



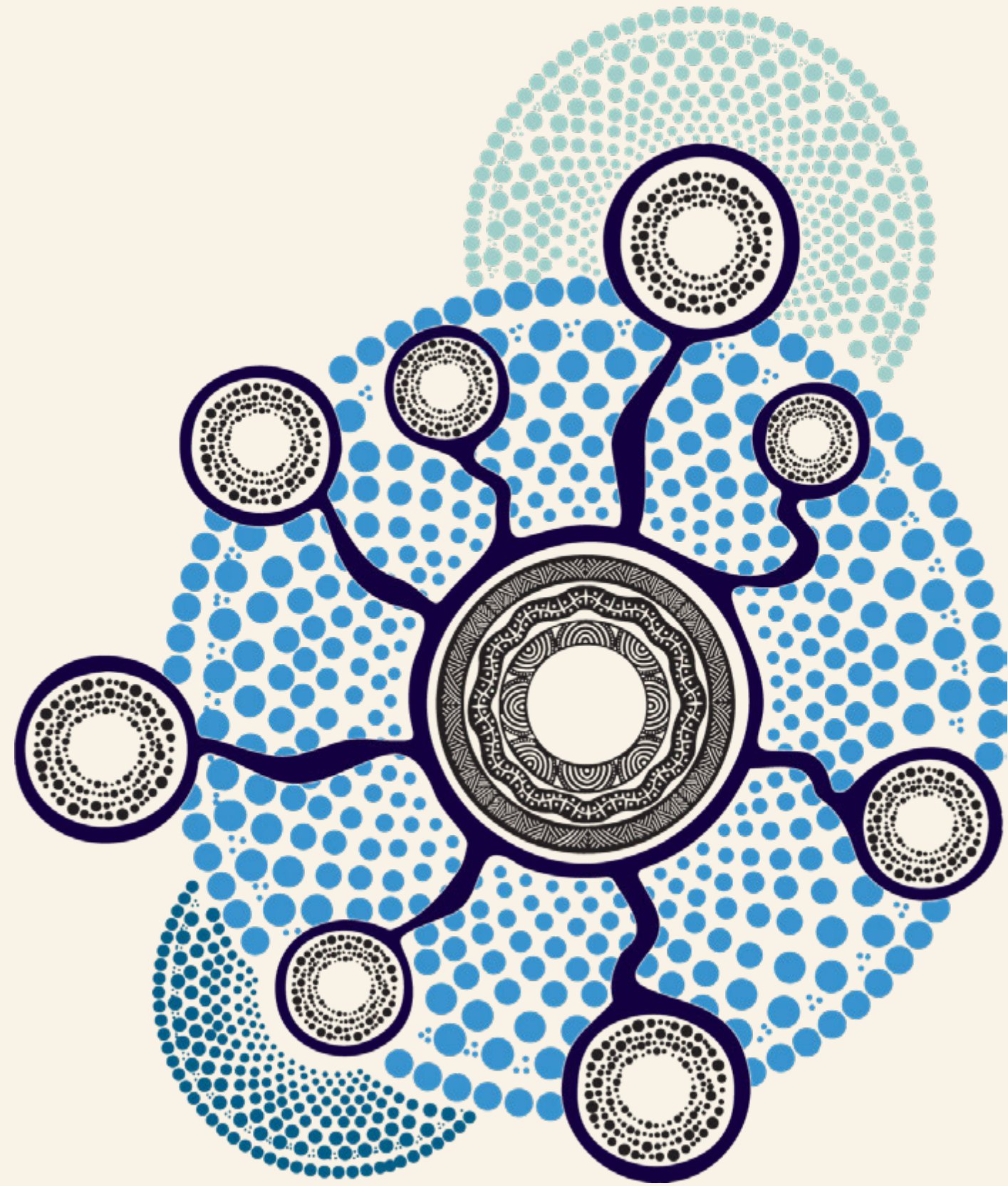
**Southern
Cross
University**

Indigenous Education Strategy 2021-2026

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Acknowledgement

Southern Cross University respectfully acknowledges that its campuses are situated on the ancestral lands of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yugambeh. The University deeply values its connections to these communities and the ongoing support and advice of elders from these lands and the contribution of Indigenous members of staff and students to the vibrancy and diversity of the University community as a whole.

Introduction

Southern Cross University is committed to student success. The University focuses on the whole student lifecycle with the University, from the point of earliest engagement to the point of graduation and postgraduation employment. This Indigenous Education Strategy is focused on the education experience of Indigenous students at the University, including access to the University, successful progression through their chosen courses, and completion of their studies.

The University recognises the equity challenges for Indigenous students, and the need to ensure that support is available for these students throughout their academic journey. We are committed to working with the Elders Council and respecting their Elders Principles in laying the foundation for this Strategy.

