

Yaitya Warpulai Tappa: Giving New Impetus to UniSA's Indigenous Employment Strategy

a d i s c u s s i o n p a p e r





Yaitya Warpulai Tappa: Giving New Impetus to UniSA's Indigenous Employment Strategy – A Discussion Paper

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Indigenous employment goals

UniSA has a strong, statutorily based, commitment to increasing life opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The University's *Statement of Reconciliation* is given effect through support for social and economic development linked to engaged education programs, while Indigenous employment initiatives complement *Strategic Plan* goals to engage with communities and work in partnership to build social capacity and community resilience.

The Strategic Plan's Indigenous staff employment goal anticipates that "all relevant areas understand and meet their responsibilities for Indigenous employment and development of Indigenous staff"¹. Allied performance dimensions refer to meeting an Indigenous employment target, that employment will be across the whole organisation, and that Indigenous staff undertake appropriate further study and gain higher qualifications.

New Horizons supports these commitments, noting that:

Intellectual, cultural and social diversity are proudly woven into the history and fabric of UniSA. Our founding legislation commits us to meeting the needs of groups within the community, particularly Indigenous people, that have suffered disadvantages in education. The University has been a trailblazer in the higher education sector in providing opportunities for people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and for women in non-traditional areas of study and employment. (p19)

The *Corporate Plan 2008-10* looks at two main ways of developing appropriate employment opportunities for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders: through the 2% Indigenous employment target, and through complementary Indigenous education initiatives.

SMG endorsed a new triennial Indigenous Employment Strategy (*Yaitya Warpulai Tappa*) late in 2007, a primary objective of which is to reach the 2% of workforce target and maintain it over time². Strategic development is informed by ongoing input from the Indigenous Employment Advisory Group (IEAG) and Indigenous Staff Network.

1.2 Indigenous workforce numbers

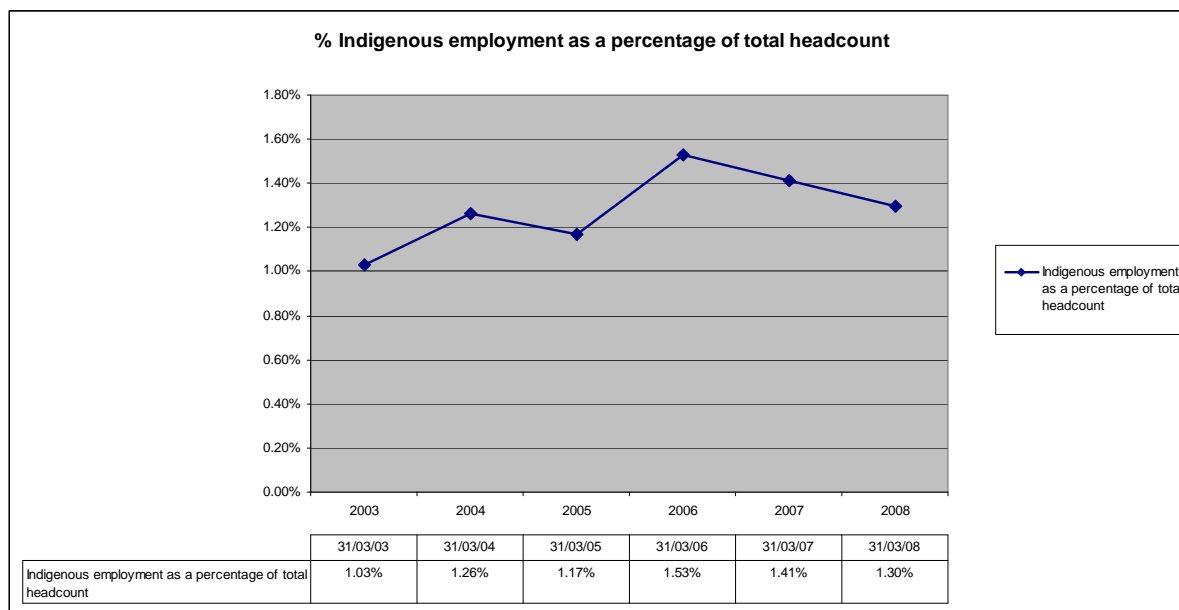
An estimated 51 Indigenous continuous and fixed term staff will need to be employed by 2010 to meet the target (based on a status quo workforce headcount of 2548), an increase of 18 from the current estimate of 33 continuous and fixed term Indigenous staff³. Should staff numbers grow, the number of Indigenous staff required to meet the 2% target similarly will increase in proportion.

