

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMME – 2017 Performance Report

Organisation	RMIT University		
Contact Person	Stacey Campton, Director, Ngarara Willim, Education Portfolio		
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1. Enrolments (Access)

As a dual sector institution RMIT has a large number of established access points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into Higher Education through sub degree and Vocational Education pathways. We also have a specific targeted “Indigenous Access Program”, which aims to increase access into degree and sub degree programs. The Indigenous Access Program significantly increases access to the University by enabling proper consideration of factors that measure the likelihood of success beyond ATAR and formal education. Under the Indigenous Access Program consideration is given to relevant life, work, educational and training experience as preparation for study. Alongside the Indigenous Access Program the University also actively reviews selection and admission processes and case manages applications through Ngarara Willim to ensure that all applications are properly assessed. The work being done in Ngarara Willim and across RMIT drove a significant increase in Higher Education commencements from 71 in 2016 to 90 in 2017 which is a 26% increase in overall Higher Education commencements. Significantly 30% of the commencements in 2017 were from rural or remote locations. Our EFTSL has increased from 123.13 in 2016 to 147.9 in 2017.

These results were driven by a very proactive admissions approach that case managed direct applications, coupled with the more strategic use of scholarships to support students to manage the cost of living. This work has made RMIT a more accessible and more attractive proposition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. There were also major gains made to ensure access to accommodation for Indigenous students in privately run partner accommodation through negotiations with the accommodation providers. The work conducted to make these improvements was driven by the 2.4 staff employed with ISSP funding.

Overall, by internal measures RMIT has significantly improved outcomes in relation to access into our Higher Education programs. Despite this, our ranking against the 40 universities ranked under the ISSP funding model is likely to remain low because the ranking system does not adequately take into account the operational context and constraints of Victorian Universities (the state has 25% of Australian Universities and only 1% of the national Aboriginal population).

Table 1 Higher Education Indigenous commencement numbers

Higher Education Indigenous Commencements	
Year	Commencements
2010	43
2011	58
2012	62
2013	52
2014	56
2015	76
2016	71
2017	90

1a Scholarships (2017 breakdown)

Student category	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total/ Students Assisted	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
From Regional/ Remote *	25,051.50	10	21,104	4	34,328	7	80,483	12
Undergraduate*	6592.50	3	0	0	14,712	3	21,304	3
Post-graduate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$31,644	13	\$21,104	4	\$49,040	10	\$101,788	15

Value of Scholarships awarded by the University to remote or regional students in the 2016 academic year (Section 21(3) in the Guidelines refers)	\$57,721
Value of Scholarships offered by the University to remote or regional students in the 2017 academic year (Section 21(3) in the Guidelines refers)	\$85,757

2. Progression (access and outcomes)

RMIT has performed well on the measure of success rates and has been ranked as high as 6th and 7th in the country. It is worth noting that despite dropping one place in rankings (from 6th in 2015 to 7th in 2016) the actual success rate increased from 82.75 to 84.05 in the same period. The comprehensive engagement program developed by Ngarara Willim and the broader University can be credited with improving the success rate and with improving retention rates from 65.8% in 2015 to 76.8% in 2016 (2017 data was not available when this report was prepared), which is a significant improvement.

The engagement program begins with the managed transition of commencing and returning students through the Gamadji Orientation Program. Gamadji provides an opportunity for all commencing students to participate in a range of social and cultural engagement activities aimed at building peer networks and community. Students are also introduced to various specialist service providers in other parts of the University. Engagement is also facilitated through check-in phone calls made at strategic times by peers who work closely with Ngarara Willim staff.

The Gamadji program also provides opportunities and information for participants to build essential learning skills to increase success, through sessions run by RMIT's Study and Learning Centre programs (amongst others). Information about ITAS and other academic strengthening programs is also provided. A total of 31 students accessed ITAS assistance during the academic year which equates to 15% of our total cohort. Of these, 23 were undergraduate students, two were post graduate students who were studying in areas that they did not do their undergraduate study in, and six were pathway or single unit students. We do not collect data on the uptake of other University-run academic strengthening programs.

A Pilot program was run in second semester to engage program managers in a process to monitor academic performance and to raise issues in a timely manner with Ngarara Willim staff for follow up. This program has been expanded in semester one 2018 and will significantly improve Ngarara Willim's ability to provide effective support when required.

