

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

2016-2020





**Southern Cross
University**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2016-2020

At Southern Cross University we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our campuses stand and pay tribute to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the unique role they play in the life of the region.

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CRICOS Provider Code 01241G
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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this publication contains images and references to people who may now be deceased. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from Southern Cross University.

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INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the Southern Cross University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. The Strategy, now in its 21st year, is a symbol of the longstanding connection that exists between Southern Cross University and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In particular it underlines the progress that we have made together in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. While there is a justified sense of pride in these achievements, we must also acknowledge that there is further work to do.

Through this Strategy, the University aims to ease the disadvantage experienced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in employment. As a University that values the contribution that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community makes, we must also recognise the reciprocal benefits that are created through the enrichment of our scholarship and community engagement.

We are mindful that the Strategy will only be enlivened through the efforts of all staff engaging with, and committing to, the principles and goals that have been set. We ask all colleagues to read and consider the contribution that they can make to its success.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Shoemaker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

PROFESSOR ADAM SHOEMAKER

**Vice Chancellor and President
Southern Cross University**

ON BEHALF OF THE GNIBI ELDERS:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aunty Irene Harrington". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Aunty Irene Harrington

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Uncle Greg Harrington". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Uncle Greg Harrington

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Uncle Charles Moran". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Uncle Charles Moran

RECONCILIATION ACTION STATEMENT

**SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY
DEEPLY VALUES THE LONG AND
PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS IT HAS
WITH THE ABORIGINAL ELDERS AND
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN THE
NORTHERN RIVERS AND BEYOND.**

We respect Aboriginal Elders, community and cultures for their inherent diversity and their generosity sharing their understandings with Southern Cross University.

Southern Cross University acknowledges the social disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal communities and we reaffirm our commitment to easing these disadvantages through our teaching, learning, research and community engagement. We support Indigenous Knowledge as a productive valuable and strong understanding that informs us all.

In living these values we will support the ongoing relationship with Aboriginal communities by maintaining the Gnibi Elders group as a permanent Advisory Committee of the University.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Southern Cross University is one of the largest employers on the NSW North Coast and border region of NSW and Queensland. These areas are the traditional home of the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr people. The region continues to be home to large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Lismore (4.5%), Coffs Harbour (4.1%) and Tweed Heads (3.5%) all have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations greater than the NSW average (2.9%).

Southern Cross University is, therefore, well placed to provide employment opportunities to the communities in which it is located.

PRINCIPLES OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY:

- Create employment opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all levels of the University.
- Southern Cross University is committed to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage in our community. Increasing participation in employment is recognised as an important part in 'closing the gap' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.
- Southern Cross University acknowledges that to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, it is vitally important that the University celebrates and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as one means of providing a culturally safe workplace.
- Develop and strengthen positive relationships between the University and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations; promoting the University as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Southern Cross University recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and their cultural knowledge are important contributors to the scholarship of the University.
- Southern Cross University acknowledges that the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff assists in providing a welcoming and culturally safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As part of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, Southern Cross University has developed a set of Values that confirms the way the University and its staff operate in order to fulfil our commitments to our University community. Our Values underpin the University's commitment to the development and implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

VALUES

COLLEGIALITY

Openness and Respect

- Being open with each other and open in our thinking.
- Saying what we believe and doing it in a constructive and respectful manner.
- Engaging with diverse cultural and Indigenous perspectives in both global and local settings.

Collaboration and Trust

- Working as a team, drawing on combined strengths to meet our shared goals.
- Trusting our colleagues to challenge us in a positive manner, and supporting each other.
- Engaging with our local and global communities and partners for mutual benefit.

INTEGRITY

Honesty and Ethical Behaviour

- Being truthful in all our dealings.
- Acting consistently with what is said and the principles held.
- Pursuing practices that develop the social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of our University, and local and global communities.
- Advancing human rights and our commitment to providing opportunities for students and staff in an inclusive, culturally safe environment.

