

# Indigenous Student Success Program 2021 Financial Acquittal

Organisation

Southern Cross University

## 1. Financials – income and expenditure

**Table 1a ISSP income available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)<sup>1</sup>**

Item	(\$)
<b>A. ISSP Grant</b>	
ISSP Grant 2021 (flexible component)	2,006,365
ISSP Grant 2021 for preserved scholarships	2,804
<b>Subtotal ISSP Grant 2021</b>	<b>2,009,169</b>
<b>B. Other ISSP Related Income</b>	
Rollover of ISSP funds from 2020 (and earlier years)	110,009
Interest earned/royalties from ISSP funding <sup>2</sup>	0
We do not accrue interest on the funding received	0
Sale of ISSP assets	0
<b>Subtotal other ISSP related income</b>	<b>110,009</b>
<b>Grand total for 2021</b>	<b>2,119,178</b>

**Table 1b Other funding available to support Indigenous students in 2021 (excluding GST)<sup>3</sup>**

Item	(\$)
<b>A. Other non-ISSP funds<sup>4</sup></b>	
Other funding provided under HESA <sup>5</sup>	1,990,801
Other Commonwealth Government funding	0
ATO cash flow boost voluntarily allocated by you to this activity	0
Funds derived from external sources <sup>6</sup>	23,237
<b>Total of other non-ISSP funds for 2021</b>	<b>2,014,038</b>

**Table 1c Expenditure on support for Indigenous students during 2021 (excluding GST)<sup>7</sup>**

Item <sup>8</sup>	Actual ISSP (\$) <sup>9</sup>	Estimate other funds (\$) <sup>10</sup>	TOTAL (\$) <sup>11</sup>
Preserved scholarships	2,804	0	2,804
Scholarships from flexible ISSP funding	651,436	140,487	791,923
Salaries for staff working on ISSP activities (excluding JobKeeper payments) <sup>12</sup>	1,245,879	1,729,366	2,975,245
Tutorial Assistance, Pastoral Care, Outreach activities, cultural competency strategies etc (non-salary components)	86,199	79,761	165,960
Travel – domestic (airfares, accommodation & meals)	9,732	19,871	29,603
Travel – international (airfares) <sup>13</sup>	0	0	0
Travel – international (accommodation and meals)	0	0	0
Conference fees and related costs <sup>14</sup>	0	0	0
ISSP Asset purchases made during 2021 <sup>15</sup>	0	0	0
Other (including other ATO cash flow boost expenditure not included in above figures)	67,042	44,553	111,595
<b>A. Total Expenditure 2021</b>	<b>\$2,063,092</b>	<b>\$2,014,038</b>	<b>\$4,077,130</b>
<b>B. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funds approved for rollover into 2022 grant year<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>C. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – flexible component</b>	<b>56,086</b>		
<b>D. Unexpended 2021 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA – preserved scholarships</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>2021 ISSP funding committed (A + B + C +D)<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>\$2,119,178</b>		

**For NIAA information only**

JobKeeper payment/s received and expended on this activity (value \$)	0
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## 2. Rollovers

**Table 2 Rollovers <sup>18</sup>**

	Rolled over (\$) (A)	Expended/committed <sup>19</sup> (\$) (B)	Excess to be returned to the NIAA <sup>20</sup> (\$) (C) (C = A – B)
2019 funds rolled over into 2021	0	0	0
2019 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable)	0		
2020 funds rolled over into 2021	110,009	53,923	56,086
2020 funds approved for roll over into 2022 (if applicable)	0		
2021 funds approved for roll over into 2022	0		

2020 ISSP funds rolled over to 2021:

\$110,009 - Analysis of SCU Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways

This project was established to as part of Southern Cross University’s commitment to improving Indigenous success rates, which is evidence led. It involved a detailed analysis of Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways, subsequent success and failure patterns for Indigenous students across a range of disciplines at the University, with a view to developing and implementing action plans to address these outcomes. The expended funding provided the resourcing to commence building a comprehensive data-informed evidence base.

### 3. Goods and Services Tax

**Table 3 Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January – 31 December 2021<sup>21</sup>**

1. GST received by you in 2021 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Program funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> <sup>22</sup>		\$0
2. GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below)		\$0
Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$
Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /

### 4. ISSP Assets

**Table 4a ISSP Assets inventory<sup>23</sup>**

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable Value <sup>24</sup>	ISSP contribution <sup>25</sup>
Multimedia Equipment	\$13,416	\$13,416

**Table 4b ISSP Assets - purchases during 2021<sup>26</sup>**

Asset Description/ category	Purchase Value	ISSP contribution
Nil		

**Table 4c ISSP Assets - disposals during 2021**

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable value	Disposals/ Sale Price <sup>27</sup>	ISSP component <sup>28</sup>	Disposals Age <sup>29</sup>
Nil				

### 5. Endorsement of the Financial Acquittal<sup>30</sup>

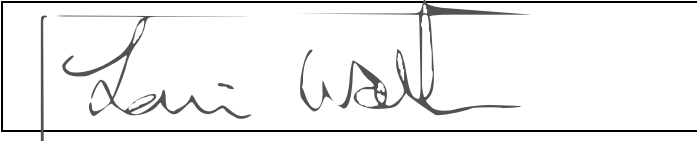
2021 Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by:

Name:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Signed: 

Date:

## INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM 2021 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2021 Performance Report and 2021 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Program.