A commitment to providing an excellent student experience for all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, underpins the University's cultural awareness program. RMIT works in partnership with the Koorie Heritage Trust to run face-to-face cultural awareness programs for staff. The University also has an online cultural awareness module for students. The University's commitment to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to the community is operationalised through the Ngarara Willim Centre. Ngarara Willim had nine staff in 2017 who were engaged in the recruitment, retention and support of RMIT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort across both the Higher Education and Vocational Education sectors. Of these five were engaged full time in these key parts of Ngarara Willim's work. ISSP funding was used to pay 2.4 of these staff, who were key to designing and implementing the Gamadji Orientation Program, in arranging social and cultural engagement activities throughout the year and administering programs like the ITAS program. Other important parts of the engagement program were paid for by base University funding.

Table 2 Higher Education Retention Rates

Year	Total Retention Rate
2010	60.5%
2011	74.1%
2012	56.5%
2013	73.6%
2014	67.9%
2015	65.8%
2016	76.8%

2a Tutorial and other assistance provided (2017 breakdown)

Assistance type	Level of study	Number of students assisted	Hours of assistance	\$
Tutorial assistance	Undergraduate	23	1716	107,127.24
	Post graduate	2	19	1,196.48
	Other	6	440	27,469.96
	total	31	2175	135,794.40
Indigenous Support Unit or other Indigenous student support activities	(optional breakdown of major activities or just total)			
	total			231,296.80
Add other categories	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. Completions (outcomes)

Course completions numbers are directly linked to a number of factors including enrolment numbers, retention and success in previous years. RMIT's commencements have increased from a mean average of 53 enrolments in the period 2010 – 2013 to a mean average of 73 enrolments in 2014 – 2017 (see Table 1), which means our completions pipeline has increased.

The increase in enrolments, and work being done to support success and retention, has led directly to our completion rate rising 41% from 19 in 2016 to our highest number of higher education completions of 46 in 2017.

Alongside the work the University and Ngarara Willim have been doing to grow our numbers and to support our students toward graduation, different parts of the University have been working closely with external organisations to support our graduates and our enrolled students to connect with employment and employers. We fundamentally feel that the best outcome for our students is to have a variety of choices, which is why we not only work through one-stop shop organisations like Careertrackers, but also with other organisations and employers directly. The University as a whole is doing significant work to create ‘hands on’ opportunities for our students in a variety of courses and contexts. Ngarara Willim has successfully ensured that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not only afforded these valuable opportunities but are very well supported to encourage engagement and take up. We have also begun the process of deepening our engagement with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni through the establishment of a specific network. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni network will enable RMIT to begin to track graduate outcomes.

ISSP funding has been a valuable resource that enable’s RMIT, through Ngarara Willim, to take a tailored and specialised approach to all aspects of our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities, applicants and students. The work being done to support our students into graduate roles forms a key part of that work. The broader University is contributing significantly to this important area, which is underpinned by a whole-of-university approach to graduate employability. A number of impactful projects and programs are being run from base funding which have direct and specific benefits for the Indigenous cohort.

Table 3 Higher education completion numbers

Year	Total higher education completions.
2010	17
2011	17
2012	24
2013	28
2014	20
2015	22
2016	19
2017	46

4. Indigenous Education Strategy accessible by public

RMIT and Ngarara Willim are working hard to operationalise a whole-of-university approach to deepen our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. This is being achieved through the explicit inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business as a core value of the ‘Ready for Work and Life’ University strategy. Indigenous outcomes are included in RMIT’s Annual Operating Plan and the more specifically focused Reconciliation Action Plan. KPIs from these plans feature in the University scorecard, with regular monitoring to the University Council. These KPIs are reflected in Indigenous Engagement Plans which have been developed by each of the

Colleges and central portfolios. These plans were created in partnership with Ngarara Willim and have subsequently been reviewed by the Deputy PVC Indigenous. These plans are driven by local 'champions'.

The plans are specific to the work unit's business and they build upon the capabilities and areas of expertise of the Colleges and Portfolios. This ensures that the plans are more targeted than a university-wide plan could be. The College and Portfolio-based plans are monitored through a robust reporting and accountability framework linked to the University's Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor. This is proving to be a very effective means to engage all parts of the University in improving access and support for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort and is building meaningful relationships with the community. Reporting through this committee happens quarterly and Indigenous business is included in dashboard reports that are provided to the Vice Chancellor's Executive (VCE) Group and University Council.

