higher education access, participation, and employment numbers that were broadly consistent with RMIT's previous performances. Indigenous Support Program (ISP) funding of \$472,000 is acquitted at the end of this document.

RMIT is pleased to report the following highlights:

- Around a 30% increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student vocational education commencements (from 96 in 2013 to 126 in 2014)
- Around a 14% increase in total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student higher education enrolments in 2014 compared to 2013 (from 122 to 139), translating to a slight overall increase in the participation rate
- 78 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed their studies in 2014, across the breadth of tertiary delivery

Student or staff cohort	2012 performance*	2013 performance*	2014 performance^	Change 2013-14
Vocational education commencements	145	96	126	31.3% increase
Higher education commencements (headcount)	59	49	54	10.2% increase
Higher education enrolments (headcount)	132	122	139	13.9% increase
Higher education completions	23	27	19	29.6% decrease

* 2012 and 2013 values reflect RMIT signed-off HEIMs data.

^2014 values reflect RMIT student statistical submission – preliminary.

SECTION 1: STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED WHICH SEEK TO ACHIEVE THE AEP GOALS AND YOUR ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER THESE STRATEGIES ARE WORKING

Whole of RMIT strategies and specialised service provision was complemented by a comprehensive scholarship facility in 2014. The amount of scholarship funding awarded in 2014 was up to \$315,512. These scholarships reflected a mix of government, University and private scholarship funding tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at RMIT. This amount expended is less than 2013. The explanation for this reduction is further expanded on in **Section 1.3-Scholarships**. In summary, it can be attributed to a lower up take of scholarships by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A review of this explanation will be undertaken in 2015 to determine if better promotion and access to scholarships can be improved.

The Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The work of RMIT's Indigenous Education Unit, the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, continued its Indigenous Access Scheme, Gama-dji Tertiary Skills Orientation Program and Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Program. These are well-established access and participation schemes that are reviewed regularly to meet changing needs. The Centre also plays a leadership role in the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at the University and continued to provide University staff and students with assistance in accessing support and advice on Indigenous matters.

These strategies, which are revised and reviewed, assists retention and creates a sense of community for students that last throughout their tertiary education. In the last quarter of 2014, the senior appointments of a Senior Manager for the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Professional), a Professor of Indigenous Studies and an Associate Professor in Health Science has helped enhance RMIT's commitment to Indigenous access, participation and leadership within RMIT.

The Indigenous Specialisation Program consolidates and grows

A highlight for RMIT in 2014, in respect of its AEP goals, was the growth of the Indigenous Specialisation program. Since 2009, RMIT has implemented the Indigenous Specialisation program. The Indigenous Specialisation enables RMIT graduates to acquire understanding of the social and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia through active engagement with individuals and communities. Specifically, the Specialisation embeds Australian Indigenous issues into existing programs of study through a growing range of subjects. Undergraduate students who complete four subjects from the Indigenous Specialisation program attain an acknowledgement on their academic transcripts, regardless of their primary program of studies.

With the introduction of a number of new courses in 2014, RMIT has doubled the number of students enrolled in Indigenous studies courses across the University (from 397 students in 2013 to 884 in 2014).

With the promotion of the Associate Professor responsible for the academic quality of Indigenous Specific curriculum to the Professor of Indigenous Studies from late 2014, strategies to increase Indigenous learning and teaching across programs at RMIT is planned for 2015.

Community engagement broadened

The broader RMIT community has again replicated and/or grown a number of significant initiatives across the University that point to a broader commitment to Indigenous values and culture. These achievements are additional to the specialised service provision of the Ngarara Willim Centre for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and direct student and staff programs. These achievements included:

- Following on from the now well established five day field trip by Diploma Conservation and Land management students to Gunditjmara Country in SW Victoria, and the 2014 launch of the pilot 'Environment and Culture: Ecological and Aboriginal understandings of Country' (Indigenous studies) elective, the School of Vocational health and Sciences will twice offer the Course in 2015. In early July (1st Semester), students undertook a five day field trip to iconic Lake Mungo in Wentworth, NSW to meet local Aboriginal custodians and to experience unique Aboriginal places interpreted by the locals. Ecology, traditional and modern Aboriginal land management techniques and understandings of Country, impacts of climate change over millennia will all be addressed in an immersive experience. In September the Course will be repeated (2nd Semester), this time travelling to Gunditjmara Country where local Indigenous Rangers (RMIT Trainees in Conservation and Land management) and Elders will interpret the unique aquaculture systems, evidence of permanent villages and stoneworks, and share insights into Indigeneity in a modern world. Both these field trips were preceded by immersive experiences in Aboriginal understandings of Country and/or place through field trips to important cultural sites in the Melbourne region, interpreted by Aboriginal guides.
- The NT Government has continued to support the delivery of vocational training to Community Support Workers in the NT through Labour Market and User Choice funding. In November 2014, 25 students graduated at a ceremony conducted in Katherine, from two qualifications - Certificate IV Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) and Diploma Community Services AOD and Mental Health. The program has now expanded and is offered in Katherine, Alice Springs and the remote Community Ngukurr. It is expected that 45 students will graduate from these programs across each site in 2015.
- In the Certificate III in Dental Assisting, six students started the program and five completed. Many of the students finishing the program considered a pathway to the Certificate IV in Dental Assisting. There is an existing partnership between North Richmond Community Health, Robinvale Health and RMIT Dental. They teach a core unit "Indigenous Oral Health and Working in Communities". This is run from Robinvale. Advertising for the course continues through community partnerships and RMIT. Two students were asked to take part in a vox pop style video through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Individual Learning Plans are an ongoing part of the course.