I certify that:

- (i) the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and
- (ii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution's use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and
- (iii) the 2021 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2021 under the Indigenous Student Success Program; and
- (iv) Indigenous Student Success Program funds, and any interest earned or royalties/income derived from these funds, was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program 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) the information contain in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and
- (iii) 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
- (iv) it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

### Certification recommended by the university's Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name:   
Title:

Signed:




Date:

### Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate<sup>31</sup>:

Name:   
Title:

Signed:



Date:

## Additional information for completing the template

- <sup>1</sup> The financial tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2021 as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. The information in tables 1a, 1b and 1c helps NIAA recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. Please feel free to add additional “item” lines as required.
- <sup>2</sup> Interest earned on ISSP is considered to be ISSP funding and must be used in accordance with the ISSP Guidelines.
- <sup>3</sup> Please estimate the funds available if exact amounts are not known.
- <sup>4</sup> Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- <sup>5</sup> Please include funding provided under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program.
- <sup>6</sup> Examples of other funding are philanthropic donations, other student payments, business income etc.
- <sup>7</sup> Where applicable, figures provided in this table must be consistent with the figures provided in the institution’s 2021 Performance Report.
- <sup>8</sup> Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- <sup>9</sup> List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1a, not including the funding rolled over from previous years (this is detailed in Table 2).
- <sup>10</sup> List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1b.
- <sup>11</sup> Sum ISSP expenditure and other funds expenditure.
- <sup>12</sup> If the staff member works on non-ISSP specific activities, only record the pro-rata amount that reflects the amount of time the staff member worked on ISSP-specific activities. Include expenditure on salaries for staff that provide tutorial assistance. May include pro-rata expenditure on salaries for staff time spent monitoring and recording tutoring and student withdrawals.
- <sup>13</sup> Note that only airfares for international travel for students can be funded under ISSP.
- <sup>14</sup> Costs may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, presentation fees, equipment costs etc.
- <sup>15</sup> Assets are defined in the *Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017*, and are items that have an individual value of \$5,000 or more.
- <sup>16</sup> This should match the figure in Table 2.
- <sup>17</sup> This figure should equal the Grand total in Table 1a
- <sup>18</sup> All rollovers have to be agreed with the NIAA and listed in a relevant determination, check with NIAA if you are unsure of your roll over information.
- <sup>19</sup> For 2019 funds rolled into 2021 and 2020 funds rolled in to 2021, the amounts included here should be the amount expended in 2021.
- <sup>20</sup> This is the amount of the rollover not expended. NIAA will issue an invoice for any amounts listed in this column.
- <sup>21</sup> If GST is not paid to you, do not complete the table in 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.
- <sup>22</sup> This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).
- <sup>23</sup> Record all active assets acquired using ISSP funding. Active assets are those that have not been sold or disposed of.
- <sup>24</sup> Adjustable value means the cost of an asset less its decline in value determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office Guide to Depreciating Assets 2014.
- <sup>25</sup> The ISSP contribution should be recorded in the same ratio to the ISSP funds used to purchase the item (this includes any sale of an older asset trade in of old assets purchased with ISSP funding).
- <sup>26</sup> Include any assets purchased during 2021 using ISSP funding that are valued over \$5,000, any assets in this category should have been agreed with the NIAA prior to the item being purchased.
- <sup>27</sup> Where an item has been stolen or destroyed, the words ‘stolen’ or ‘destroyed’ should be listed in the sale price column.
- <sup>28</sup> The ISSP component should be the proportion of the sale price in the same ratio as the proportion of ISSP funding that contributed to the purchase of the asset.
- <sup>29</sup> Where groups of assets are disposed of, an average age can be provided.
- <sup>30</sup> Appropriate endorsement/authorisation is required to ensure compliance with the ISSP Guidelines and the 2022 Outcome Letter. If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this endorsement must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation’s internal audit function (e.g. an internal auditor). If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation’s auditor should sign this authorisation.
- <sup>31</sup> For the purposes of this certification, an equivalent delegate is either the Acting Vice Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Provost, or a relevant senior executive who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

# Indigenous Student Success Program

## 2021 Performance Report

<b>Organisation</b>	Southern Cross University		
<b>Contact Person</b>	Associate Professor Stuart Barlo, Chair ISSP Grant Committee and Dean, Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples		
<b>Phone</b>	02 6620 3553	<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:stuart.barlo@scu.edu.au">stuart.barlo@scu.edu.au</a>

### 1. Enrolments (Access)

In 2021, Southern Cross University, like most organisations and universities Australia wide, was impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. 2021 saw a slight decrease in the total number of Indigenous students studying at Southern Cross University - 656 Indigenous students in 2021 from a high of 694 students in 2020. This slight decrease in Indigenous students was also reflected in the slight decrease in non-Indigenous students, see Table A – Table C below.

During 2021, the University continued ongoing strategies to support and improve access for Indigenous students, while increasing online and phone support (see further details below). Critically, the University increased financial support through:

- a COVID-19 Bursary Scheme to assist all students facing hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- additional funding for scholarships for Indigenous students in 2021, an increase on the 2020 level of funding.

Alternative entry pathways were also ongoing for Indigenous students, through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Testing and Assessment (T&A) program. Further, two projects were established:

- a review of scholarships was completed and new scholarship offerings are now on offer in 2022;
- a project to analyse the University's Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways. It is an ongoing project involving a detailed analysis of Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways, and subsequent success and failure patterns for Indigenous students across a range of disciplines at the University with a view to developing and implementing action plans to address these outcomes.

Due to the pandemic, engagement and support activities pivoted online in 2020. These continued online in 2021 with limited face-to-face student interaction and outreach activities possible. Focused activities for students occurred predominately via online, zoom, webinar, call campaigns, email and phone support and in summary, included (further details later in report):

- Indigenous Australian Student Services (IASS) maintained a Study Support Service, and Tutorial Support Service delivering a range of academic and social support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These were predominantly delivered online to ensure the continuation of key programs.
- Direct lines of communication, reporting and proactive liaison were maintained between the SCU College PSP Course Coordinator, Study Support Officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PSP students, to advocate and support unit progression and success.
- In 2021 the University continued the online delivery of key activities including the cultural Welcome to Country, Elder and community engagement, Indigenous events, tutorial assistance and PSP study support.

**Table A**

**Domestic Student Count by School and Indigenous Status, 2018 to 2021**

Student Count		2018	2019	2020	2021
Educational Partnerships Board	Indigenous	1	3	3	5
	Non Indigenous	192	220	257	276
	Total	193	223	260	281
	% indigenous of total	0.5%	1.3%	1.2%	1.8%
Faculty of Business, Law and Arts	Indigenous	149	127	135	110
	Non Indigenous	4,143	3,908	3,968	3,430
	Total	4,292	4,035	4,103	3,560
	% indigenous of total	3.5%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%
Faculty of Education	Indigenous	112	106	122	142
	Non Indigenous	2,389	2,572	2,834	3,095
	Total	2,501	2,678	2,976	3,237
	% indigenous of total	4.5%	4.0%	4.1%	4.4%
Faculty of Health	Indigenous	216	233	241	235
	Non Indigenous	4,268	4,818	5,506	5,678
	Total	4,484	5,051	5,747	5,913
	% indigenous of total	4.8%	4.6%	4.2%	4.0%
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Indigenous	41	35	48	39
	Non Indigenous	973	908	1,116	1,248
	Total	1,014	943	1,164	1,287
	% indigenous of total	4.0%	3.7%	4.1%	3.0%
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples	Indigenous	48	46	37	30
	Non Indigenous	33	31	27	25
	Total	81	77	64	55
	% indigenous of total	59.3%	59.7%	57.8%	54.5%
Office of Research	Indigenous	0	0	0	0
	Non Indigenous	5	0	1	0
	Total	5	0	1	0
	% indigenous of total	0.0%	n.a.	0.0%	n.a.
SCU College	Indigenous	80	86	95	88
	Non Indigenous	895	1,048	1,237	898
	Total	975	1,134	1,352	986
	% indigenous of total	8.2%	7.6%	7.0%	8.9%
Other School (Misc. etc.)	Indigenous	9	8	13	7
	Non Indigenous	245	237	288	160
	Total	254	245	301	167
	% indigenous of total	3.5%	3.3%	4.3%	4.2%
Courses by Course School	Indigenous	656	644	694	656
	Non Indigenous	13,143	13,742	15,274	14,823
	Total	13,799	14,386	15,968	15,479
	% indigenous of total	4.8%	4.5%	4.3%	4.2%

Source: MIS Student Demographics (S1) Cube, 08 April 2022

Table B

**Domestic Student Load (FETSL) by School and Indigenous Status, 2018- 2021**

Teaching School		2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2020 to 2021
Educational Partnerships Board	Indigenous	4.63	5.13	4.13	2.63	-36.4%
	Non-indigenous	157.25	150.63	169.00	125.50	-23.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>161.88</b>	<b>155.75</b>	<b>173.13</b>	<b>128.13</b>	<b>-26.0%</b>
Faculty of Business, Law and Arts	Indigenous	99.09	85.45	80.38	72.25	-10.1%
	Non-indigenous	2350.43	2166.78	2217.72	1976.46	-10.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2449.52</b>	<b>2252.23</b>	<b>2298.10</b>	<b>2048.71</b>	<b>-10.9%</b>
Faculty of Education	Indigenous	66.50	60.00	78.25	92.26	17.9%
	Non-indigenous	1343.40	1469.07	1639.66	1818.39	10.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1409.90</b>	<b>1529.07</b>	<b>1717.91</b>	<b>1910.65</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Indigenous	34.07	24.75	28.64	20.12	-29.8%
	Non-indigenous	737.88	580.37	704.58	709.41	0.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>771.95</b>	<b>605.12</b>	<b>733.22</b>	<b>729.52</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>
Faculty of Health	Indigenous	117.36	130.13	134.13	134.88	0.6%
	Non-indigenous	2432.36	2918.90	3242.14	3344.94	3.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2549.72</b>	<b>3049.03</b>	<b>3376.27</b>	<b>3479.82</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples	Indigenous	33.73	30.76	24.50	18.77	-23.4%
	Non-indigenous	95.86	108.70	108.54	128.44	18.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>129.59</b>	<b>139.46</b>	<b>133.04</b>	<b>147.20</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
SCU College	Indigenous	36.50	41.38	42.63	32.63	-23.5%
	Non-indigenous	454.75	545.00	588.38	407.38	-30.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>491.25</b>	<b>586.38</b>	<b>631.00</b>	<b>440.00</b>	<b>-30.3%</b>
Units by Unit Teaching School	Indigenous	381.24	377.48	382.02	379.62	-4.7%
	Non-indigenous	7668.31	7836.68	8883.88	8510.61	-1.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7860.66</b>	<b>8214.16</b>	<b>9265.90</b>	<b>8884.03</b>	<b>-1.9%</b>

Source: MIS Student Load (S1) Cube, 08 April 2022

Table C

**Number of enrolled units with domestic students in 2021 by teaching school and indigenous status**

Academic Organisational Unit	Indigenous status	no. enr. Units
Educational Partnerships Board	Indigenous	7
	Non-indigenous	35
Faculty of Business, Law and Arts	Indigenous	178
	Non-indigenous	286
Faculty of Education	Indigenous	77
	Non-indigenous	112
Faculty of Health	Indigenous	167
	Non-indigenous	260
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Indigenous	59
	Non-indigenous	167
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples	Indigenous	25
	Non-indigenous	23
SCU College	Indigenous	13
	Non-indigenous	15
Total	Indigenous	526
	Non-indigenous	898

Source: MIS Performance cube, 11 April 2022



## 2021 strategies to support and improve access to the University for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

The following initiatives and events are ongoing programs resourced through ISSP Grant funds:

- **Engagement:** Indigenous Australian Student Services (IASS) has had a strong and long-standing engagement with communities between the Gold Coast, Lismore and Coffs Harbour campuses. Community engagement within the Aboriginal communities of Maclean, Grafton, Yamba, Casino, Tabulam, Ballina and Tweed areas has facilitated collaboration towards promoting the universities pathways and entry programs, courses and Indigenous support. COVID did prevent a majority of our planned school visits and community engagements from taking place, but through virtual and online school visits and workshops, online cultural events and alternate methods of online engagement, we have maintained our contacts and engagement to deliver relevant information to our local schools and Indigenous communities.
- **Support Services:** IASS maintained a Study Support Service, which delivers a range of academic, social and emotional support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking enabling courses including the Preparing for Success Program (PSP). IASS have Study Support Officers providing support for PSP students at each campus location and online for students studying in cities, regional areas and remotely. During COVID IASS adopted a focused online delivery of support to continue to deliver key programs. These included weekly phone contacts and zoom sessions, pre-orientation online information sessions and daily access to support services. Weekend support sessions as well as out of hours contact were also provided.
- **Tutoring support:** IASS continued to deliver a tutoring support service in 2021. IASS supported a total of 279 Indigenous students studying Undergraduate, Post Graduate and Enabling courses. A total of 6,476 hours of tutoring support was delivered for students studying across SCU. (Refer to Table 2a Tutorial assistance provided in 2021). IASS maintained a casual tutor register with over 400 active and qualified tutors available to tutor across all disciplines at SCU.
- **Study spaces:** Culturally safe, social and study spaces were maintained in 2021 across all three primary University campuses. Students were able to use the spaces for study and access 24/7. These spaces remained accessible and open during COVID to ensure that Indigenous students were not disadvantaged through lack of access to computer and internet services. These strategies enabled Indigenous students continuity and a consistent and reliable study space and access, negating any increases of withdrawals or deferrals due to lack of services.
- **Proactive liaison:** As stated above, COVID-19 required an increased level of proactive and direct communication and provision of information online. University colleagues across differing support and service delivery units collaborated proactively to support students to ensure that individual hardship was supported and learning was supported.

- **Alternative Entry pathways:** Further, alternative entry pathways were ongoing for Indigenous students in 2021, through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Testing and Assessment (T&A) program. 3 Indigenous students successfully sat the T&A assessment and were made direct offers into their chosen undergraduate courses. The Testing and Assessment Alternate Entry Pathway was updated in 2021 due to COVID-19 to allow potential students to sit the assessment remotely within their own homes or chosen space. This allowed the 3 applicants in 2021 to successfully sit and be made offers to commence study in 2021.
- **Elders Council:** Southern Cross University's Gnibi Elders Council has 36 members of Elders, senior Indigenous community representatives and Gnibi staff across the University's campus footprint from Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung and Yugambeh Nations. Whilst COVID-19 prevented the Elders Council from meeting face-to-face, they still met online via zoom to provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to Indigenous issues that involved and impacted Indigenous students, staff and Indigenous communities.

### **Outreach activities and access to University**

Outreach activities and events were organised throughout the year to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, heritage, histories and stories.

With the second year of online events due to COVID-19, Southern Cross University's Indigenous Events Coordinating Committee (SCUIECC) continued to provide information, organised guest speakers, workshops, and panel discussions with Elders, staff and community members through the livestreaming of events and online viewing of videos. Events included the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, National Close the Gap Day, National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC. All events focused on important Indigenous issues reflecting specific themes for each event which included Healing Country, the cultural knowledge and understanding of Country and its connection and relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; Reconciliation and what actions we need to take towards a just and reconciled nation which included discussions on SCU's Reconciliation Action Plan and where to from here; discussions around Indigenous Health, cultural safety, education and social and cultural determinants of health and community programs to help Close the Gap; and listening to the stories and experiences from members of the Stolen Generation. Students, staff and the wider community were invited to listen, learn and hear the stories of our Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, to engage, build and strengthen links between the University and the wider community.

The Working with Vulnerable Populations one day workshops were well attended with a total of 64 students, staff and community participants. This workshop combines Western scientific knowledge and traditional healing principles and prepares participants to work in a culturally safe and trauma informed way to gain a better understanding of trauma and symptoms of trauma as well as coping mechanisms.

Southern Cross University's Gnibi Elders Council continued to support and share cultural and traditional knowledge, advice and leadership across the University's events, engagement activities and curriculum.

Funding to support these events and activities were provided by ISSP funds.

## Scholarships

The breakdown of scholarship payments paid in 2021 (refer Table 1 below):

- Enabling - 41 students received a scholarship based on their enrolment into an enabling course in 2021, an increase from 12 in 2020.
- Undergraduate - 596 students received a scholarship based on their enrolment in an undergraduate course in 2021, an increase from 362 in 2020.
- Post-graduate – 63 students received a scholarship based on their enrolment into a post-graduate course in 2021, an increase from 14 in 2020.
- Other – in 2021 there was 1 scholarship offered to a student who was not in an enabling, undergraduate or postgraduate course at Southern Cross University, an increase from 0 in 2020.
- Total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received any form of ISSP scholarships – 701 students received an ISSP scholarship in 2021, an increase from 388 in 2020.
- Total of \$654,240 was paid to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received an ISSP scholarship in 2021, compared to \$383,011 in 2020.

**Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2021 payments**

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total <sup>1</sup>	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling <sup>2</sup>	12,352.00	26	5,000.00	2	\$14,950.00	13	32,302.00	41
Undergraduate <sup>3</sup>	\$113,731.50	242	\$120,499.00	56	\$328,000.00	298	\$562,230.50	596
Post-graduate <sup>4</sup>	\$10,902.00	27	\$12,805.50	5	\$34,850.00	31	\$58,557.50	63
Other	0	0	0	0	\$1,150.00	1	\$1,150.00	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,985.50</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>\$138,304.50</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>\$378,950.00</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>\$654,240.00</b>	<b>701</b>

On 12 March 2021, the Vice Chancellor established an Indigenous Scholarships Working Party with the aim of optimising the provision of Indigenous Scholarships to support and improve student success.

The Working Party identified the key barriers to equitable Indigenous participation as:

- Unaffordability of secure and proximate accommodation;
- Unaffordability of transportation;
- The Digital Divide – higher difficulty in accessing the internet and enabling technology;
- Incidental Academic and Emergency Expenses – income disruption caused by professional placements (health/education courses), small but important expenses derived from meeting cultural norms (travel to country).