This approach will be continued and further developed through the University's second RAP which is currently being co-created with the University's Vice Chancellor's Executive Group and Ngarara Willim. Members of the VCE Group will also be co-sponsors of the second RAP. The ISSP funding guidelines and the UA Indigenous Strategy are key documents that are informing this process and the second RAP will be a comprehensive two year plan.

5. Indigenous Workforce Strategy accessible by public

RMIT is currently developing a university-wide Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP), which will be completed in Q4 2018. The Indigenous Workforce Plan is being developed concomitantly with this broader institutional activity and Indigenous priorities will be reflected in all areas of RMIT's workforce planning and development. The final Indigenous Workforce Plan will be submitted to the Department and made available to the public in Q4 2018. In the interim, RMIT's Indigenous Employment Plan (IEP) and Reconciliation Action Plan articulate RMIT's commitment to building its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, retention and cultural capability.

Key Performance Indicators include 1) Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff FTE; 2) Retention rate; 3) Development and training undertaken; 4) Career progression; and, 5) Number of staff undertaking training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability

The University has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Committee to support the University's objectives in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. The Committee meets quarterly and guides and monitors implementation of the Employment Plan.

The IEP sets an employment target of achieving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff cohort of 42 FTE by 2020. This equates to 1% of the University workforce and is in parity with the Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. This is a firm target and once met will be a solid foundation towards an aspirational target of 3 %. As at end of year 2017 the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff population is 0.59% of the University workforce.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff at end of year 2017 was 28 Actual, continuing and fixed-term, or 24.90 FTE. This represents an overall increase of 6 Actual staff or 4.30 FTE over 2016 numbers. In 2017 we had a record 11 Actual, continuing and fixed-term, or 9.1 FTE new staff appointments; these gains, however, were offset by staff separations of 5 Actual or 4.8 FTE representing a high staff turnover ratio of 1:5. There were 11 casual employees also engaged throughout the year.

Career planning and personal development is embedded in the University's individual staff work plans and promoted and offered to all staff via the University's Organisational Development programs. Staff, through their performance work-plans, are encouraged to highlight, discuss and nominate professional development needs with their managers. In 2017, 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members undertook personal and career development activities and 1 staff member was promoted.

The University continued its commitment to providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training in 2017 providing 25 workshops and having 1,371 staff undertaking training as compared to 45 staff in 2016.

5a Indigenous workforce data (2017 breakdown)

While universities report on the number of Indigenous staff members through mainstream reporting requirements, the additional information below provides enhanced monitoring of the University's efforts in building its Indigenous workforce.

Faculty	Level/position	Perm/ >1yr		Casual/ <1yr	
		Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
College of Design & Social Context	LEVEL A	1			
	LEVEL C	1			
	HEW 6		1		
Education	EXEC E1	1			5
	HEW 10A		1		
	HEW 9		2		
	HEW 8		1		
	HEW 7		2		
	HEW 6		2		
	HEW 5		1		
Operations	HEW 10		1		
	HEW 8		1		
	HEW 7		1		
	HEW 5		1		
Science, Engineering & Health	LEVEL D	1			1

N.B data does not include perm/<1yr or any fixed-term (non-casual) staff.


6. Indigenous involvement in decision-making

RMIT is committed to supporting and enabling self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Consequently, all decisions about how ISSP money is spent have been made by the Ngarara Willim team, which is led by and is predominantly made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. In March 2017 the University appointed Professor Mark McMillan as the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous), which strengthened the University's Indigenous leadership team. Since the DPVC-I commenced all decisions about ISSP spending have been made by the DPVC-I and the Director of Ngarara Willim with expert advice from operational staff in Ngarara Willim who have responsibility for key tasks and activities. Meetings to monitor the budget and to make decisions about the use of resources are held monthly, as well as issues relating to strategy, progress and other related matters. The members of this process were Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Mark McMillan (1 year), Ms Stacey Campion (Director, Ngarara Willim, 3 years), Mr Kevin Moore (Planning and Operations, Ngarara Willim, 7 years) and Ms Nicole Shanahan (Regional Community Outreach, Ngarara Willim, 1.5 years).