¹ UniSA *Strategic Plan* (December 2006) at page 10

² Provided as [Attachment 6](#)

³ These figures are based on an investigation undertaken by Eddie Cubillo, the Indigenous Employment Consultant, in mid-2008. Ongoing work is considering how best to ensure that the management information system can collect reliable annual data without this additional exercise being needed.

Attachment 2 provides a larger discussion of this workforce situation. The trend is shown in the following graph.



Attachment 2 outlines where Indigenous staff were employed in the University in June 2008, noting that:

- 25 of the 33 Indigenous staff were aligned with DUCIER;
- the headcount percentage of continuing and fixed term Indigenous staff was 1.3% of the total University workforce;
- 21 of the 33 staff were women and 12 men;
- 12 were professional staff and 21 were academics;
- the Academic Portfolio and Business Division each had 1 Indigenous employee, the Chancellery had 2 and Health Sciences Division 3;
- the following Divisions/Portfolios appeared to have no Indigenous employees: Finance and Resources; International and Development; Research and Innovation Services; Strategy and Planning; and Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment.

1.3 Current Indigenous employment activities and Corporate Plan expectations

UniSA is committed to being a corporate and community leader in Indigenous employment. Attachment 3 provides further information about Corporate Plan expectations relating to education programs of benefit to the Indigenous community and workforce diversity at UniSA.

Existing activities that support Indigenous employment include:

- the Indigenous Employment Strategy, with its 2% of workforce employment target
- oversight by an Indigenous Employment Advisory Group (IEAG)
- employment of the Indigenous Employment Consultant
- an Indigenous Staff Network
- special professional development funding opportunities
- provision of Indigenous cultural awareness programs for non-Indigenous staff (well received sessions were conducted on four metropolitan campuses in September 2008)
- preparation and distribution of targeted media and information (such as the May 2008 *Indigenous Employment Brochure*), and
- direct involvement with DEEWR and other Indigenous employment programs.

The Corporate Plan expects UniSA in the next triennium to focus on increasing student retention and completions and increase access for applicants with a high likelihood of successful completion. Various initiatives are identified that also bear upon the Indigenous employment agenda:

- improved student recruitment via Dept. of Education and Children’s Services networks;
- provision of pathways counselling to all potential students;
- increased Indigenous scholarships and scholarship applications and take-up;
- intensive academic support to Indigenous students;
- cross-University approaches to raise awareness of issues affecting the retention and success of Indigenous students;
- improved completion rates and employment outcomes by developing employment pathways, including cadetships with government, industry and community employers.⁴

These proposals can support the achievement of the 2% of workforce Indigenous employment target and thereby underpin the renewal of the workforce development strategy through “maintaining and enhancing the University’s commitment to staff diversity”⁵.

Creating improved pathways that span education, training and employment can advance the University’s broader goals. Embedding Indigenous employment activities within our institutional culture and practice corroborates the University’s claim to be a corporate and community leader in this sphere. It can be done most effectively by having a dual impact, as a large South Australian employer, and as a partner in various engaged community activities.

1.4 UniSA and State and Australian Government commitments

The *Indigenous Employment Strategy* reflects a strong commitment to addressing the socio-economic disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It resonates strongly with the intentions of the South Australian and Australian Governments.

South Australian Government

Alliance Partner status with respect to *South Australia’s Strategic Plan* demonstrates the University’s collaborative strategic approach. At least four State Plan targets have specific relevance to Indigenous employment opportunities (including the State’s own 2% of workforce target).

A recent report exploring the State Government’s Indigenous employment policy examined analogous issues to those experienced by UniSA. The *Equity Works* report (November 2007) identified eight main barriers to the State achieving its own 2% of workforce target (see [Attachment 4](#)). Discussion reflects the University’s experience in areas such as cultural competence and responding to low employment levels in mainstream, non-Indigenous specific, units. Attention is drawn to the type, duration and levels of appointment, reflecting findings about “an unequal distribution with lower proportions of Aboriginal employees in the higher salary groupings and a higher incidence in the lower salary groupings, relative to non-Aboriginal employees”. It was proposed that a coordinated approach would benefit from “building pathways” to employment and offering pre-employment work experience linked to other parts of the education/training sector.

⁴ from UniSA [Corporate Plan 2008-10](#), section 4.3, *Indigenous Education*

⁵ See section 4.1, *People and Services* (Corporate Plan)

Australian Government

The University is recognised as a Corporate Leader within the Commonwealth's Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Education Program (CLIEP), and participates in the Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP).

UniSA recently made a submission responding to the Government's *Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity*⁶ discussion paper which focussed on Indigenous employment issues. The University, in the discussion paper's terms, can be seen as both a *business* able to employ Indigenous people, and a potential *partner* in multi-partite initiatives. Our approach to Indigenous employment is congruent with that in the discussion paper: "[w]e want individuals to receive more comprehensive support to help determine a person's interests, guide them to realistic employment expectations, train them to address gaps in skills and mentor them before and after they are placed in a job." (at page 9)

It is expected that the report arising from the current Bradley *Review of Australian Higher Education* will clarify the terrain within which the University's Indigenous Employment Strategy is situated, especially in relation to the treatment of enhanced higher education workforce participation opportunities for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Australian Employment Covenant

The *Australian Employment Covenant* was signed on 30 October 2008 by the Prime Minister and Andrew Forrest on behalf of the AEC executive, and aims to secure 50,000 sustainable jobs for Indigenous Australians.

The AEC is described as "a national industry-led initiative which brings all Australians together to break the vicious cycle of unemployment, hopelessness and poverty amongst many Indigenous Australians. It is the first of its kind and represents a major commitment to providing the majority of Indigenous Australians who are capable of work, with a real opportunity to achieve their full potential as productive members of Australian society."

A three way commitment is established through which AEC Employers formally guarantee employment to job ready and training ready Indigenous Australians, provide industry specific training specifications to Government training providers and provide individual mentor support to Indigenous participants. The Government, through employment services, will support the recruitment of Indigenous job seekers and support pre-employment training to the specifications of AEC Employers resulting in sustainable employment. Indigenous people will commit to accept and remain in employment once trained.

It is highly likely that the roll out of any new program opportunities and arrangements will support the purpose and activities of the *Indigenous Employment Strategy*. While we cannot yet draw out the full dimensions of this anticipated congruence of interests, it is expected that the Covenant will be of strategic and practical significance in the immediate future.

⁶ Australian Government: *Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity: A discussion paper on the future of the CDEP and Indigenous Employment Programs* Canberra, May 2008 (quotes are from pages 6 to 9).

DISCUSSION

2.1 Developing and strengthening employment opportunities

This report recommends measures to build upon existing policies and programs to help achieve the Indigenous employment target of 51 Indigenous continuing and fixed term staff by 2010, and to support their retention thereafter.

Discussion in section 2.2 considers enhanced human resource practices, while section 2.4 situates potential initiatives within UniSA's broader engagement work. The aim is to identify employment and training programs that will attract, induct and sustain Indigenous employees, with a focus on initiatives to increase mainstream employment throughout the University.

2.2 Enhancing practices and capacity

This section identifies intervention points that could bolster Indigenous employment efforts in the immediate future. [Attachment 1](#) provides a more detailed outline of possible actions.

Hosting: attributes and capacity

Consolidate advice and ongoing support for line and other managers of Indigenous staff: the capacity to be a welcoming and responsive workplace for Indigenous staff can be reinforced, especially by ensuring that work sites are culturally competent and line managers are confident in their role.

Focus on under-represented units

Focus on under-represented organisational units to achieve the required new 18 Indigenous staff by 2010: DUCIER needs to be supported by a complementary focus on employment and advancement opportunities in other organisational units that have no or few Indigenous staff.

Address the need for higher level experience opportunities for Indigenous staff

Job shadowing and experience building, including through mentoring and other activities: retention and professional advancement strategies need to provide opportunities to develop capacities at higher and/or specialised levels. Systematic succession planning, multi-skilling opportunities, access to leadership programs, and position mobility opportunities are needed for Indigenous staff. The University's mentoring mechanisms can be adapted for appropriateness for staff members from Indigenous cultural backgrounds.

Better connectivity with external activities

Build on the University's external relationships to integrate Indigenous employment efforts with appropriate programs and activities: an example of the work envisaged is described in section 2.4 below. The larger task foresees more collaboration over time with interests such as Alumni, regional, and community networks, as well as exploration of further interaction with industry and corporate partners to broaden impact and opportunities.

Improve internal education/training/employment pathways

Establish better internal pathways to enable transition from trainee or student status to that of employee: improved entry and articulation arrangements are needed for Indigenous members of the University community to improve mobility across education, training and employment roles. Australian Government programs have an important part to play in this area of activity.

Other ideas outlined in [Attachment 1](#) consider:

- workplace culture & design;
- identifying and addressing challenges to experience-building and advancement; and
- strengthening liaison and communication between the University, the Indigenous community, and employment sector organisations and programs.

The following table identifies a range of programs that can support an integrated ‘pathways’ approach to long term Indigenous employment opportunities.

Table 1: Spectrum of Indigenous employment/training opportunities

Employment/Training Opportunity	UniSA Availability (June 2008)	Opportunities / Actions
Cadetship (Aust. Govt.)	not available	<i>Each of these programs either is underway or under investigation for application at UniSA</i>
Traineeship (STEP)	available	
Graduate Traineeship (UniSA)	soon to be available	
Corporate Leader Program	not available	
Scholarships (various)	available	
Work placement at UniSA	available	<i>UniSA employs three STEP trainees in November 2008 (2 in DUCIER and 1 in BUE)</i>

2.3 Existing Australian University Practices

Recommendations accompanying this Report refer to potential UniSA approaches or initiatives that already operate in a similar form at some other Australian universities. Attachment 5 to this Report provides indicative information on just three of these:

- *Griffith University* - for its clear cascading of Indigenous staff recruitment and retention responsibilities to appropriate operational managers;
- *Charles Sturt University* - for its Indigenous Employment Incentives Scheme (practical steps to recruit and retain Indigenous trainees or staff);
- *Sydney University* - for Assisted Merits Based Recruitment.

Work also is being undertaken through the national Indigenous Employment Consultant’s Group to see whether an adequate bench-marking capacity can be developed in relation to Indigenous employment data and characteristics at Australian universities. This network similarly functions as the forum through which the effectiveness of activities is discussed.

2.4 A model linked to community engagement activities

UniSA’s academic and other capacities are deployed to achieve agreed goals with diverse partners through engagement in external environments: in local communities and regions, and with industry sectors. Responding to Indigenous community needs and aspirations already features in this community and industry based context. Employment within UniSA is part of a larger agenda in which the University’s capacity to employ is a valuable resource in its own right.

The Strategic Plan explains this role in various ways, including in terms of social responsibility and civic-mindedness, where “[t]he University’s commitment to social justice, social responsibility and ethical action is reflected in its engagement with communities and in its

programs, which are designed to produce graduates with qualities that are valued by employers and society". UNAP is a major vehicle for effective engagement with many collaborative relationships already in place and a brief for developing life opportunities for Indigenous people from its northern metropolitan catchment area. It can facilitate access to existing networks and expertise through groups like Northern Futures, SA Works, the Para West adult education campus, and structured workplace learning and 'adopt-a-school' program activity. Enhancing UniSA as a 'destination' for prospective trainees/employees will help achieve the aims of UNAP and its local partners. The outcomes of the recent *Northern Summit* will add impetus to achievement of common goals in this area.

Preliminary discussion with DEEWR officers suggests that a practical model can be developed in which UNAP would facilitate local sourcing of prospective Indigenous trainees/employees at one end of an articulated pathway (or 'pipeline') that links education and/or training participation to potential job destinations. The model also can be explored for the Centre for Regional Engagement (CRE) in Mount Gambier and Whyalla and for programs conducted with several regional and remote Indigenous communities.

Involvement with Australian Government Indigenous training, education and employment programs needs to be reconsidered, both in terms of existing arrangements and potential access to options that have not hitherto been used. Cadetships, traineeships (including STEP), graduate traineeships, the Corporate Leader Program (CLIEP), as well as integration with work placement and scholarship programs, are potential mechanisms available to the University.

CONCLUSION

This Report proposes dual and complementary approaches for the next phase of the University's Indigenous Employment Strategy: through improved human resource approaches, and through better linkages with communities and industry.

A central idea in the community engaged context is that education, employment and broader economic outcomes for the Indigenous community will be improved if articulated pathways are developed to connect the supply and demand ends of the employment spectrum.

A flexible UniSA program will integrate community based 'supply' measures with a University program to develop skilled workers with real career destinations (at UniSA and elsewhere). Deploying enhanced Indigenous Employment Strategy initiatives within UNAP's area of influence provides a promising initial focus for applied effort.

Complementing this with an improved human resource environment as introduced in section 2.2 of this paper offers a realistic chance of achieving Indigenous Employment Strategy goals, especially if steps are taken to employ and retain Indigenous staff across work areas.

A set of recommendations is made in a separate memorandum to the Senior Management Group.

***Proposals for implementing the Indigenous Employment Strategy
A renewed approach 2009-11***

In addition to reinforcing the need for the University to be a 'culturally competent' organisation, options that can be explored further in the 2009-11 triennium include:

Internal 'education to employment' streaming

Establish better internal pathways that enable transition from student status to that of employee.

- e.g. via scholarships, the NICP (cadetships), UniSA's Graduate Trainee Program, and potentially new approaches proposed through a *Commonwealth Diversity Funding bid*, or the *Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Education Program*;
- improve collaboration with 'supply streams' for potential Indigenous students/employees (i.e. improve integration of UniSA's education and employment capacities with community based networks and programs);
- consider increased work experience opportunities in the University for Indigenous students from all education levels.

Work design & culture

Assess the suitability of work places/environments for staff from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- conduct work design/culture analyses in units to prepare positions to be more amenable to entrants from diverse backgrounds;
- clarify the support networks/initiatives available to Indigenous trainees/students/staff who enter the University through various programs;
- promote the achievements of Indigenous staff and students via University and other publications and avenues;
- include Indigenous employment criteria in appropriate unit or program evaluations/reviews;
- ensure that exit interviews with departing Indigenous staff provide an opportunity to reflect upon the University as a hospitable environment for Indigenous staff.

Support for line- and other managers

Consolidate advice and ongoing support for line and other Managers of Indigenous staff.

- clarify training and support programs or opportunities for supervisors;
- monitor and manage a comprehensive approach to this role;
- review relevant recruiting practices (e.g. recruitment advertising, training for 'culturally aware' interviewing etc);
- clarify accountability and responsibilities at appropriate management levels and link to performance expectations;
- review suitability of various publications, forms and other communications.

Focus on under-represented units

Respond to data that shows that there is little or no employment of Indigenous staff in a number of non-DUCIER units.

- develop policy and initiatives that support achievement of the 2% target by focussing on non- or under-represented organisational units;
- support units that volunteer for the development of a unit-specific strategy for Indigenous employment.

Job 'shadowing' and experience building

Address the need for higher level experience opportunities for Indigenous staff.

- establish a 'job shadowing' program to accelerate the competitiveness of Indigenous applicants for higher level and/or specialised jobs;
- systematise succession planning, multi-skilling opportunities and position mobility opportunities for Indigenous staff;
- assess the amenability of existing University leadership programs for Indigenous staff, including building on the capacity currently provided through the University's mentoring programs;
- develop initiatives based on an acceptance that there will be increasing competition to secure and retain the best Indigenous staff.

Indigenous Employment Register and job network linkages

Establish a Register for potential Indigenous employees and use as a basis for providing ongoing information and advice about jobs as they arise.