2014 identified challenges

RMIT also experienced challenges that have been factored into changes for 2015:

- Student experience and employability of students after they graduate were RMIT's major focus and analysed through a number of reviews undertaken in late 2014. Changes to RMIT policy and programs to improve outcomes in these areas will require thoughtful consideration of the impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait student cohorts in the future.
- As noted in the 2013 Statement, RMIT has also recognised that it needs to identify a number of senior university sponsors to maintain the AEP goals as the University develops its new Strategic Plan to 2020 during 2015 (see below).

Plans for the future improvement of existing strategies or implementation of new strategies to meet each of the AEP goals relevant to higher education

The following section of the Statement will address the six AEP goals for which a response has been requested in relation to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's template. Each section will be answered separately and summary data presented. The financial acquittal document is attached separately.

During 2015, RMIT is developing its new Strategic Plan to 2020. The Plan will be underpinned by an open, transparent, innovative and respectful consultation process and provides the opportunity to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff and renew our strategies and commitments for the period 2016-2020. This will include reviewing Indigenous access and participation strategies. Each phase of the process will be communicated to stakeholders. Key parts of the process will consider RMIT's overarching values and its commitment to the communities with which we engage, as well as strategic approaches to supporting us achieve our objectives. This provides a key opportunity for RMIT to reflect and refresh its strategies to achieve its objectives and the goals of the AEP. For further information on RMIT's strategic plan process, see: <http://shapermit.com/>

Consistent with the 2012 Behrendt Review outcomes, we are continuing to try and implement our strategies through a whole of university approach, drawing on the expertise of the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while not relying on them to bear the full brunt of responsibility. The development of these strategies are to inform a broad range of activities including teaching and learning and developing new partnerships.

In 2012 the National Behrendt Review and the internal RMIT review of the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were undertaken with similar recommendations being made in both of these reports. The implementation of strategies and plans from these reviews were realised with the appointment of the new senior manager to the Centre. This appointment coupled with the start of the new Vice Chancellor in February 2015 and along with a number of internal RMIT strategic documents that are due to be reviewed, will see initiatives and inclusions to better profile Indigenous education at RMIT.

Further appointments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff will continue. Building the Indigenous academic profile is commensurate with recommendations from the Behrendt Review and will build the profile of Indigenous education within RMIT.

The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan is also planned for 2015 which is expected to increase the commitment internally - all staff, Alumni, Council members and students and, externally with the wider community of Victoria.

A University wide review of student services started in late 2014 with implementation of strategies and plans to improve the profile and quality of students attending RMIT to begin in 2015. RMIT's analysis of and separate reports on student experience and employability outcomes set the scene in the latter half of 2014, for changes to programs and service delivery for 2015.

This university wide review also impacts on the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' experiences and needs. The delivery of courses, wellbeing, counselling and administration services to all students will be reviewed to determine the best way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students engage with these services. This review is to find the best way mainstream services can be implemented to meet the needs of the growing cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Implementation of mainstream changes impact significantly on Indigenous educational outcomes and requires continued commitment from RMIT and its policies to ensure Indigenous outcomes are improved.

Section 1.1 - Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making

The number of people involved in Institutional decision making processes and the nature of their involvement i.e. membership on boards, committees

Senior Governance: RMIT has three specialist senior governance committees with specific Indigenous representation. All are active with the purpose of addressing university issues and their relationship to Indigenous issues:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research Advisory Group: The Committee is an advisory committee to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor to inform the development, implementation and review of strategies, plans and developments that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research at RMIT.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Advisory Committee: The purpose of this Committee is to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy within the University. The Committee also supports the University's objectives in relation to the Wurreker Strategy (footnoted above) and assists in efforts to support the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

Indigenous Specialisation Program Advisory Committee: The Committee assists in the development of detailed program submissions for new and reviewed programs in relation to the Indigenous Specialisation. General information about these Committees is available to RMIT staff on the RMIT website.

Mechanism to share concerns at RMIT: RMIT also hosts the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network (ATSISN); a formal network established so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have an opportunity to network with and support one another within the University environment. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working for the University are invited to participate. The ATSISN meets 3-4 times a year and is designed to:

- Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff the opportunity to network with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members;
- Provide informal mentoring opportunities;
- Allow practical information sessions and discussions regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs and issues within RMIT.

RMIT university will review the 2011-2015 Strategic and Academic Plans and will look to providing new strategies for governance and decision making structures as a part of the 2016-2020 Strategies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior staff roles and responsibilities within your Institution

Professor Barry Judd: Promoted in late 2014 to the Professor of Indigenous Studies role (Lecturer E) is a significant appointment for RMIT. As the most senior Indigenous Academic at RMIT he is responsible for ensuring the enculturation of Indigenous specialisation courses across the curriculum, profiling Indigenous affairs within RMIT, securing grants and being a role model of academia for future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aunty Kerrie Doyle: The School of Health Sciences has created a cross-faculty appointment for an Indigenous identified Associate Professor position. Aunty Kerrie Doyle occupies this position and provides advice on Indigenous perspectives to be incorporated in curriculum across the health disciplines.