RMIT's commitment to self-determination extends well beyond decision making about the use of ISSP resources. The University acknowledges and appreciates the depth of knowledge and the experience that Ngarara Willim staff has built up through working with a whole-of-university remit. This expertise is drawn upon not only in the areas of curriculum development but across all parts of the University's operations.

7. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

As a member of the Indigenous Governance Mechanism team for 2017 I have ensured the expenditure of the 2017 ISSP funding has been done with regard to the ISSP guidelines and RMIT's accounting standards. I am pleased to be able to provide the 2017 performance report. It showcases a number of areas – enrolment and completions – in which RMIT has improved. This improvement was made possible through the commitment and passion of staff in Ngarara Willim to improved student access and service delivery. The improvement has also been achieved due to RMIT executive staff and whole of university commitment and approach to improving outcomes for Indigenous staff and students at the University. We are well on our way to becoming an employer and tertiary provider of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work and study.



Professor Belinda Tynan
Deputy Vice Chancellor
and Vice President

30 April 2018

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMME – 2017 Financial Acquittal

Organisation

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University

The following tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2017 as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. ISSP supplements the support the institution should already be providing to Indigenous students and the third column below helps us recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes.

1. Income (excluding GST)

Item	Actual ISSP (\$)	Estimate other funds (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
ISSP Grant 2017	\$722,920.53		\$722,920.53
Rollover of funds from previous years			
Interest earned/ royalties			
Sale of assets			
(Include other categories as appropriate e.g. HEPP for other funds)			
A. Total Income 2017	\$722,920.53	\$	\$722,920.53

2. Expenditure (excluding GST)

Item	Actual ISSP (\$)	Estimate other funds (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
Salaries	\$323,795.01		\$323,795.01
Administration	\$41,669.13		\$41,669.13
Travel – domestic	\$23,371.59		\$23,371.59
Travel – international			
ISSP Asset purchases			
Conference fees and related costs			
(other major expenditure categories ensuring breakdown sums to total at B below)	\$334,084.80		\$334,084.80
B. Total Expenditure 2017	\$722,920.53	\$	\$722,920.53
<i>C. Unexpended funds PM&C agreed to rollover.</i>			
<i>D. Unexpended Funds to be returned to PM&C</i>			
E. TOTAL ISSP Funding use (B+C+D)	\$722,920.53		

Note: A-E must equal zero

3. Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January - 31 December 2017

- If GST is not paid to you, do not complete the table in this section 3.
- If GST is paid to you, the amount of GST funding included in each payment is set out in a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) Issued to you at the time of the payment. State whether these amounts have been remitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or committed for payment to the ATO.

1. If applicable, GST received by you in 2017 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Programme funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> . This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).		\$
2. If applicable, GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below)		\$
Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$
Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /

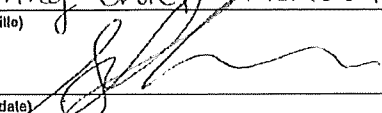
4. ISSP Assets summary (only a requirement for assets over \$5000- see clause 16 of guidelines)

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable Value	ISSP contribution

4a ISSP Asset - acquisitions and disposals summary

Asset Description/ category	Acquisitions Purchase Value	Disposals/ Sale Price	Disposals Average Age

5. Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by:

Sharron Jackson
(Print name of relevant officer)
 Acting Chief Financial Officer
(Print position title)

(Signature and date) 05/04/2018

Telephone contact: 9925-0608 E-mail: sharron.jackson@rmit.edu.au

Note:

- If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this authorisation should be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation's internal audit function.
- If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation's auditor should sign this authorisation.

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMME – 2017 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2017 Performance Report and 2017 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Programme.

I certify that:

- (i) the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Programme as set out in guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and
- (ii) the 2017 Indigenous Student Success Programme Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution's use of programme funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and
- (iii) the 2017 Indigenous Student Success Programme financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2017 under the Indigenous Student Success Programme; and
- (iv) Indigenous Student Success Programme Funds and any Interest earned or royalties/Income derived from these Funds was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Programme guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

I understand that:

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

Certification recommended by university's Indigenous Governance:

Name: Stacey Campton
Title: Director Ngarara Willem
Signed: [Signature] Date: 30/4/2018

Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate:

Name: BELINDA TYNAN
Title: DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR & VP
Signed: [Signature] Date: 30/4/2018