- assess the utility of establishing and managing a Register;
- *alternatively*: negotiate with the State Government (DFEEST) to have access to the State's existing *Aboriginal Employment Register*;
- coordinate communication opportunities such as Alumni and Industry links;
- this initiative would be integrated with a more systemic relationship with the 'supply conduits' for potential Indigenous students/employees (i.e. improved integration of UniSA's educative and employment capabilities with the community based networks and programs that have the expertise and resources to work at that level).

Synergies with other Partnering processes

UniSA maintains relationships with various sectors, making it possible to explore further potential collaborative work in relation to Indigenous employment.

- initiate collaborative activity with UNAP (and potentially the CRE);
- explore opportunities presented by Alumni, regional and community networks;
- explore potential crossover with industry/corporate partners to broaden impact and opportunities.

Further work is being undertaken to investigate Indigenous employment measures that may have been implemented successfully at other Australian Universities. Material prepared for the *National Indigenous Employment Coordinators Group* has consolidated much of this information.⁷ Outcomes from this investigation will inform later stages of this policy process and will include consideration of effective benchmarking across Australian universities.

⁷ Consolidated *National Indigenous Employment Coordinators Group* material (untitled, via Eddie Cubillo, June 2008)

The Indigenous Workforce at UniSA

An estimated 51 Indigenous continuous and fixed term staff will need to be employed in 2010 to meet the University's target (based on a 'status quo' workforce headcount of 2548), an increase of 18 persons from the June 2008 estimate of 33 continuous and fixed term Indigenous staff. Table 2 establishes that this will have to be achieved in a situation where the number employed effectively has been on a plateau in recent years.

While it is not possible to establish whether reported numbers reflect a greater or lesser degree of self identification as Indigenous by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in information collection processes in the period since 2003, the current estimate is believed to be relatively accurate⁸.

The Indigenous Employment Consultant estimates that there were 8 Indigenous casual staff employed at UniSA on 2 June 2008. Information on casual employment is not included in data discussed in this section, with reporting historically being consolidated in relation to continuing and fixed term staff.

Table 2: Headcount of Indigenous Continuing and Fixed Term staff 2003 - 2008 (June 2008)

Year	Total: continuous and fixed term staff (Headcount)	Total Indigenous, Continuing & Fixed Term Staff
2008	2548	33*
2007	2412	34
2006	2287	35
2005	2226	26
2004	2220	28
2003	2133	22

* Indigenous Employment Consultant's estimate as at 2 June 2008

The trend over these years is shown in the following graph. The broader comparative situation is that 1.7% of the South Australian population identifies as Indigenous (ABS 2006 Census), as do 1.4% of the SA Public Sector workforce (June 2006).

⁸ Estimate by Eddie Cubillo, Indigenous Employment Consultant.