The Working Party focussed on providing an effective balance of two competing needs - to support as many Indigenous students as possible while providing enough financial support per student to make a real difference in overcoming known financial barriers to equitable

participation. The Working Party recommended the rationalisation of the eight types of scholarships on offer into the Accommodation/Education/Reward Scholarships suite so as to maximise the impact of the scholarship offer per student, as well as life-of-degree support and pro-rata eligibility rules.

The recommendations were supported and from 2022, the University offers (annually):

1. *Commonwealth Indigenous Accommodation Scholarships (CIAS)* - 20 x \$8,000
2. *Commonwealth Indigenous Education Costs Scholarships (CIECS)* - 40 x \$4,000 and
3. *Indigenous Commonwealth Reward Scholarships (ICRS)* as follows:
  - Aunty Hazel Rhodes Scholarship - Indigenous students who have a Distinction Average over 128 credit points of study
  - Uncle Greg Harrington Scholarship – Indigenous students who have a Credit Average over 72 credit points of study
  - Aunty Irene Harrington Scholarship - Female Indigenous students who are ready to submit their Doctoral thesis
  - Uncle Charles Moran Scholarship - Male Indigenous students who are ready to submit their Doctoral thesis

Both CIAS and CIECS scholarships will be for the full duration of a 3-year Bachelor degree pro-rated up to a maximum of 6-years where part time study is preferred.

To ensure the scheme is having its intended effect in promoting Indigenous student success, the ISSP Grant Committee (ISSPGC) will measure and monitor the progress of all scholarship recipients on a bi-annual basis. That is, the GPA, retention/attrition and success rates of Indigenous students with the scholarships cohort will be measured against that of the non-scholarships cohort. If the scheme works as intended and the scholarships cohort outperforms the non-scholarships cohort in the key areas, the data will be used to bolster marketing and philanthropic efforts led by the Office of Engagement.

## 2. Progression (outcomes)

At Southern Cross University, the Indigenous Australian Student Services (IASS) provides tutorial assistance and Indigenous Support activities which are directly resourced through ISSP Grant funds, as set out in Table 2a below.

IASS supported a total of 351 Indigenous students studying Undergraduate, Post Graduate and Enabling courses, an increase on 279 students in 2020. A total of 6,476 hours of tutoring support was delivered for students studying across the University. The data on success rates in Tables D and E below, show an overall rise in success rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, promising in light of the many challenges faced by these students in 2021.

IASS have 5 full-time continuing professional staff employed across the three primary University campuses:

- 1 x Team Leader;
- 1 x Senior Liaison Officer;
- 3 x Student Support Officers; and
- 3 x Sessional Study Support Officers for students studying PSP, and
- a casual tutor Register with over 400 active and qualified tutors available to tutor across all disciplines at SCU.

**Table 2a Tutorial assistance provided in 2021**

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted <sup>5</sup>	Total number of tutorial sessions attended <sup>6</sup>	Total hours of assistance <sup>7</sup>	Expenditure <sup>8</sup> (\$)
Enabling	195		1,800	\$73,026
Undergraduate	152		4,554	\$259,135
Post graduate	4		122	\$6,261
Other				
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>		<b>6,476</b>	<b>\$338,422</b>

The University has also taken major strides to support students generally with the introduction of a more flexible academic program through the Southern Cross Model <https://www.scu.edu.au/southern-cross-model/>

Specifically, to alleviate hardship, the University provided a COVID-19 Bursary Scheme through the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students) portfolio to assist all students facing hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, University staff were mindful of the additional stress and difficulties faced by many students, and went above and beyond in their online and phone support. As stated above:

- IASS continued to advocate and promote Indigenous student support by engaging with key student support areas across the university including Equity and Inclusion (disability and medical support), Financial support, On campus and External Accommodation, SCU Health Clinic and Counselling and crisis support.

- IASS maintained a Study Support Service. During COVID IASS adopted a focused online delivery of support including weekly phone contacts and zoom sessions, pre-orientation online information sessions and daily access to support services. Weekend support sessions as well as out of hours contact were also provided.
- IASS continued to deliver a tutoring support service in 2021.
- Culturally safe, social and study spaces were maintained in 2021 across all three primary University campuses. Students were able to use the spaces for study and access 24/7. These spaces remained accessible and open during COVID to ensure that Indigenous students were not disadvantaged through lack of access to computer and internet services, and
- Importantly, to proactively support students as stated above, direct lines of communication, reporting and proactive liaison were critical in supporting the students manage the additional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, the University provides cultural competency training to all staff on commencement through an external online program. Feedback on the program is generally positive. The University evaluates this program regularly and there is work currently underway exploring new content in this area.

The following Tables D and E include the Success Rate by School and Course level respectively. This data is collated and reviewed by the ISSPGC and the University Executive to monitor the success of the support provided to Indigenous students. In 2021, the data has demonstrated an overall rise in the success rates of Indigenous students, in a challenging learning environment. The success rates still remain less than the non-Indigenous student population. This issue is a focus of the continuing project established to analyse the University's Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways. In addition to including a detailed analysis of Indigenous admissions schemes and pathways, the project includes an analysis of subsequent success and failure patterns for Indigenous students across a range of disciplines at the University with a view to developing and implementing action plans to address these outcomes.