Drive and Accountability

- Striving to ensure the University's ongoing success.
- Having the drive and commitment to innovate based on rigorous analysis.
- Being accountable for our individual and collective actions and for the performance of those we lead.



EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 2016-2020

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2016-2020 aims to build on the positive work of previous Strategies by continuing to create quality and sustainable work opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



KEY PRIORITY AREAS

The 2016-2020 Strategy will focus on the following three priority areas:

1. **Cultural Competence and Safety**
2. **Recruitment** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
3. **Development and Career Success** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

PRIORITY 1

PROVIDE A CULTURALLY SAFE WORKPLACE BY DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURAL COMPETENCY ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY AND RESPECTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURE

| Action | Responsibility | Timeline | Performance Indicator |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mandatory cultural competency training for new staff as part of the induction program. | HR Services | Implemented by December 2017 | All new staff undertaking cultural competency training as part of the Southern Cross University induction process. Review "Ochre" training program for suitability. |
| 2. Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency course targeted at Supervisors and Managers, with the participation of University staff and Elders. | HR Services | Implemented by December 2017 | Course available as part of the HR training program. |
| 3. All staff encouraged to participate in the planning of and attendance at University Indigenous events. | Vice Chancellor and Heads of Work Units | Annually | The Southern Cross University Indigenous Events Coordinating Committee provided with support to engage with and promote events to the wider University community. Staff provided with an opportunity to attend University Indigenous events. |

PRIORITY 2

RECRUITMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF

| Action | Responsibility | Timeline | Performance Indicator |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Promote and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment through targeted pathway programs – traineeships, cadetships, career development fellowships. | HR Services | Twice yearly during term of Strategy | Southern Cross University Managers aware of the availability of programs, and report annually on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in pathway programs. |
| 2. Review of current designated positions, professional and academic, with a particular focus on opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted positions. | HR Services | Review complete by September 2017 | Review completed and opportunities for additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment identified. |
| 3. Report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within individual work units to encourage accountability and focus. | HR Services | Annually | Work unit reporting included as part of the 'Strategy' report to the Vice Chancellor and Joint Consultative Forum. |
| 4. Southern Cross University to participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events as a means of promoting the University as an employer of choice. | Marketing and Southern Cross University Indigenous Events Coordinating Committee | Annually | Southern Cross University promoting the University at community events at each location in our footprint at least once per year. |

PRIORITY 3

DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER SUCCESS FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF

| Action | Responsibility | Timeline | Performance Indicator |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Prioritise access to development opportunities for professional staff including consideration of secondments where available and encouragement and support to apply for the Professional Staff Career Development Scheme. | HR Services | Annually | Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participating in development opportunities. |
| 2. Development of a mentoring program targeted at new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. | HR Services and Equity and Diversity | July 2018 | Formalised program in place with objectives, guidelines and training available. |
| 3. Development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network as an opportunity to discuss issues relevant to employment at Southern Cross University. | HR Services | Commence September 2017 | Staff network in place and meeting on a quarterly basis. |
| 4. Exit interviews offered and encouraged upon cessation for all fixed term and continuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to gauge their experience at Southern Cross University and reasons for leaving. | HR Services | By end of 2017 | Exit interviews offered to all staff ceasing employment with Southern Cross University. |

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy ('the Strategy') will operate until December 2020 and will be reviewed annually to ensure that objectives and initiatives are aligned with the current higher education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment environment and the University's Strategic Plan. The Strategy's outcomes will be reported annually to the University's Executive through the Vice Chancellor and to staff via the Joint Consultative Forum.

Feedback and updates on the implementation of the Strategy will occur through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff forum, and relevant Indigenous networks to ensure continued progress and success of the Strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Strategy was developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Working Group. The Working Group consisted of Academic and Professional staff from across the University, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Consultation and feedback on the Strategy was undertaken with senior staff at Southern Cross University and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community members across the University's footprint.

RESOURCES

- Southern Cross University Enterprise Agreement 2016
- Southern Cross University Strategic Plan 2016-2020
- Southern Cross University Reconciliation Action Plan
- National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy

