

## INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE PLAN 2025 - 2028

### Acknowledgement of Country

**UNSW respectfully acknowledges the Bidjigal, Biripai, Dharug, Gadigal, Gumbaynggirr, Ngunnawal, and Wiradjuri peoples, on whose unceded lands we are privileged to learn, teach, and work. We honour the Elders of these Nations, past and present, and recognise the broader Nations with whom we walk together. UNSW acknowledges the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to culture, community, and Country.**

#### **Preamble – Leanne Gemma**

At UNSW, we recognise the deep and ongoing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country, culture, education and community. As a leading institution in education and research, UNSW is committed to fostering a culturally safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for Indigenous staff and communities.

The UNSW Indigenous Workforce Plan 2025-2028 is strategic and transformative aimed at embedding Indigenous self-determination and empowerment within our workforce. This plan aligns with our commitment to societal impact and the principles outlined in the UNSW Strategy. Central to this plan is the implementation of the Micro-Treaty, which will serve as a foundation for delivering meaningful and sustained change in Indigenous employment, cultural safety, and leadership.

Through this plan, UNSW seeks to increase Indigenous representation across all levels of the university, support career development and progression, and ensure that Indigenous voices are heard, valued, and integrated into decision-making. As a whole University we together commit to achieving our targets through structured governance, proactive recruitment and retention strategies, and the celebration of Indigenous knowledge and achievements.

Our priority is ensuring an environment that is conducive to the successful and transformative experiences of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is not just a workforce initiative, it is about creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can thrive, lead, and shape the future of UNSW. By embedding Indigenous-led solutions into our institutional fabric, UNSW will strengthen its role as a leader in, ensuring a future where Indigenous excellence is recognised and celebrated.

#### **Micro-treaty**

A significant part of the plan will be to deliver on the outcomes of the Micro-Treaty once delivered.

*We actively support Indigenous self-determination. We were the first university to campaign for the Uluru from the Heart, committed to advancing Indigenous rights and voices. With our Indigenous Strategy embedded at the heart of the UNSW Strategy, we have made significant efforts to embed a strengths-based approach to Indigenous empowerment, education, and leadership. Through respectful and meaningful partnerships, research, and initiatives, we strive to create lasting change, fostering opportunities that celebrate the resilience, knowledges, and contributions of Indigenous communities. (UNSW Strategy)*

The Micro-treaty ensures that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where UNSW is located are given a voice that exemplifies self-determination and agency in determining the commitments of UNSW towards Indigenous societal impact. The Micro-Treaty will ensure that communities are at the centre of decision-making, contributing to long-term collaboration and positive outcomes across all aspects of the University's business.

## **Purpose**

The UNSW Indigenous Workforce Plan 2025-2028 aligns closely with the UNSW Progress for All Strategy and the Societal Impact Framework by embedding Indigenous employment and cultural safety within the broader institutional goals of equity, excellence, and societal contribution.

The UNSW Strategy focuses on three key themes: Academic Excellence, Social Engagement, and Global Impact. The Indigenous Workforce Plan directly supports this strategy by:

**Advancing Academic Excellence:** Through targeted recruitment, career development programs, and Indigenous leadership appointments (e.g., Associate Deans Indigenous), UNSW fosters excellence in Indigenous scholarship and research.

**Enhancing Social Engagement:** The plan strengthens UNSW's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by providing culturally affirming workplaces, ensuring Indigenous voices shape university policies, and promoting truth-telling and empowerment.

**Increasing Global Impact:** The plan includes initiatives such as establishing global Indigenous networks, enabling knowledge exchange, and celebrating Indigenous contributions at national and international levels.

The UNSW Societal Impact Framework prioritises initiatives that create tangible benefits for communities. The Indigenous Workforce Plan contributes by:

**Creating Employment Opportunities:** Increasing the number of Indigenous staff at all levels, including senior leadership, and establishing graduate and early-career academic programs.

**Enhancing Cultural Safety:** Embedding Indigenous perspectives in workplace policies, ensuring cultural responsiveness training for all staff, and implementing anti-racism programs.

**Strengthening Indigenous Self-Determination:** Supporting Indigenous staff career advancement, promoting Indigenous governance structures, and fostering economic empowerment through employment and leadership pathways.



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The Indigenous Workforce Plan is not an isolated initiative but a core component of UNSW's strategic vision. By aligning with the UNSW 2025 Strategy, the Societal Impact Framework, and other university plans, it ensures that Indigenous employment, cultural safety, and leadership are central to UNSW's ongoing mission to drive meaningful change within our university and broader external communities.

### **Governance and Implementation**

Responsibility for implementation, deliverables, and meeting targets will be shared across **all faculties and divisions**, embedding Indigenous workforce priorities as a collective institutional commitment. Faculty and division plans will contribute to the four strategic objectives.

Aligned to the Enterprise Agreement an Indigenous Workforce Governance Committee will be established to guide policies and initiatives, to ensure Indigenous-led decision making.

To support the successful implementation of the Indigenous Workforce Plan, UNSW will ensure that Indigenous workforce data remains accurate and up to date, enabling informed decision-making and accountability. The University will actively monitor and report on Indigenous workforce outcomes and targets, ensuring transparency and progress toward key commitments.

Additionally, relevant university policies and procedures will be aligned with the deliverables and actions outlined in the Indigenous workforce targets, reinforcing a systemic approach to Indigenous employment and development.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: CULTURAL SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

Without a strong foundation of cultural safety, recruitment and retention efforts will be less effective. Once a strong, culturally safe foundation is in place, recruitment, career development, and community partnerships can follow with greater impact and long-term success.

#### **Priority 1: Creating a culturally safe and inclusive workplace.**

- Continue to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which the University is located, working through appropriate processes and protocols.
- Deliver on the outcomes of the Micro-Treaty once negotiated.
- Deliver and promote anti-racism and discrimination programs related to Indigenous peoples at UNSW.
- Ensure promoting of safe reporting mechanisms for racism and discrimination.
- Develop and deliver Cultural Safety/Responsiveness Training, led by Indigenous voices, to all UNSW staff to support staff to contribute to enhancing Indigenous outcomes and truth telling, including through induction programs.
- Recognise and celebrate Indigenous culture and values through workplace events and physical environments.



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## **Priority 2: Culturally affirming workplace polices, decision making and leadership**

- Embed Indigenous perspectives across all aspects of Indigenous workforce programs and initiatives.
- Deliver culturally appropriate exit interviews to inform continual improvement and future retention.
- Develop a program for Indigenous staff to connect to Country (e.g. working with Gujaga Foundation for Kensington and Paddington Campus)
- Promote Indigenous language allowances and leave provisions in UNSW enterprise agreements to allow staff to participate in cultural/ceremonial activities.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT**

### **Priority 1: Attracting High Quality Indigenous Talent**

- Showcase the University as a place of opportunity and success for Indigenous staff and communities.
- Maintain a talent pool of potential high quality Indigenous workforce and develop a program that draws on the talent pool for targeted recruitment processes. Include targeting UNSW alumni.
- Faculties and Divisions to set targets related to Indigenous academic and professional staff recruitment and success.
- Allocate Scientia fellowships for Indigenous applicants per year and promote to PhD students and early career researchers to mentor and nurture their career.
- Formalise an Indigenous workforce seed funding initiative.
- Identify appropriate networks and platforms that allow for the promotion of UNSW employment opportunities.
- Develop a clear definition and initiative for identified and targeted roles to attract high quality Indigenous academic and professional staff.

### **Priority 2: Recruitment and Pipeline for Success**

- Provide an onboarding experience that ensures Indigenous staff feel welcomed and well prepared for a successful career trajectory at UNSW.
- Implement an internal strategy to identify opportunities for current staff to develop career pathways, such as secondments, succession planning, educational and skills development.



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- Develop an early career academic internship and postdoc program that prepares and transitions Indigenous PhD candidates and graduates into academic positions.
- Appoint student cadets/interns across the University as a pipeline to ongoing appointments post-graduation. Develop and implement a UNSW Indigenous grad program and promote to final year students through targeted initiatives.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: RETENTION AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE**

#### **Priority 1: Creating a sense of belonging and community**

- Work with estate management and other stakeholders to ensure that the UNSW campuses and online environments are welcoming, physically and culturally, so that Indigenous students and staff feel a sense of belonging and purpose that they are able to thrive.
- Provide Indigenous staff with opportunities to share experience and to establish a sense of community and connection, contributing to personal, cultural, wellbeing and professional development.
- Provide access to mentoring and coaching for Indigenous staff at all levels.

#### **Priority 2: Self-determination and advancement.**

- Develop specific funding opportunities that support Indigenous staff training and development, including postgraduate study and opportunities for the advancement of early and mid-career academics.
- Identify secondment opportunities for professional staff that contributes to professional development and career planning, including leadership opportunities.
- Appoint an Indigenous leader, such as an Associate Dean Indigenous or equivalent within every Faculty.
- Provide funding opportunities for Indigenous staff to attend national and international conferences/symposiums and events.
- Deliver annual promotions workshops to ensure academic staff are confident to apply for promotion from early career to mid-career and beyond.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: SOCIETAL IMPACT – SUCCESS AND CELEBRATION**

- Engage in activities and programs that contribute to Indigenous societal impact.
- Establish global Indigenous networks that provide opportunities for our Indigenous staff for opportunities such as cross-institutional exchange.



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- Promote to and engage with Indigenous alumni, as potential workforce, mentors/coaches and development opportunities.
- Celebrate Indigenous knowledges, research and success, as well as significant historical and contemporary events and dates.

## **OUR TARGETS**

**UNSW will achieve the following targets:**

- **Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from 117 headcount (March 2025) to 180 headcount (Dec 2028) continuing and fixed term contract.**
- **Increase number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed at Senior Professional levels 9 and above**
- **Initiate an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Academic Program (grow our own)**
- **Initiate an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduate Program (grow our own)**
- **All Staff attend Cultural Responsiveness Training**

**Current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment at UNSW**

- **117 Continuing and Fixed Term staff self identifying in our system.**

**Break down of faculties and divisions**

- **ADA – 25**
- **Business (AGSM) – 3**
- **Div Ed and Student Exp – 4**
- **Div of VC & President – 11**
- **Engineering – 1**
- **DVC Academic – 16**
- **Law & Justice – 2**
- **Medicine & Health – 31**
- **Ops Div -10**
- **Research & Enterprise – 1**
- **Science – 6**
- **Society Impact Equity Engagement – 3**



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- UNSW Canberra – 4