Tables D and E

Success Rate\* by School and Indigenous status, 2018 to 2021 (domestic only)

Unit EFTSL		2018	2019	2020	2021
Educational Partnerships Board	Indigenous	n.a.	n.a.	0.0%	71.4%
	Non Indigenous	77.8%	80.6%	88.3%	83.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77.8%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>79.2%</b>
Faculty of Business, Law and Arts	Indigenous	58.5%	58.6%	63.1%	66.6%
	Non Indigenous	75.1%	74.5%	76.1%	77.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>73.9%</b>	<b>75.7%</b>	<b>77.5%</b>
Faculty of Education	Indigenous	74.1%	77.8%	74.3%	75.4%
	Non Indigenous	83.5%	83.9%	85.4%	84.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>83.6%</b>	<b>84.9%</b>	<b>84.0%</b>
Faculty of Health	Indigenous	73.4%	73.0%	76.5%	83.0%
	Non Indigenous	85.5%	83.9%	85.6%	85.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84.9%</b>	<b>83.4%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>84.8%</b>
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Indigenous	58.9%	67.3%	57.0%	57.0%
	Non Indigenous	71.8%	78.7%	79.9%	76.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>71.3%</b>	<b>78.2%</b>	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>76.4%</b>
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples	Indigenous	59.5%	66.4%	59.2%	50.0%
	Non Indigenous	79.0%	80.1%	80.4%	76.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>77.2%</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>47.7%</b>
SCU College	Indigenous	27.4%	28.7%	42.2%	58.0%
	Non Indigenous	52.8%	54.2%	59.6%	73.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>58.5%</b>	<b>71.5%</b>
Units by Unit Owning Org Unit	Indigenous	62.9%	64.4%	66.9%	73.6%
	Non Indigenous	78.3%	78.7%	80.7%	82.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>80.1%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>

Success Rate\* by Course Level and Indigenous status, 2018 to 2021 (domestic only)

Course Level		2018	2019	2020	2021
Undergraduate	Indigenous	66.1%	68.4%	69.5%	74.0%
	Non-indigenous	78.5%	79.3%	80.8%	81.1%
	<b>All students</b>	<b>77.9%</b>	<b>78.8%</b>	<b>80.3%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>
Postgraduate	Indigenous	71.5%	70.0%	73.3%	80.1%
	Non-indigenous	87.9%	85.9%	88.4%	88.6%
	<b>All students</b>	<b>87.6%</b>	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>88.4%</b>
Non Award	Indigenous	28.9%	31.5%	43.8%	62.6%
	Non-indigenous	55.4%	56.5%	61.6%	75.1%
	<b>All students</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>60.4%</b>	<b>74.1%</b>
Courses by Course Level	Indigenous	62.9%	64.4%	66.9%	73.6%
	Non-indigenous	78.3%	78.7%	80.7%	82.0%
	<b>All students</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>80.1%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>

Source: Student Performance Cube, 08 April 2022

\* Success rate is based on the method used by DESE (i.e. completed EFTSL as a proportion of attempted EFTSL)

### 3. Completions (outcomes)

The data in Table F below shows that the overall domestic completion count has improved for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from 2020 to 2021, with improved successful completions increasing in the Faculties of Business, Law and Arts, Education and Health. The strategies, activities and programs implemented to support students are described in the previous sections of the report.

**Table F**

Domestic Completions Count by School and Indigenous Status, 2018 to 2021

		2018	2019	2020	2021
Educational Partnerships Board	Indigenous	0	0	0	0
	Non Indigenous	26	37	49	64
	Total	26	37	49	64
Faculty of Business, Law and Arts	Indigenous	16	14	14	20
	Non Indigenous	712	793	752	790
	Total	728	807	766	810
Faculty of Education	Indigenous	14	12	12	20
	Non Indigenous	314	359	405	466
	Total	328	371	417	486
Faculty of Health	Indigenous	26	37	35	38
	Non Indigenous	750	891	1024	975
	Total	776	928	1059	1013
Faculty of Science and Engineering	Indigenous	3	3	7	6
	Non Indigenous	165	177	149	155
	Total	168	180	156	161
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples	Indigenous	6	6	10	3
	Non Indigenous	8	6	2	4
	Total	14	12	12	7
Office of Research	Indigenous	0	0	0	0
	Non Indigenous	1	0	1	0
	Total	1	0	1	0
SCU College	Indigenous	2	0	2	1
	Non Indigenous	10	14	49	51
	Total	12	14	51	52
Courses by Owning Org Unit	Indigenous	67	72	80	88
	Non Indigenous	1986	2277	2431	2505
	Total	2053	2349	2511	2593

Source: MIS Student Retention (S1) cube, 11 April 2022



## 4. Regional and remote students

### Strategies and outreach to potential students from regional/ remote areas

During 2021 the University implemented a number of strategies for all Indigenous students, as described in previous sections of this report to improve access, progression and completion rates. As a regional University, the majority of our Indigenous students are regional students. However, with COVID-19 online learning requirements, there was a real focus on online and phone support for all students.

A large proportion of Individual potential student inquiries were received through IASS during 2021 via phone, email and CRM. IASS provided a range of information, advice and support to convert these inquiries into student applications and ultimately commencing students.

IASS collaborated with the Office of Engagement in conducting online “school visits” with Indigenous students from Year 7 to 12 across the University’s footprint during 2021. Due to COVID-19, visits were conducted via online interactive workshops and online information sessions.

In 2021, IASS continued to advocate and promote Indigenous student support by engaging with key student support areas across the university including Equity and Inclusion (disability and medical support), Financial support, On campus and External Accommodation, SCU Health Clinic and Counselling and crisis support.

### Activities to support students during their studies

In 2021, as mentioned above, the University continued to support activities via online delivery such as cultural Welcomes to Country, Smoking Ceremonies, Elder and community engagement, Indigenous events, tutorial assistance and PSP study support.

In 2021 Indigenous students represented the University at the Indigenous National Games held at Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle. 16 students competed against Indigenous students from 20 other Universities across four days of sporting competition.

The key objectives: *Celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture*

*Promote unity, health, fitness and wellbeing*

*Demonstration of self determination*

*Initiating new communication networks*

*Reinforce identity through positive role models*

**Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students<sup>9</sup>**

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2020 Payments	126,443.57	180	101,375.85	48	29,684.93	68	257,504.34	296
B. 2021 Offers	91,232.87	253	89,879.26	57	199,121.72	252	380,233.84	562
C. Percentage (C=B/A*100)	42.15	140.56	88.66	118.75	670.78	370.59	147.66	189.86
<b>2021 Payments</b>	85,118.57	233	81,768.26	55	191,002.34	244	357,889.17	532

\*note due to rounding associated with some postcodes being only partially regional, the total value is out by \$27.00.

