



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Employment Plan 2016–2020

Wominjeka – Welcome

Acknowledgements

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

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of lands across Australia where it conducts its business, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures and heritage.

RMIT University appreciates and values the contribution given in the development and shaping of this employment plan.

Special acknowledgement and thanks to the representatives from:

- National Tertiary Education Union
- Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Indigenous Employment Coordinator Network
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Advisory Committee (RMIT)



Artwork

Flowering Manna Gum ink on paper

Artist: Carly Michelle Donovan – Wiradjuri and Dunghutti

RMIT staff member – Ngarara Willim Centre



Vice-Chancellor's Statement

RMIT has a strong commitment to creating a workforce that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of peoples and cultures that exist in the wider Australian community.

This employment plan is a continuation of an employment commitment first made in 2007 with the *'Togip-gabaareng' Indigenous Employment and Career Development Action Plan 2007-2009*, followed by the *RMIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2012-2015*.

As a leading Australian university, it is imperative that RMIT continues to implement programs and services that support the progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and reflect the principles of equity and social justice, as outlined in the *RMIT Act 2010*.

This plan will guide our commitment to creating an inclusive workforce and improving opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our goal is to inspire and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop knowledge, skills and experience in order to self-determine their identities and futures.

Our commitment is to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to at least 42 by 2020. This is an opportunity for all sections of the University to participate, as we recognise that providing meaningful employment can have a transformative and positive effect on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and community.

As we work towards the 2020 target, I encourage all staff not to see this as the end point, but rather as an ongoing process to improve the employment, participation and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is up to all of us to use these directions, goals and priorities to achieve impact and progress over the next five years.

Martin Bean CBE
Vice-Chancellor and President
RMIT University

RMIT Organisational Values

PASSION

We take pride in RMIT and its contribution and we are deeply committed to extending and deepening RMIT's positive impact.

AGILITY

We are forward-looking, balanced and sustainable in our approach to organisation and resourcing. We are able to adapt quickly and effectively to new pressures and opportunities.

IMPACT

RMIT achieves positive impact through an applied, practice-based approach and relevance to contemporary needs. We are strongly committed to performance, accountability and value for money. We shape the world for the better through collaborative design, research and problem solving.

COURAGE

We are honest and fair in our relationships. We embrace new thinking and evidence, test it rigorously and apply it to our own learning. We speak out on issues of importance to our community and our world and we respect the rights of others and the planet.

INCLUSION

RMIT creates life-changing opportunities for all, welcomes students and staff from diverse backgrounds, honours the identity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, and is an accessible and open institution dedicated to serving the needs of the whole community.

IMAGINATION

We value innovation and creativity as essential qualities of our work and resources for the economy and society. We are committed to developing, applying and sharing new ideas and perspectives.

Guiding Principles

RMIT University is committed to implementing initiatives supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

Our commitment is guided by the following principles:

- We acknowledge and support reconciliation-related initiatives aimed at progressing the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a whole-of-University commitment and responsibility.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will receive the full support of the University, including orientation, professional and career development.
- RMIT will provide a culturally safe work environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, where culture and heritage is acknowledged and respected.
- RMIT is committed to increasing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for all staff and creating an inclusive workforce.
- Recruitment targets will be based on parity with the estimated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Victoria as a percentage against the total staff population.

Definitions

In the context of this plan, RMIT has adopted the definition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander from the Commonwealth's *Report on a Review of the Administration of the Working Definition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders* (Canberra, 1981) to mean:

“An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she is associated”

In this document, the terms ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ are used interchangeably.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan Framework

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan draws from a number of internal and external documents, including recommendations from the *National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy 2011* and *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Final Report*, published in 2012.

While its implementation is informed by RMIT's *Strategic Plan 2020* and the *RMIT Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)*, it is also supported by a number of key national strategies and internal RMIT policies and documents.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan builds on the following:

Relevant Internal Resources

- *RMIT Act 2010*
- *RMIT Strategic Plan 2016-2020 – 'Ready for Life and Work'*
- *RMIT Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2018*
- *Wurreker Plan*
- *Toorong Marnong Accord*
- *HR 2020 Futures*
- *Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2016-2020*
- *RMIT University Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014*
- *RMIT 2014-16 Mission-based Compact*
- *RMIT Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Business Agreement*

Relevant External Resources

- Commonwealth Department of Education and Training www.education.gov.au
- Commonwealth Department of Employment www.employment.gov.au
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. www.vaeai.org.au
- *Yalca Policy*
- Skills Victoria www.skills.vic.gov.au
- *National Best Practice Framework for Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australia Universities*, October 2011 www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au
- *Guiding Principles for Developing Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities*, October 2011 www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au
- *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Final Report*, July 2012
- *National Indigenous Higher Education Strategy*, 2011

Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment

RMIT University is committed to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, training and employment outcomes, adding to the successes of the past and continuing to build on strong connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We recognise that providing meaningful employment can have a transformative and positive effect on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and community.



“ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment is a priority of the University. Our commitment to employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples applies across the University – this is a whole-of-University responsibility. The initiatives outlined in this plan will not only benefit the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but also enrich the entire RMIT community.

Marcia Gough
Executive Director, Human Resources



Employment and Reconciliation

RMIT supports Reconciliation Australia's vision of reconciliation, which is based on five inter-related dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, unity, institutional integrity, and historical acceptance.

RMIT is committed to the appointment, retention, development and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, as outlined in Action Area 4 of the RAP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Participation and Success (RMIT Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2018, p.24).

“Creating real, meaningful and sustainable employment outcomes requires more than just a focus on job placements.

The right workplace environment is central to the successful recruitment, retention and progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers come from within the workplace.

Employers must address these barriers in their workplace culture, including current employee attitudes and behaviours, and implement targeted mentoring programs to achieve enduring employment outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.” (Reconciliation Australia's submission to the Australian Government Review of Indigenous Training and Employment, 2014)





Our Employment Target

RMIT has set itself an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce target of 42 full-time equivalent (FTE) by the end of 2020, which equates to 1 per cent of the current University workforce.

In order to measure progress towards our overall target we have set an intermediate or milestone target of 32 FTE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be achieved by the end of 2018.

In setting our target we are guided by the recommendations of the Behrendt *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*:

- That the Australian Government define the population parity rate (parity) as the proportion of the population aged between 15 and 64 years that is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander according to ABS population statistics.

- That universities use the population parity target identified by the Australian Government to set their own targets and timeframes:

- for the proportion of the university general and academic staff to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- reflecting their geographic and demographic catchments and their own strategies.

Based on the ABS Data, 2011, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population for Victoria was 0.9 per cent of the total state population and the national population was 3 per cent.



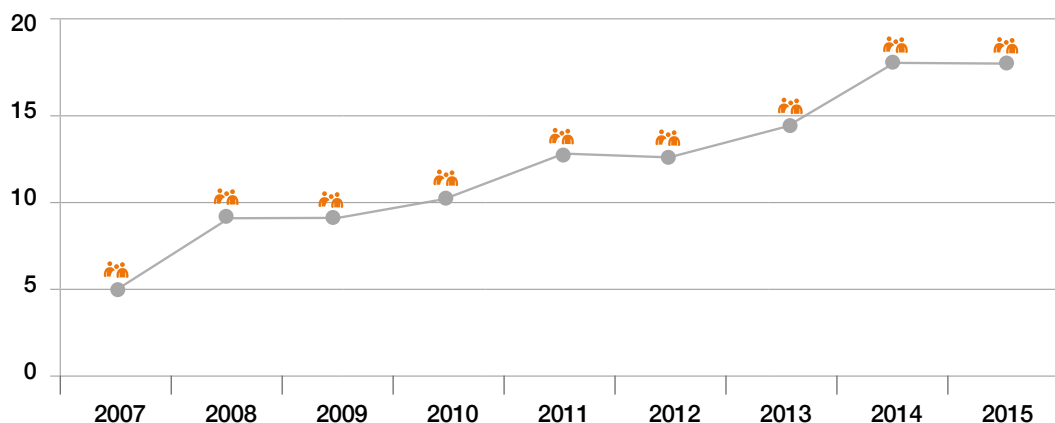
Current Profile

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers (FTE) have increased by over 250 per cent since the implementation of the first Indigenous employment plan in 2007 ('Togip-gabaareng') as compared to a 21 per cent increase in FTE for all staff. The current FTE of 0.44 per cent (2015) however, falls short of our parity target with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population for Victoria, estimated at 0.9 per cent (Source: ABS Data 30 June 2011).

Staff Population by Year

Year	Indigenous		RMIT Total Staff		% Indigenous	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE
2007	5	5	3519	3264.22	0.14%	0.15%
2008	9	9	3631	3358.17	0.25%	0.27%
2009	9	9	3891	3614.96	0.23%	0.25%
2010	12	10.4	3918	3639.17	0.31%	0.29%
2011	13	12.4	3969	3670.8	0.33%	0.34%
2012	13	12.2	3977	3692.04	0.33%	0.33%
2013	15	14.3	3916	3644.69	0.38%	0.39%
2014	19	17.8	4113	3833.21	0.46%	0.46%
2015	18	17.6	4235	3956.6	0.43%	0.44%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Staff FTE by Year



Goal 1

Building our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce

Priority

To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed at RMIT University.

Focus

Attraction and recruitment.