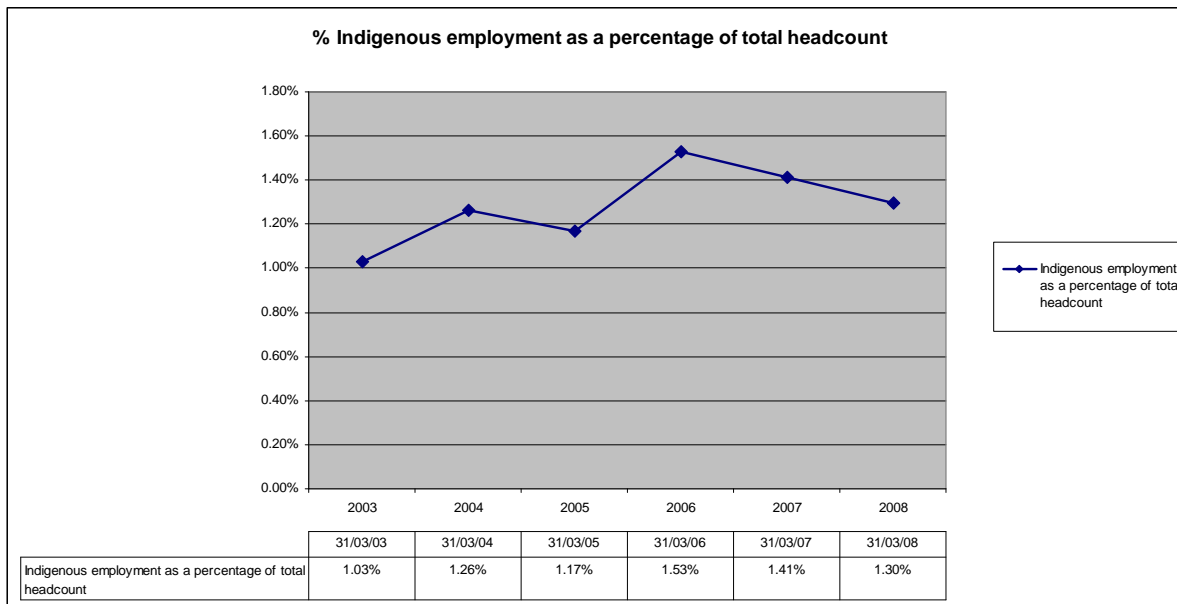


Table 3 shows employment by Division/Portfolio as at 2 June 2008 (Indigenous Employment Consultant's analysis with the support of the Indigenous Staff Network, a regularly convened group open to all UniSA Indigenous employees). Points worth noting about this include that:

- 25 of the 33 estimated Indigenous staff employed in mid-2008 were aligned with DUCIER;
- the headcount percentage of continuing and fixed term Indigenous staff was 1.3% of the total University workforce;
- the Academic Portfolio and Business Division each had 1 Indigenous employee, the Chancellery had 2 and Health Sciences Division 3;
- the following Divisions/Portfolios apparently had no Indigenous employees: Finance and Resources; International and Development; Research and Innovation Services; Strategy and Planning; and Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment.

Table 3: Headcount of Indigenous Continuing & Fixed Term by organisational unit (June 2008)

Division/Portfolio	Estimated Number of Indigenous Staff	Notes (as at June 2008)
Chancellery	2	2 Human Resources Staff
<i>Coordinating Portfolios</i>		
Academic	1	1 Library Staff member
F&R	0	
I&D	0	
R&I	0	
S&P	0	
<i>Academic Divisions</i>		
Business	1	1 Professional Staff Member
EAS	26	25 DUCIER Staff and 1 in Education
Health Sciences	3	3 Professional Staff
ITEE	0	
TOTAL	33	21 Women / 12 Men 12 Professional Staff / 21 Academics This total includes the 3 STEP Trainees

Indigenous employment activities and Corporate Plan expectations

UniSA is committed to being a corporate and community leader in Indigenous employment. Existing activities that support this include:

- the Indigenous Employment Strategy, with its 2% of workforce employment target (which also features within the University's enterprise agreement)
- strategic oversight by an Indigenous Employment Advisory Group (IEAG)
- employment of the Indigenous Employment Consultant
- an Indigenous Staff Network that meets in work hours
- special professional development funding opportunities for Indigenous staff
- encouragement of Indigenous staff involvement in Women and Leadership and other developmental programs
- provision of Indigenous cultural awareness programs for non-Indigenous staff (note: well received sessions were conducted on the four metropolitan campuses in September 2008)
- preparation and distribution of targeted media and information (such as the May 2008 *Indigenous Employment Brochure*), and
- direct involvement with DEEWR and other Indigenous employment programs.

Of a total of some 33,000 students, 267 undergraduates and 47 postgraduates identified as Indigenous in 2007 (0.77% and 0.135% respectively of total student numbers). The *Corporate Plan* noted that, despite some recent fluctuations, UniSA continued to attract more than 50% of South Australia's Indigenous first preferences in that year's intake, while the retention of Indigenous students in 2006 (71.6%) was the highest ever recorded.

The Corporate Plan expectation is that in the next triennium UniSA will focus on increasing retention and completions and increase access for applicants with a high likelihood of successful completion. Various initiatives to help achieve this outcome are identified that also bear upon the Indigenous employment agenda:

- improving student recruitment through DECS school networks;
- improving the admissions process by providing pathways counselling to all potential students;
- increasing the number of Indigenous scholarships and increasing the number of scholarship applications and take-up;

- providing intensive academic support to Indigenous students through tutoring and mentoring programs, with a particular focus on first year retention;
- supporting cross-University collaborative approaches to raise awareness of issues affecting the retention and success of Indigenous students, with a focus on providing inclusive learning opportunities for all Indigenous students;
- improving completion rates and employment outcomes by developing employment pathways, including cadetships with government, industry and community employers.⁹

These proposals can support the achievement of the 2% Indigenous employment target and thereby underpin the renewal of the workforce development strategy through “maintaining and enhancing the University’s commitment to staff diversity”¹⁰.