**Table G**

**Domestic Indigenous Student Load (EFTSL) by Region, 2018 - 2021**

Region	2018	2019	2020	2021	% change 2020-21
Major Cities of Australia	156.1	149.7	173.3	168.2	-2.9%
Regional	229.1	220.6	213.0	197.9	-7.1%
Remote	6.3	7.1	5.1	6.1	19.5%
Offshore	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.6	25.0%
Unknown	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.6	-16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>391.9</b>	<b>377.6</b>	<b>392.6</b>	<b>373.5</b>	<b>-4.9%</b>

Source: Student Load (S1) Cube, 08 April 2022

## 5. Eligibility criteria

### 5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

Southern Cross University is focussed on student success, and is committed to improving the whole student lifecycle, from the point of earliest engagement with the University to the point of graduation and post-graduation employment. The University is very aware that COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Indigenous students, widening some of the already existing barriers to entry, retention and completion.

To mitigate the impact of changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic on the welfare of Indigenous students, the online support services and direct lines of communication were enhanced. Scholarships and the COVID-19 bursary scheme were provided to assist students financially during this time as well. Continued access to the IASS computer lab, internet services and staff ensured students were able to gain assistance when and as required.

The Indigenous Education Strategy rolled over from 2020, while a new Strategy was developed during 2021 in alignment with Section 13 of the ISSP Guidelines. With COVID-19 restrictions, and devastating floods in the Northern Rivers of NSW this year, the opportunity to complete consultations with the Elders Council has been limited. The Elders Council will next meet in June 2022.

The relevant links to the Strategy:

<https://www.scu.edu.au/about/locations/reconciliation-action-plan/>

<https://www.scu.edu.au/media/scueduau/about/documents/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Strategy-2017-2020.pdf>

In alignment with the ISSP Guidelines, the Indigenous Education Strategy focusses on the education experience of Indigenous students at the University, including access, successful progression through their chosen courses and completion of their studies. The Strategy recognises the equity challenges for Indigenous students and includes Elders Guiding Principles underpinning the work to improve support available for these students throughout their academic journey.

Indigenous Knowledge is celebrated through the work of Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples (Gnibi). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, the promotion of Indigenous Knowledge as a discipline within Southern Cross University affirms their Indigenous identity and culture as integral to their educational experience, scholarship and success.

Specifically, the University includes Indigenous Knowledge in curricula, graduate attributes and teaching practices, and activities to improve all students and staffs' cultural competency as follows:

- Gnibi has its own Board, which has responsibilities for recommending and approving changes to units and courses.
- Gnibi offers degrees from the Bachelor, Bachelor with Honours and the Doctor of

Indigenous Philosophies, as well as a university wide major in Indigenous Knowledge, and related university wide electives which are available to undergraduate students across all discipline areas. These degrees have been mapped to the Gnibi Elders' Principles which sit alongside the Graduate Attributes and Course Learning Outcomes.

- A University Graduate Attribute is *Cultural Competence*.  
*Graduate Attribute 7: An ability to engage with diverse cultural and Indigenous perspectives in both global and local settings.*  
Learning outcomes of all courses and units are scrutinised to ensure that they incorporate this Graduate Attribute in a meaningful way – responsibility for this rests in particular with the Accreditation Committee (a sub-committee of Academic Board) The Southern Cross Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) states a goal to “Support refinement of Graduate Attribute 7 to facilitate greater understanding of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures”.
- All Faculties/Colleges must address cultural competency, diversity, and Indigenous perspectives in external accreditation applications; examples include AACSB, and accreditation for allied health, nursing and midwifery courses.
- The University also has Graduate Attributes for HDR degrees which include cultural competency:  
*HDR Graduate Attribute 7: ‘To interact in a diverse community’.*  
All new research degrees will undergo scrutiny by the Higher Degrees Research Committee, which includes representatives from Gnibi.
- The University has Curriculum Design and Development Procedures that direct the Course Design Team for each course to consult broadly to ensure representative views of all relevant stakeholder groups are considered, specifically including an appropriate Indigenous academic community member, and document this consultation.
- The Procedures also require that teaching methods, learning resources and learning activities will demonstrably meet the learning needs of all students, including Indigenous Australians, international students regardless of cultural background, mature age students, school leavers, students with disabilities and students who are the first in their family to study at university.

## 5.2 Indigenous Workforce Strategy

The overall percentage of Indigenous staff has increased marginally since 2020, see Table 5.2 below. A key reason for only a small increase is that the University undertook the Transform SCU project in 2020 in which the size of the overall workforce was reduced. While this change process was occurring, our recruitment of new staff and some replacement roles was constrained. In 2021, the University recruited 2 Aboriginal academics, one at Professorial level. The University currently has 3 academic positions in the market.

The relevant links to the Strategy:

<https://www.scu.edu.au/media/scueduau/staff/hr-services/documents-amp-forms/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Employment-Strategy.pdf>

<https://www.scu.edu.au/about/locations/reconciliation-action-plan/>

The Strategy rolled over from 2020, while a new Strategy was developed during 2021 in alignment with section 12 of the ISSP guidelines. With COVID-19 restrictions, and

devastating floods in the Northern Rivers of NSW this year, the opportunity to complete consultations with the Elders Council has been limited. The Elders Council will next meet in June 2022.

Each Strategy includes Elders Guiding Principles providing a framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and training and career progression. Currently, the permanent non-academic staff percentage is over 3%, while the permanent academic staff percentage will improve with the successful recruitment of the 3 positions currently in the market. The University recognises the benefits that are created through the employment of talented Indigenous academic and professional staff members, enriching the environment in which we all work and learn and is committed to building its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

**Table H**

**PERCENTAGE OF ABORIGINAL/ TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE MAKING UP THE UNIVERSITY'S TOTAL STAFF POPULATION**

COUNT OF PERSON NUMBER	Permanent		Casual/ contract/ fixed-term		Grand Total
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic	
STAFF COUNT (INDIGENOUS)	6	16	11	9	42
ALL STAFF COUNT	226	490	459	421	1596
% OF STAFF	2.65%	3.27%	2.40%	2.14%	2.63%

**Table 5.2 Indigenous workforce data (2021 breakdown)**

Level/position	Permanent		Casual/contract/fixed-term	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
Level A			9	
Level B	5		2	
Level D	1			
HEW Level 1				4
HEW Level 3		1		1
HEW Level 4		7		1
HEW Level 5		2		1
HEW Level 6		4		1
HEW Level 7		2		
HEW Level 9				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>

## 5.2. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

In 2017, the University established the ISSPGC in compliance with section 12 of the ISSP Guidelines, see link to major committees page of the SCU website: <https://www.scu.edu.au/about/university-council/how-scu-is-governed/council-boards-and-major-committees/>

In November 2019, the ISSPGC proposed amendments to the ISSPGC Charter to comply with the changes to the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines. These changes were endorsed.

The updated *Indigenous Student Success Program Grants Committee Charter* sets out the membership, responsibilities, authority and operations of the ISSPGC, see link [ISSPGC Charter](#)

The Indigenous Governance Mechanism, the ISSPGC, works according to its Charter as follows:

### **Responsibilities of the ISSPGC**

The Committee is responsible for advising the Vice Chancellor on, reviewing, making recommendations about, and monitoring the use of ISSP grants.

In formulating and determining its advice, the committee works collegially and by consensus.

### **Membership**

The membership of the ISSPGC is:

- Chair - Dean, Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples
- Team Leader - Indigenous Australian Student Services
- Senior Student Management Officer, Student Administration Services (Scholarships and Admissions)
- Director, Office of the Vice Chancellor

There were three Indigenous members of the Committee, the Chair and Dean of Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples, the Team Leader Indigenous Australian Student Services and the Senior Student Management Officer, who has since taken up another role as the Applications Delivery and Support Coordinator, Technology Services.

Appointments to the ISSPGC are made by the Vice Chancellor who appoints members to and from the Committee subject to:

- all appointees having skills and experience relevant to the role; and
- the committee at all times retaining a majority of Indigenous persons.

The Committee values advice and input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including Indigenous Elders, University staff and students. To that end, the Chair will have sole discretion in regards to attendance and the distribution of invitations for each meeting of the Committee.

### **Operation of ISSPG**

Meetings will be held at least 2 times per year, and more frequently at the discretion of the Chair. At least three Committee members must be present to constitute a quorum.

The Chair may determine that urgent matters requiring the Committee's approval between meetings may be conducted by Flying Minute. Flying Minutes require a simple majority and must be evidenced by the members' signatures, which may include electronic signatures, or email confirmation sent from the email account which the Committee Secretary is satisfied belongs to the member concerned.

### **Secretariat**

Support for the ISSPGC is provided by the University's Governance Services, which provides high level secretariat support for all critical governance committees.

The Dean of Gnibi College is one of the six Deans of Southern Cross University. In addition to his role as Chair of the ISSPGC, he is a member of the Academic Board. The Academic Board is responsible for maintaining representation of Indigenous Australians on Faculty Boards and its committees.

More broadly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in many decisions supporting and impacting Indigenous students. Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples is the hub of activity, providing courses, support services, and engaging in scholarship and research relevant to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are representatives from Gnibi on both the Accreditation Committee and Academic Board, in which all new courses and course changes are approved, noted, and discussed. There are also representatives from Gnibi on a number of sub committees of the University's Academic Board including: Academic Standards and Quality Committee, Teaching and Assessment Committee and the Research Committee, which explicitly also requires a senior Indigenous researcher in addition to the Associate Dean Research for Gnibi. The Team Leader for IASS is a member of the Student Academic Experience Committee.

As well as Indigenous academic staff, the Gnibi College Board includes Aboriginal Elders. Elders directly advise on Indigenous initiatives in the University with the Elders Council meeting 4 times per year and engaging directly with the Vice Chancellor.

### **5.3.1 Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism**

The ISSPGC affirms its commitment to the ISSP Guidelines and is appreciative of the support received under this funding program.

The ISSPGC's work over the past year has been focussed on tightening compliance on key elements of the Guidelines and supporting its students through the continuing challenges following drought, bushfires, floods, COVID, floods, and more floods.

In 2021, the new Terms of Reference for the ISSPGC were approved and embedded in the governance framework of the University; a review of our Scholarships offerings was undertaken and the offerings revamped to provide stronger ongoing academically focussed support for students; and the Indigenous Education and Indigenous Workforce strategies

were updated to have fewer, more focussed KPIs. Consultation on the strategies is ongoing and will be considered by the Elders Council at their next meeting in June 2022.

The University, and the ISSPGC, has a keen focus on the whole student lifecycle, from the earliest engagement to graduation and postgraduation employment. With this focus, the Committee recognises the extraordinary challenges that have faced its students over the past few years and the extraordinary resilience many have demonstrated in the face of many personal challenges- others have understandably struggled and the University recognises that the equity challenges for Indigenous students have been exacerbated by the natural disaster challenges and COVID. The new revamped Scholarship offerings and additional tutoring and academic support are intended to address and support students more effectively as they progress through their academic studies. The University has also taken major strides to support students generally with the introduction of a more flexible academic program through the Southern Cross Model.

All of these changes would not have been possible without the dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Our Indigenous academic and professional staff have been critical to the ongoing support and success of our students, at the same time enriching the environment in which we all work and learn.

We also wish to acknowledge and thank the Elders Council. We respect their Elders Principles as laying the foundation for our work. With the Principles at the forefront, we are committed to ensuring students are supported through the ISSP funding to access, progress, and complete their studies and develop the skills, capabilities and confidence to thrive post-graduation.

Associate Professor Stuart Barlo, Dean Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples  
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## **Additional information for completing the template**

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<sup>1</sup> This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

<sup>2</sup> Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>3</sup> Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>4</sup> Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

<sup>5</sup>Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

<sup>6</sup> Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

<sup>7</sup> Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

<sup>8</sup> Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

<sup>9</sup> Only record amounts which required payment during the 2021 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.