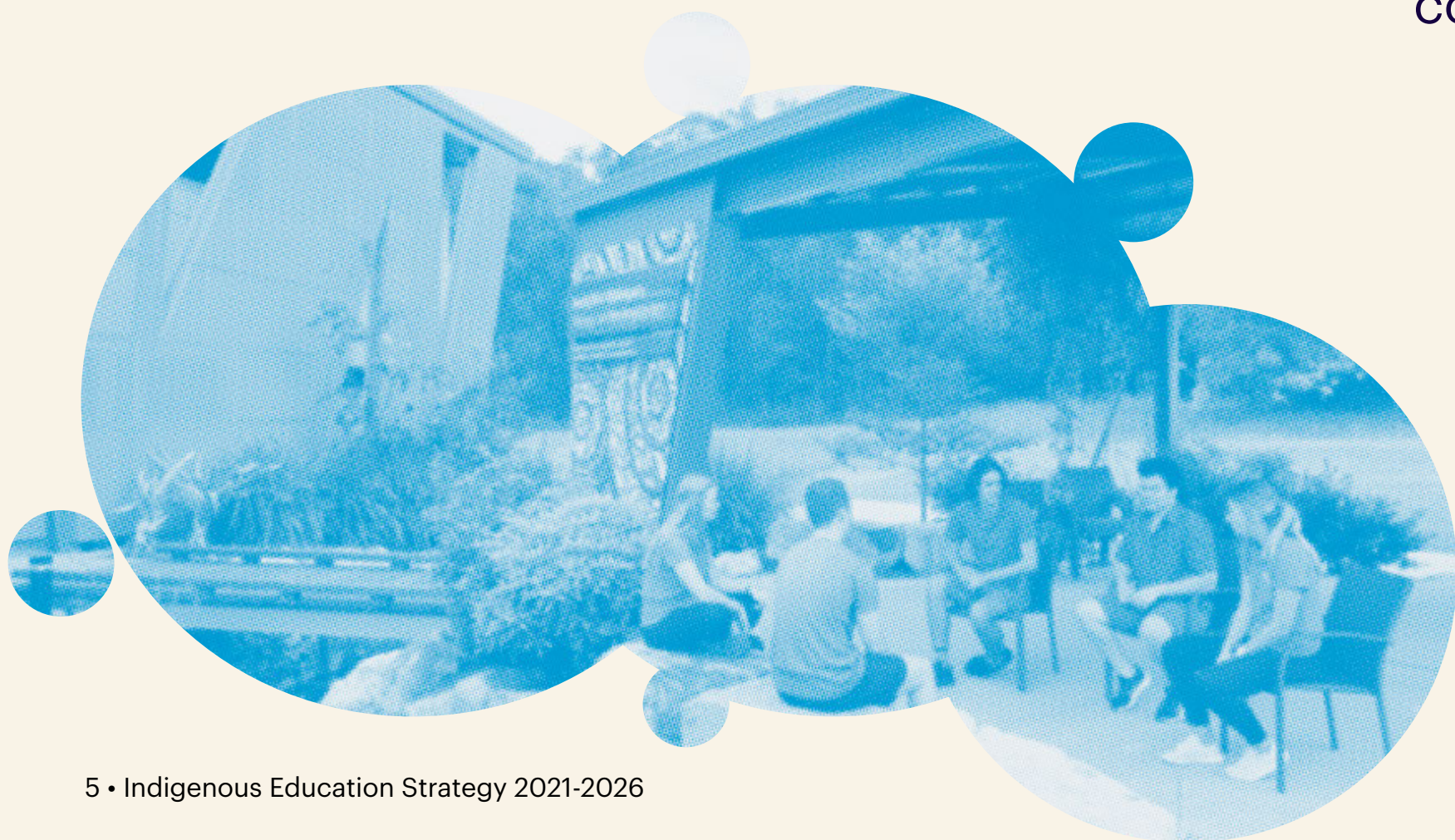


Indigenous Student Success Program

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has administered the Australian Government's Indigenous Student Success (Higher Education) Program (ISSP)¹ since 1 January 2017. This program is now the major funding source for higher education providers to prioritise progress for Indigenous students.

This Indigenous Education Strategy is a critical document under this scheme providing transparency on the University's focus areas for the funding. It is required to:

- a) include Key Performance Indicators; and
- b) prioritise increasing the number of Indigenous students enrolling in, progressing in and completing courses leading to higher education awards; and
- c) facilitate, monitor and improve upon the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in curricula, graduate attributes, and teaching practices; and
- d) include activities for students and employees of the provider that promote cultural competency in Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories and the diversity of circumstances of Indigenous people in Australia.



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, communities and cultures for their inherent diversity and their generosity sharing their understandings with Southern Cross University.

Southern Cross University acknowledges the lived experiences of Indigenous communities and we reaffirm our commitment to enhancing social and emotional wellbeing through our teaching, learning, research and community engagement. We support Indigenous knowledge as a productive, valuable and strong form of understanding.