Ms Stacey Campton: RMIT appointed a Senior Manager (Professional) of the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the latter half of 2014. Ms Campton has extensive senior management experience in Indigenous affairs with the experience of working with budgets, grant applications and acquittals and developing and implementing strategic policy and programs related to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Ms Jillian Weaven: Ms Weaven has extensive senior management experience in Human Resources management across several industry sectors including education, engineering and construction at both a domestic and global perspective. Ms Weaven currently holds the position of Human Resources Business Partner at RMIT.

Section 1.2 - Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed, as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions

An outline of your active Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment strategy including details on how it was authored, how current it is and whether or not it is publicly accessible on the internet. (Please provide a current link).

The RMIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2012-2015 (the strategy) was authored by Ms Alison Craigie-Parsons (then Senior Coordinator, Indigenous Employment) in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Advisory Committee and the Human Resources Department and with significant consultation of other stakeholders. The strategy was informed by national best practice and builds on previous employment strategies.

The strategy objective is to increase employment opportunities and improve the retention rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all levels within the University. It is a guide for operational area staff to work towards increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed within RMIT. The strategy outlines five key goals and priorities:

1. Effective recruitment practices

Priority: To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed within the University within all sectors and levels.

2. Ongoing career development

Priority: To provide career development opportunities within RMIT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to establish successful careers.

3. Develop and strengthen community links

Priority: To promote and develop collaborative partnerships between RMIT University and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that will increase recruitment opportunities and improve staff retention rates.

4. Increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in leadership and governance

Priority: To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are incorporated in leadership, governance and decision-making within the University.

5. Inclusive cultural workplace practices

Priority: To develop and promote the cultural competency and skills of all RMIT staff.

The RMIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2012-2015 is publically available on the RMIT University website here: <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/z4legdpdkb2mz.pdf>

Information on your strategies for increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed at your University.

The strategy has a target of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers proportionate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Victoria, currently 0.7% (Australian Bureau of Statistics). The RMIT Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014 (the agreement) commits to achieving annual targets and to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers 'by at least 10 FTE by the end of 2015'. The agreement also commits to providing central funding to facilitate the initial employment of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Academic staff and PhD students to academic roles.

The strategy is supported and overseen by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Advisory Committee and has a Senior Indigenous Employment Coordinator to facilitate implementation. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network has been established to build collegiality amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and as a forum for ideas,

information sharing and to discuss key issues. Cultural awareness workshops are being conducted for staff targeting areas engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and an online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander awareness program is being developed for implementation in 2016. An expression of interest in employment is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access and upload their resume on the RMIT employment vacancies web site.

The number of Indigenous-specific positions at RMIT University, detailed by occupation and level

By the end of 2014 there were currently 11 Indigenous-specific positions – three (3) Academic and eight (8) non-academic. These positions encompass roles in key areas that underpin our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education goals. Detailed in the table below are the position occupations and levels.

Faculty/Institute/Section	Academic/Non-Academic	Position title
College of Design and Social Context	Academic	Associate Professor - Level D Lecturer Level B
College of Science, Engineering & Health	Academic	Associate Professor - Level D
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Manager - HEW 10A
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Coordinator - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Advisor - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Advisor - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Advisor - HEW 7
Academic	Non-Academic	Student Liaison Officer – HEW 5
Academic	Non-Academic	Project Officer - HEW 7
Resources	Non-Academic	Senior Coordinator - HEW 8
Total	11	

The current number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at your University and their roles across the University (Including numbers in academic and non-academic roles, and by level).

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, as at 28 February 2015, is: 16 permanent (ongoing), 1 fixed-term (contract) and 5 casual, totalling 22 or 21.2 FTE staff.

Table 1 – Permanent positions

Faculty/Institute/Section	Academic/Non-Academic	Position title
College of Design and Social Context	Academic	Professor - Level E
College of Design and Social Context	Academic	Lecturer - Level B

College of Science, Engineering and Health	Academic	Associate Professor - Level D
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Manager - HEW 10A
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Coordinator - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Advisor - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Senior Advisor - HEW 8
Academic	Non-Academic	Advisor - HEW 7
Academic	Non-Academic	Student Liaison Officer- HEW 5
Resources	Non-Academic	Senior Manager - HEW10A
Resources	Non-Academic	Senior Coordinator - HEW 8
Engagement and Vocational Education	Non-Academic	Information Officer - HEW 5
College of Business	Non-Academic	Administrative Officer - HEW 5
Student Services Directors Office	Non-Academic	Project Officer - HEW 7
Resources	Non-Academic	Team Leader - HEW 7
College of Design and Social Context	Non-Academic	Administrative Officer - HEW 5
Total	16	

Table 2 – Casual Positions

Faculty/Institute/Section	Academic/Non-Academic	Position title
College of Business	Academic	Casual Academic - Level A
College of Design and Social Context	Academic	Casual Academic - Level A
Academic	Non-Academic	Casual Professional - HEW 5
Academic	Non-Academic	Casual Professional - HEW 2
Academic	Non-Academic	Casual Professional - HEW 2
Total	5	

Table 3 - Fixed-Term positions

Faculty/Institute/Section	Academic/Non-Academic	Position title
Academic	Non-Academic	Project Officer - HEW 7
Total	1	

Section 1.3 - Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher Education

Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers for 2014 (access rate) as compared to 2013 (please provide an all student comparison).

Commencing Higher Education (HE) Enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students - EFTSL

	2012*	2013*	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	47	39	35^
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	8,806	9,835	10,059^

Commencing Higher Education (HE) Enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students - Numbers

	2012*	2013*	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	59	49	54^
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	11,069	12,200	12,548^

Commencing Vocational Education (VE) Enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students - Numbers

	2012	2013	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	145	96	126^
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	11,817	11,279	10,375^

*2012 and 2013 values reflect RMIT signed-off HEIMs data (HE).

^2014 (HE) values reflect RMIT student statistical submission – preliminary. VE data also preliminary.

Commencing higher education student numbers declined from 39 students in 2013 to 35 students in 2014 (a 10% decline). This absolute decline was also evident in proportional terms with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commencing students representing 0.39% of total commencements in 2013 compared with a 0.35% in 2014. More positively:

- HE commencements (enrolments) increased in 2014 to 54, up from 49 in 2013. This also translates to a small increase in the access rate (0.43% in 2014, up from 0.4% in 2013);
- Using Australian Government data regarding the equity profile of demand through the Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC), the overall proportion of applicants from an Indigenous background has been stable (between 0.40% and 0.44% of applicants – source Australian Government Institutional Performance Portfolios, 2012-2014), indicating consistent levels of preference applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prospective students.

Also, RMIT continued to provide a number of pathways into our tertiary programs to encourage access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into higher education.

The leverage of the dual sector capacity provides RMIT with advantages in the provision of

educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The cross sector skill elective, the articulated pathway and the dual qualification are all advantages of RMIT as it provides a number of diverse educational pathways and qualification options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students seeking tertiary education. In this context, we note 2014 RMIT vocational commencements have increased by 31.3% in 2014 over 2013.

Programs run, by the University, to improve access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

RMIT provides a number of targeted and special access schemes that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student access to RMIT study through priority non-competitive processes. These schemes help the university to consider factors other than solely Tertiary Entrance Rank or Grade Point Average (GPA) scores. These schemes include:

- A targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entry scheme – this also applies within our Schools network Access Program SNAP partners;
- Special Entry Assistance Schemes (SEAS) – through which RMIT supports people who have experienced educational disadvantage;
- Apply Direct – our application process direct to RMIT, including through VTAC 7;
- Postgraduate Research Equity Places (PREP scheme) – a program to provide special entry to postgraduate students from equity backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The scheme enables priority access for eligible candidates, including to higher-degree programs.

Programs to improve access

Program Name	Target Audience	Outline of Program	Outcome
Indigenous Access Scheme	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples wishing to access a tertiary program.	NWC staff work with course selection officer(s) and course/teaching staff to interview prospective students, further supporting the student to demonstrate their capacity for tertiary study and promoting academic staff commitment to Indigenous education and training.	57 people were interviewed and offers of acceptance/enrolment were made Of the 57 offers made, 37 students accepted and officially enrolled at RMIT.
Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) entry scheme	Secondary school students in the SNAP Partnership (105 schools from 6 metro and 4 regional areas of Victoria).*	The SNAP scheme provides bonus ATAR points or other consideration to support entry by applicants below the “clearly in” mark.	8 Aboriginal students from SNAP schools received RMIT offers for 2015 entry.

Details on outreach activities and their effectiveness, in including and attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (See table below)

RMIT has partnered with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) since 2010. AIME is a national Indigenous mentoring program that targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students and provides mentoring from university students to raise aspiration for university study. AIME tutored 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at RMIT in 2014. AIME figures show more than 95% of Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were mentored by RMIT students through the program last year progressed to Year 10. The figures also show almost 82% of RMIT-mentored students completed Year 12 last year – more than 10% above the average completion rate for Indigenous students around Australia (71.8 per cent).

In the latter half of 2014, whilst undertaking Indigenous Access Scheme applications and interviews, it was evident that the previous year’s work between AIME and RMIT would produce more applicants for enrolment at RMIT in future years. This outcome is mainly due to the working relationship between AIME staff and Centre staff. An RMIT Aboriginal student was appointed to the AIME-RMIT relationship/program manager for 2014. This student is an Honours student and an excellent role model for tertiary study. AIME’s commitment to and understanding of developing inspiration and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to tertiary study was unwavering.

Outreach activities

Outreach activity	Target audience	Outline of Program	Outcome
“I Belong” on-campus programs and modules*	Aboriginal secondary school students	Three programs designed to build aspiration for and awareness of university, disciplines, careers and pathways, incorporating experiential learning. Two programs co-delivered with AIME.	24 students from 8 schools participated in the 3 programs.
Year 7 - 10 Connections in the Discipline of Exercise Science	Tiwi Island Student leaders	The 'Year 7-10 Connections program: I Belong Bundoora' enables high school students to visit RMIT Bundoora campus to experience the types of activities associated with Physical Education and Exercise Science careers.	The school leaders from Xavier Catholic College, Wurrumiyanga, NT, Bathurst Island, Tiwi Island visited the Discipline of Exercise Science on Bundoora Campus for the day. Ten students, from years 7 – 12.

In 2014 the University received a HEPP grant for the “I Belong Senior Years” program to increase Indigenous participation, and has employed a full-time Indigenous Program Coordinator. The role acts to enhance capacity and achievement across the breadth of the University’s outreach activity with prospective Indigenous students, their families and communities including in the Middle Years programs.

RMIT scholarship support for Indigenous students

RMIT recognises that scholarships are crucial to underpin our broader access and retention strategies and we focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to access scholarships through a joined-up approach and a broad marketing strategy. In 2014, students benefited from \$315,512 in scholarship support across 13 categories. This is new scholarship funding for 2014, not pipeline (continuing student scholarships). The Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples advertises to both the prospective and continuing students the benefactor scholarships that the students could potentially apply for. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduate/coursework students had the opportunity to access study support and laptop scholarships. Scholarships are advertised to students in various ways, including:

- Through the Centre, which advises on scholarships on offer and close-off dates;
- Participation by our Scholarship Office staff in the Gama-dji Orientation and Transition programs, to encourage and support students to complete applications for scholarships;
- A targeted webpage that comprehensively outlines scholarships that are available to Indigenous students (both through the University and externally) and links to the national Indigenous Scholarships website that includes information on relevant Australian and overseas scholarships;
- MyRMIT (RMIT's Learning Management System) which allows targeted promotion of scholarships to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students; and
- General marketing activities including the Scholarships brochure, Open Day and TV advertising at our student information counters.

In 2014 the scholarships specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants had a 20% reduction in take up rate. Key points to note include:

- 110 scholarships were awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at RMIT in 2014;
- 98 RMIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2014 benefited from broader equity scholarships;
- Students who need to relocate to study at RMIT are predominantly funded through the University-funded accommodation support (rather than Commonwealth funds) to ensure that support is available throughout their studies.

Looking forward, RMIT continues to explore opportunities to further build on scholarship support including for Indigenous accommodation and to potentially increase funding from private sources.

Scholarship details	Government/ Private/ University specific	No. Allocated	Cost [#]		No. Awarded*
			Value of scholarship	Total cost awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	
Indigenous Access Scholarship	Government	18	4702	43,469	12
Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship	Government	17	2,492	41,118	17
Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship	Government	4	4,985	17,448	4
RMIT Study Support Scholarship [^]	University	562	Up to 2500	81,400	38
RMIT Study Support Scholarship [^]	Government	149	Up to 2500	0	0
RMIT Equity Notebook Scholarship [^]	Government	295 20	808 2204	15,352 4,408	19 2
RMIT Equity Notebook Scholarship [^]	University	83	808	11,312	14
RMIT Accommodation Support Scholarship [^]	University	32	Up to 5200	36,635	8
RMIT Village Accommodation Support Scholarship [^]	University	16	5193	15,195	5
RMIT Village Accommodation Support Scholarship [^]	Private	16	7753	38,765	5
Northcote Trust [^] Scholarship	University / Private	13	Up to 5000	2,500	1
Rural Grant [^]	Private	20	Up to 5000	0	0
Evelyn Boekemann Scholarship	Private	8	813	7,910	8

[^]No. Allocated includes both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other cohorts of students

[#]Cost, has been divided into to, the value of the scholarship and the total cost of awarding to (I) students only.

* No. Awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

RMIT Equity, Foundation and HEPP Comments:

All commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in full time Vocational Education, Undergraduate study (including associate, bachelor and honors degree programs), and postgraduate by coursework programs are entitled to receive a RMIT Study Support Scholarship worth \$2500. Any of these full time commencing students who come from rural, regional or remote homes who want to live at RMIT Village are entitled to fully paid accommodation in a two bed studio with the RMIT Village Accommodation Support Scholarship (for non-Indigenous students this scholarship pays half their accommodation costs of \$127 per week).

Comments on Commonwealth Indigenous Scholarships - new 2014

The Coursework Scholarships Office was successful in its bid to the Federal Government for Commonwealth Indigenous scholarships for 2014. RMIT received an extra seven scholarships (three IAS and four ICECS). While we have a higher number of Commonwealth scholarships to offer, the number of bachelor degree applicants applying for these scholarships is lower than in previous years, some applicants were ineligible as they had received these scholarships in the past, and some do not meet the geographical and/or financial criteria to be eligible to receive these particular scholarships.

Comments on Philanthropic Scholarships - new 2014

Students are able to apply for benefactor scholarships directly to RMIT. A number of 'direct' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants who applied for these scholarships failed to supply the required written statement and references. Both the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Coursework Scholarships Office provide additional support to students on how to complete an application. If an application is received prior to the due date by the Coursework Scholarships Office, a staff member will call the student to advise them if they have not completed the necessary statements/references. The student who received the Northcote Trust Scholarship was phoned and asked to complete a new statement addressing the key points for the scholarship, and their application was ultimately successful.

Section 1.4 - Achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of all other Australians

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments for 2014, compared to 2013 (please provide an all student comparison).

Overall RMIT maintained the participation rates of Indigenous students, with a 13.9% increase in the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (from 122 students in 2013 to 139 students in 2014), leading to a slight increase in the participation rate at RMIT.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student HE enrolments for 2012-2014:

Student Identification	2012*	2013*	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	132	122	139^
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	26,874	29,389	32,320

*2012 and 2013 values reflect RMIT signed-off HEIMs data (HE).

^2014 (HE) values reflect RMIT student statistical submission – preliminary. VE data also preliminary.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student HE EFTSL for 2012-2014

	2012*	2013*	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	103	95.75	96.25
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	20,722	23,083	25,383

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students – Vocational Enrolments

Student identification	2012*	2013*	2014^
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	47	56	44
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Domestic students only):	5,925	4,777	3,779

Details of your institution's strategies to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation

RMIT continues to provide support services and information to help with the initial transition to study. Key activities and strategies that RMIT undertakes include:

- The Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be moving to new, larger and purpose built premises in 2015. This will enable increased opportunities for networking, tutoring and community consciousness amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort;
- The Centre organises activities to support social engagement, including free student and staff lunch meetings, offers a culturally mediated referral for Indigenous students to student services in housing, employment, student counselling and study support issues. The Centre also provides a range of facilities including a meeting space, kitchen facilities and a TV and lounge area. Many RMIT Indigenous students are active in their contact with the Centre throughout their studies. Centre staff also proactively contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (particularly Gama-dji participants) during their first year of study to further support retention;
- RMIT's Gama-dji orientation program is a free multi-day 'residential' program where students meet other students, learn study skills, explore their culture and get to know RMIT and Melbourne;
- Supporting all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who need to move to study at RMIT to live free of charge for their first year in the RMIT Village. This helps our students to meet other students and to develop a new peer network;
- Strong support for the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS), at RMIT is managed by the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Centre actively promotes ITAS availability and supports access tailored to students' needs. RMIT makes the scheme available to all Indigenous students (TAFE, VE and in special cases Postgraduate students);
- A dedicated Career's Counsellor to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Counsellor undertakes access and outreach activities (to work with prospective students) and also works with current RMIT tertiary students to identify further education and training opportunities, as well as employment pathways; and
- Articulation pathways from vocational education offerings at RMIT through to higher education and postgraduate to allow access and secure opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to further participation options.

2014 identified challenges:

- The Gama-dji and ITAS programs has proved beneficial for students who participate. Students are exposed in to services, supports and information designed to equip them so that their experience with academia is positive. Our challenge is to continue to improve on the participation rate of Indigenous students in these programs and we continue to revise, review and develop new strategies to achieve higher rates of participation.
- ITAS policy changes by the Australian Government were flagged in 2014. A review of these changes on 2015 practices will be undertaken to determine the continuation of the program in its current format beyond 2015.

Sections 1.5 – Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians

Student Identifier	2012*	2013*	2014
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree By Research)	1	0	0
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree By Research)	Domestic: 154	Domestic: 201	Domestic: 166
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree By Coursework)	2	9	4
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Higher Degree By Coursework)	Domestic: 1,202	Domestic: 1,450	Domestic: 1,408
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Other postgraduate - Grad Dip/ Grad Cert)	7	2	0
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Other postgraduate- Grad Dip/ Grad Cert)	Domestic: 1,123	Domestic: 1,026	Domestic: 795
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Bachelor degree)	Bachelor: 13 Honours: 0	Bachelor: 12 Honours: 3	Bachelor: 13 Honours: 1
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Bachelor degree) (Total)	Bachelor: 9,649 Honours: 189	Bachelor: 11,888 Honours: 222	Bachelor: 9,777 Honours: 1,246
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Bachelor degree) (Domestic Students only)	Bachelor: 3,728 Honours: 166	Bachelor: 4,534 Honours: 207	Bachelor: 3,758 Honours: 797
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Sub-degree)	0	1	1
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: (Sub-degree)	Domestic: 237	Domestic: 443	Domestic: 586

*2012 and 2013 values reflect RMIT signed-off HEIMs data (HE).

^2014 (HE) values reflect RMIT student statistical submission – preliminary. VE data also preliminary.

As noted in the below table, 78 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed their studies in 2014, across the breadth of tertiary delivery. 2014 performance is down compared to 2013 but is up compared to 2012 performance.

Completing cohort	2012	2013	2014^
Postgraduate	11	11	4
Undergraduate#	13	16	15
VE	44	75	59
Total	68	102	78

Undergraduate reflects Bachelor Pass + Honours + Subdegree

Support mechanisms

ITAS provides financial resourcing from the Australian Government that enables individual study attention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. RMIT's use of ITAS also requires significant human resources to ensure:

- The matching of students to tutors is fruitful;
- Tutors have the necessary space, support and cultural training to proceed with tutoring this student cohort; and
- ITAS funding is efficiently, effectively and appropriately expended.

A major challenge with ITAS tutoring is students requiring tutorial assistance too late to be able to assist with success in course completion. Gama-dji orientation is the opportunity to "sell" the concept of tutoring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, explaining that access to a tutor is about specific course content and is not a "shame factor" and to recognise that undertaking tertiary study is intense and a big change from high school or other study format.

In late 2014 a move to encourage students to access mainstream study and learning services has been investigated and further options for implementing this access in a culturally sensitive approach will be undertaken in 2015.

The Centre's collaboration with RMIT Course and Program Coordinators and Managers during selection processes for the Indigenous Access Scheme allows for the development of long term relationships. The relationships built between the Centre and the Course/Program Coordinators is a significant support system for students. Student case by case management assists in early identification of students who have difficulties throughout their tertiary program. Intervention can then be undertaken as soon as possible, bearing in mind cultural sensitivity (shame factor), when assisting student needs. This intervention can take the role of ITAS tutoring, counselling for wellbeing issues, housing and financial assistance, enrolment, expulsion etc.

A Student Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also being developed in response to the increased activity by RMIT's Student Services Group in late 2014. The access and opportunities developed by Student Services, Career and Employability Section enables students to graduate with industry experience relevant to their studies.. Mainstream services already implemented, in late 2014, such as the "Jobs on Campus" initiative which provides work experience for students in jobs on RMIT campuses. This initiative provides great opportunities, experience and role modelling for future students. A formal role mentoring initiative is planned for 2015.

Section 1.6 - To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures

All formal RMIT University led events are preceded with formal Welcome to Country, hosted by Indigenous community leaders, or Acknowledgement to Land. RMIT also displays a formal acknowledgement of the Land of the Wurundjeri peoples on buildings and walkways throughout the physical campus. The further development of the Indigenous Specialisation Program was encouraging as were a number of cross university events and experiences.

Health Sciences Growth from 2013

Compulsory subjects in all of our Indigenous Health education programs now exist. The school of Health Sciences employed an Indigenous Associate Professor Level E, Auntie Kerrie Doyle, in late 2014 to further acknowledge the commitment to Indigenous culture, education and knowledge.

All nursing students have a mandated Indigenous health subject as part of their degree for registration; however, this course is open as an elective to all disciplines. This course facilitates learners' development of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency and then applied cultural proficiency skills, and includes history, current context of health and the social determinants of health and well-being.

Course	2014	2013	2012
Undergraduate electives			
HUSO1296 Indigenous Studies ¹ (core in Bachelor of Social Work)	134	131	140
PUBH1402 Indigenous Health (core in Bachelor of Nursing from 2014; new in Sem2, 2013)	345	22	-
ENV11048 Indigenous Peoples and the Environment ²	16	38	0
POLI1102 Indigenous Policy ² (new in Sem2, 2013)	40	23	-
HUSO2301 Applied Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples ²	34	2	16

ARCH1153 The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail ¹	13	12	12
TCHE2331/TCHE2304 Diversity and Difference (core in Bachelor of Education)	173	184	175
Postgraduate electives			
HUSO2295 Applied Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples ²	21	10	21
POLI1101 Indigenous Policy ²	24	10	-
LAW2434 Legal Clinical Practice	17	10	13
Total Indigenous Specialisation course enrolments	847	432	377

Indigenous Studies Unit

The promotion of Professor Barry Judd in late 2014 to the role of Professor of Indigenous Studies has been a strong commitment by RMIT in building the Indigenous academic cohort and also profiling this in RMIT's Academic Plan which is being refreshed in 2015. The implementation of the Indigenous Studies unit will start in 2015.

Indigenous Specialisation Completions

A total of 102 students have enrolled in or are completing two or more Indigenous Specialisation subjects. By the end of Semester 1, 2014, eight students met the requirements of the Indigenous Specialisation (four of seven available subjects). The following table details the number of students who completed or were enrolled in Indigenous Specialisation subjects at Semester 1, 2014.

IS subjects completed	No. students
2	88
3	6
4	7
5	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>102</i>

RMIT receives an ARC Discovery Indigenous Scheme Grant funding

A Discovery Indigenous Scheme grant of \$529,000 was awarded to Professor Barry Judd, from the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, to examine Indigenous identity through organised sport in remote communities. The project will address the problem of how participation in organised sport affects identity and everyday life in remote Indigenous communities, both positively and negatively, providing the basis for policy development and formulation.

Student shortlisted for Indigenous art award

RMIT Diploma of Visual Arts student Gregg Dinah has been selected as a finalist in the prestigious 2014 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards for his work at the Art Gallery of Ballarat "Street Light", Type C Photograph. Mr Dinah, who is of Noongar, Yamitji and Bardi ancestry, said he decided to pursue a career in the arts when he was just 16. Mr Dinah submitted three type C photographs titled House on the corner, Starry Night and Street Light. He took the photographs in his local neighbourhood of Frankston and said he wanted them to show the area in a positive light.

Street art campaign calls for constitutional change

RMIT students have collaborated on a street art project to raise awareness about Constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians. The "*Recognise This*" campaign is a grassroots movement that aims to gain recognition in the Australian Constitution for the 40,000 year history of Australian Indigenous peoples and remove any elements of racial discrimination. Holly Brambley, a descendant of the Anmatyerre people said: "Constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and getting young people heard in the political debate is a personal issue for me but something we were all passionate about.

The street art project features large scale black and white portraits of RMIT and Australian Catholic University (ACU) students and is designed to provide a platform for young people to share their faces and stories in support of constitutional recognition.

The communication strategy developed by the students will be used by "*Recognise This*" for future street art projects planned at Australian universities.

How the University addresses the cultural competency of its staff and students.

A key plank of RMIT's Employment Strategy is the inclusive of cultural workplace practices. The priority of this strategy is to develop and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency and skills of all RMIT staff. Indigenous cultural awareness workshops are being conducted for staff targeting areas engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These face to face, two day workshops are conducted at the request of individual schools and sections within RMIT. A Victorian Aboriginal consultant is engaged for these workshops. RMIT is also developing for implementation in 2016 an on-line Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness program for staff to access.

The University's involvement with Indigenous community members

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporation (VAEAI)

VAEAI is the governing body for Victorian Indigenous Education; RMIT University through the Centre is in constant consultation with them on student graduation from year 12 and programs progressing Year 9, 10, and 11 students. This work is done through liaising with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and Koorie Education Support Officers (KEDO's) that implement strategies such as Wurreker and Wannik.

SUNRISE Health

The partnership was initially brokered to deliver the vocational accredited Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) course and to provide opportunities to consult and abide by protocols, like cultural learning and awareness for non-Indigenous staff and students working within the remote regions. RMIT Universities Plumbing and Engineering programs are now consulting with Sunrise Health and the Centre about water innovation for remote communities around the Katherine region.

Fitzroy AllStars

RMIT University through the Centre, have built up a continuing partnership with the focus on educational pathways for Fitzroy Football Stars' members to access. The Centre staff attended games and training sessions in support. There was also sponsorship given to Fitzroy Stars in the way of signage.

Toorong Marnong (*Woiwurrung Language for "Coming Together"*)

The Toorong Marnong is a multilateral project which links all Victorian universities (including RMIT University) in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), members of the Victorian Vice Chancellors' Committee (VVCC). The common aim of Toorong Marnong is to increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who access and succeed in tertiary education. Toorong Marnong Committee is unique in bringing all nine Victoria Universities together with VAEAI and the support of the VVCC to improve the higher education participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The project has historically been jointly funded through contributions from all Victorian universities and steered by a committee with senior staff membership. Toorong Marnong is particularly focused on helping the transition of students from high schools to universities. We work with Koorie Education Support Officers (KESOs) and Koorie Education Transition officers (KTOs) in the Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). There are a growing number of students completing VCE seeking university places. As a point of comparison, two Koorie students accessed higher education in 1985, whilst 384 did in 2013. There is an increasing demand for transition communication for this cohort, in order that they (and their families and community) understand the process of applying for a university place, and support when there. The Toorong Marnong Project supplies this communication through a number of mediums - dedicated website, annual Koorie Big Day Out - university expo, and a 1800# hotline to assist with access choices once ATAR's are posted.

Conservation and Land Management Program

The Diploma Conservation and Land management cohort undertook two compulsory Courses aimed at equipping graduates with the necessary cultural competency to work in the 'Environment industry'. The Courses are:

1. Inspect and monitor cultural places, and
2. Conduct Field research into natural and cultural resources.

A comprehensive program of acculturation takes place, first grounding students in basic concepts of place, introduction to local Traditional Owners and Aboriginal interpretations of place, cultural sites, history, correct research protocols, followed by an immersive five day field trip guided by Aboriginal guides and Elders. The students are accompanied on the road, and in camp, by an Aboriginal Elder. At the destination the students undertake a program of site visits designed and interpreted by Aboriginal Elders and Rangers. The relationships built up over the last half dozen years with the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council, Winda Mara Co-op / Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Corp, the Yorta Yorta Nations, and the Lake Mungo National Park Traditional Owners have served to provide valuable service to our students while recognising Aboriginal rights to intellectual property.

School of Business - RMIT's Learning and Teaching Investment Fund project - Aboriginal entrepreneurs smash the gap

In 2014 the School of Business received funding to deliver a feasibility study on 'Cultural Business: Connecting Students with Contemporary Indigenous Business'. The grant totalled \$33,427 and this supported the recruitment of an Aboriginal Project Officer to undertake interviews with Aboriginal business owners from Victoria. These interviews have revealed the secrets to their success and shared their desires to give back to their communities.

The 12 businesses showcased include a consulting firm, a media agency, a gallery and an industrial laundry. Some owners were part of a first wave of Aboriginal businesses in Victoria and have been operating for nearly 30 years, while others are new businesses carving out their niche.

Some of the themes that the interviewees brought up highlighted a culturally different approach to running a business, such as the importance of embedding cultural protocols and values in their work and the way they work with communities.

The desire to 'give back' to Indigenous communities, either through pro bono work or through mentoring other Aboriginal people, was a strong and constant theme throughout the interviews.

Another aim of the interviews, was their focus on the strengths and achievements of the participants, is to counter-balance the deficit view, or negative representations, of Aboriginal people that many students are subjected to through the media.

The interviews may be used to provide content for a new course in Cultural Business should the School of Business pursue this option as part of RMIT's Indigenous Specialisation program. Further development, support and resources from the University would need to occur for this happen.

SECTION 2 - EXPENDITURE OF INDIGENOUS SUPPORT PROGRAM GRANT (Attachment 1)

This ISP report is a legislated requirement, under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 – Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2008*.

SECTION 3 - HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Please nominate contact officers for all policy and operational matters regarding your Indigenous Education Statement, including name(s), position title, phone number and email address.

The 2014 Indigenous Education Statement was completed by the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Indigenous Education Unit at RMIT.

University Officer	Indigenous Education Support Unit Officer
Name: Owen Hughes	Name: Stacey Campton
Position Title: Dean of Students	Position Title: Senior Manager
Phone Number: (03) 99251095	Phone Number: 03 99253875
Email: owen.hughes@rmit.edu.au	Email: Stacey.campton@rmit.edu.au

SECTION 4 - PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT

Following approval of the IES by PM&C, providers **are to publish** the current and the previous two IES on their website. Please provide PM&C with a link to the statement

http://www.rmit.edu.au/media/public-site-media-production/documents/about/2014_RMIT_Indigenous_Education_Statement.pdf