Actions

Creating opportunities	Responsibility/Lead
<p>1.1 – Vice-Chancellor to include Key Performance Indicators in senior executive work plans on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff recruitment, retention and career development as per RAP Action Area 4 commitments.</p> <p>Implementation: Annually as per the work plan cycle.</p>	Vice-Chancellor Human Resources Senior Executive RAP Committee
<p>1.2 – Engage and consult with executive and senior management to source employment opportunities.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing.</p>	Human Resources
<p>1.3 – Develop and implement faculty/school/departmental action plans and initiatives outlining resources and commitments to building our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.</p> <p>Implementation: Annually as part of workforce planning process.</p>	Human Resources Heads of School
<p>1.4 – Maintain employment incentive schemes to foster creation of employment opportunities and career paths.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing commitment.</p>	Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President Resources Human Resources
<p>1.5 – Targeted recruitment for specific academic appointments, including the appointment of at least one senior researcher and for the annual recruitment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research Fellowships. As per RAP Action Area 3.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing as opportunities are identified and created.</p>	Research and Innovation Heads of School Human Resources
Attracting the right people	Responsibility/Lead
<p>1.6 – Support the attraction and retention of high-quality academics through the creation of strategic recruitment initiatives.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing.</p>	Heads of School Human Resources
<p>1.7 – Raise awareness through marketing and promotional campaigns and social media.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing.</p>	Human Resources
<p>1.8 – Maintain a candidate talent pool and implement processes for talent pipeline management and placement.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing.</p>	Human Resources
<p>1.9 – Develop and leverage formal and informal recruitment networks and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks.</p> <p>Implementation: Ongoing.</p>	Human Resources
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander FTE staff numbers.– Increased awareness of RMIT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment initiatives.– Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job applications and employment enquiries.– Greater awareness and support across the University for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	

Goal 2

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff's career and personal development needs and aspirations

Priority

To provide career and personal development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet career aspirations.

Focus

Retention and ongoing career development.

Actions

Keeping the right people	Responsibility/Lead
2.1 – Provide a retention program that includes career guidance and planning, professional and personal development support and study assistance schemes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff. Implementation: 2016-2017.	Human Resources
2.2 – Develop a targeted resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff outlining in-house and external training and professional development programs. As per RAP Action Area 4. Implementation: 2018.	Human Resources
2.3 – Identify opportunities for staff to develop skills and experience through exchange and backfill roles. Implementation: Ongoing.	Human Resources
2.4 – Identify the key factors causing attrition and factors impacting staff experience amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, including conducting exit interviews to identify factors impacting attrition and staff experience. Implementation: 2017 Ongoing.	Human Resources
2.5 – Implement a culturally appropriate staff induction program for newly hired Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, ensuring awareness of provisions for cultural and ceremonial leave and relevant EEO policies and procedures. Implementation: 2016-2017.	Human Resources
2.6 – Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC week. As per RAP Action Area 6. Implementation: 2018.	Human Resources
2.7 – Provide a culturally appropriate staff mentoring program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Implementation: 2018.	Human Resources
2.8 – Recognise and celebrate significant achievements and career progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Implementation: Ongoing.	Human Resources
2.9 – Promote collegiality amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by continuing the RMIT Indigenous staff Network Group, ensuring staff are permitted time from regular duties to attend meetings of the group. Implementation: Ongoing.	Human Resources

Outcomes

- Active encouragement and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to further develop skills and career opportunities.
- Academic and Professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff undertaking internal career advancement opportunities, increasing staff retention rates.

Goal 3

Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the diversity of their cultures

Priority

To engender respect for and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Focus

Development of cultural capability and skills of all RMIT staff.

Actions

Raising Awareness	Responsibility/Lead
3.1 – Continue implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness program for all staff to allow greater understanding of issues and barriers faced, and to provide greater awareness among RMIT staff. Implementation: Ongoing.	Human Resources
3.2 – Develop, implement and review a cultural training strategy for staff that defines continuous cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business, and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face-to-face workshops or cultural immersion). As per RAP Action Area 2. Implementation: 2017.	Human Resources
3.3 – Attendance by all staff members who are in executive positions at cultural awareness training specifically designed for RMIT executives. As per RAP Action Area 2. Implementation: 2017-2018.	Human Resources
3.4 – Promotion of significant and historical events and activities, including NAIDOC and 'National Sorry Day'. Implementation: Annually and ongoing.	Media and Communications Ngarara Willim Centre
3.5 – Cultural and ceremonial leave provisions and entitlements will be communicated to managers and supervisors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Implementation: Annually and ongoing.	Human Resources
3.6 – Provide opportunities and a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and distinguished community members to speak or write on Indigenous-specific topics. Implementation: Ongoing.	RAP Committee Media and Communications Indigenous Specialisation

Outcomes

- Greater understanding and awareness of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by all RMIT staff.
- Insight into the issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students at work and study.
- Encouragement to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Implementation Monitoring Group

Governance

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Advisory Committee guides and monitors the implementation of this plan.

The Committee meets quarterly and supports the University's objectives in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, as contained in the *RMIT University Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014*, the *RMIT Reconciliation Action Plan*, the *Wurreker Plan* and in Australian Government policies, programmes and initiatives aimed at 'closing the gap' on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation.

Key Performance Indicators

1. number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff FTE.
2. retention rate.
3. development and training undertaken.
4. career progression.
5. number of staff undertaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Training.

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