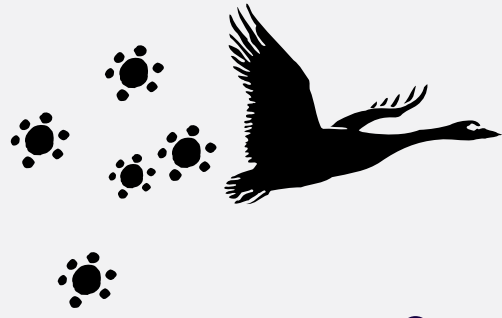
In adhering to these values, the University will support the ongoing relationship with Indigenous communities by maintaining the Gnibi Elders Group as a key reference group for the University.

Gnibi Elders Principles

The Gnibi Elders Principles have underpinned strategies of the University since they were shared by the Elders in 2014. In 2021, the Elders met and reaffirmed the Guiding Principles, and reaffirmed their commitment to work with the University to support all students to grow in their understanding and knowledge and all Indigenous students to learn and thrive, becoming proud and effective leaders walking in all worlds. The University values their generosity in sharing their wisdom and understanding. The Bundjalung elders who advise Gnibi college at Southern Cross University, shared these guiding principles in 2014.

1. Indigenous Knowledge is relevant, ethical, intelligent, effective and a useful way of knowing.
2. Indigenous peoples are active, able and worthy peoples.
3. The truth about our histories and value of Indigenous ways are determined by us, we carry this knowledge.
4. Elders hold our Aboriginal spirituality and our culture close. We choose what is open and shared and what will be closed. Aboriginal spirituality is the basis for life, Indigenous education and cultural competency, it infuses everything.
5. Our knowledge is relational. Our principles are the basis for Southern Cross University to establish and sustain an active, informed and respectful relationship with Indigenous Elders who will give considered collective input. The continuance of this relationship through the Elders group is essential.
6. Culture is sacred to us. We are and own this living culture. We do not need a 'book'. We share with you so that you can learn how to listen and hear what we say.
7. Identity is based upon things [inside] beneath the surface. Empowered, individual, affirmed identity is the basis of positive, productive, healthy and nondestructive lives – opportunities to engage and build knowledge builds strong mob through [inside] learning.
8. Learning everyday with each other has to be informed and sustained by a politic of open, positive and ethical interactions.
9. We as Elders have presented these things all our lives without being heard – we are often listened to but our message is not heard nor heeded. We take this opportunity to speak in the understanding that you will listen in the right way, hear us and learn.





Gnibi College Of Indigenous Australian People

The importance and pride we take in Gnibi College cannot be overstated. Gnibi College has a strong presence in the Northern Rivers region. In 1977, the Bundjalung people founded an Aboriginal Community Education Centre at the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education in Lismore. This became the Gungil Jindabah Centre (Gnibi) College of Indigenous Australian Peoples when Southern Cross University was established in 1994. The name Gnibi was gifted to the University by Widjabul Elders of the Bundjalung Nation and is the Bundjalung word for 'black swan'. It is also the name the Bundjalung people gave to the star system, or constellation, that early European explorers called the 'Southern Cross'.

Gnibi College is committed to delivering dynamic and innovative courses, providing professional career pathways, and engaging in scholarship and research relevant to the needs of Indigenous peoples. It takes a lead role in the engagement with Aboriginal communities and works closely with the Elders Council. The University is proud of its place as a continuing leader for Indigenous Education and will continue to support Gnibi College build this academic recognition and reputation.

Gnibi College will continue to support conversations to enable a whole of University approach to ensure equitable higher education access, participation, and graduation of Indigenous students. Working with the Elders and Indigenous staff and students, Gnibi College will support the University in improving its academic support for students across all disciplines to increase progression and completion rates, increased engagement and improved graduate employment outcomes.

Strategic Focus Areas

The Key Performance Initiatives below will focus on:

- increasing the number of appropriately academically prepared Indigenous students enrolling in, progressing in and completing courses leading to higher education awards; and
- facilitating, monitoring and improving the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in curricula, graduate attributes, and teaching practices; and
- opportunities for students and employees that promote knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories and the diversity of circumstances of Indigenous people in Australia.

To facilitate and monitor the KPI's, the University will be supported by the Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian People, Academic Faculties and Colleges, the Student Support services, the Academic Portfolio Office and HR. Each of these units will work collaboratively to action the whole of University response to the KPIs.



Key Performance Initiatives

Focus Area	Performance Indicator	Responsibility
Indigenous student enrolments	Increase the number of appropriately academically prepared Indigenous Australian students enrolled at Southern Cross University year on year from 2021 base.	Faculties and Colleges VP Engagement Academic Portfolio Office
Indigenous student progression rates	Improve rates of retention for Aboriginal and Torres	Faculties and Colleges Academic Portfolio Office
Indigenous student completion rates	Improve completion rates of student's year-on-year from 2021 base.	APO in partnership with Gnibi College
Indigenous scholarships	Improve the targeting and effectiveness of scholarships designed to support the progress of Indigenous students	VP Engagement

Evaluation And Review

This Strategy will operate until December 2026 and will be reviewed annually and reported through to the University Executive to ensure action on the Key Performance Initiatives.