As with many other organisations, the University has found the 2% target difficult to achieve. Given that 51 Indigenous staff must be employed in 2010 to meet the target (based on the existing 2548 workforce headcount), 18 additional Indigenous staff are required.

Creating improved pathways that span education, training and employment opportunities can advance the University’s broader goals. Embedding Indigenous employment activities within our institutional culture and practice corroborates the University’s claim to be a corporate and community leader in this sphere. It can be done most effectively by having a dual impact, as a large South Australian employer, and as a partner in various engaged community activities.

⁹ from UniSA Corporate Plan 2008-10, section 4.3, *Indigenous Education*

¹⁰ ibid. see section 4.1, *People and Services*

Strategic Government Partnerships

UniSA and State Government commitments

Implementation of UniSA's Indigenous Employment Strategy reflects a strong commitment to addressing socio-economic disadvantages faced by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders which resonates strongly with the intentions of the South Australian and Australian Governments.

Alliance Partner status with respect to *South Australia's Strategic Plan* demonstrates the University's collaborative strategic approach. It is worth recognising that at least four State Plan targets have specific relevance to Indigenous employment opportunities:

- *T1.26 Aboriginal unemployment*: reduce the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment rates each year.
- *T5.7 Aboriginal Leadership*: increase the number of Aboriginal South Australians participating in community leadership and community leadership programs.
- *T6.1 Aboriginal wellbeing*: improve the overall wellbeing of Aboriginal South Australians.
- *T6.24 Aboriginal employees*: increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% by 2010 and maintain or better those levels through to 2014.

Analogous issues to those experienced by the University are examined in a recent report exploring the policy of increasing Indigenous employment in the State's public sector. The *Equity Works* report provided in November 2007 to the Don Dunstan Foundation identified eight main barriers to the State achieving its own 2% of workforce target:

1. negative or misinformed perceptions and attitudes
2. under-developed workforce cultural competence and culturally inclusive workplaces
3. gaps in educational attainment
4. work-life-balance challenges
5. under-developed culturally inclusive recruitment processes
6. under-developed support mechanisms
7. insufficient ongoing employment opportunities
8. insufficient use of exit strategies and succession planning.

The discussion in this report reflects the University's experience in areas such as cultural competence and responding to low employment levels in mainstream, non-Indigenous specific, units. Attention is drawn to the type, duration and levels of appointment, reflecting findings about "an unequal distribution with lower proportions of Aboriginal employees in the higher salary groupings and a higher incidence in the lower salary groupings, relative to non-Aboriginal employees". It was proposed that a coordinated approach would benefit from "building pathways" to employment and offering pre-employment work experience linked to other parts of the education/training sector.

There is marked similarity between these findings and Corporate Plan initiatives outlined in Attachment 3 above, and other proposals in the current paper.

Interaction with the Australian Government and the ‘Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity’ discussion paper (May 2008)

The University is recognised as a Corporate Leader within the Commonwealth’s Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Education Program (CLIEP), and participates in the Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP). It does not appear, however, that the opportunity to apply for funding through the CLIEP Program has been pursued. Funding can be “tailored to your business needs” and assist with developing and implementing “a strategy that could, for example, include assistance for pre-employment training, mentoring or cross-cultural awareness training”¹¹.

UniSA recently made a submission responding to the Government’s *Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity*¹² discussion paper. The submission focused on Indigenous employment issues, seeing the University in the discussion paper’s terms as both a *business* able to employ Indigenous people, and a potential *partner* in multi-partite initiatives. This position reflects the dual approach underpinning the current proposal.

UniSA’s approach to Indigenous employment is congruent with that in the discussion paper: “[w]e want individuals to receive more comprehensive support to help determine a person’s interests, guide them to realistic employment expectations, train them to address gaps in skills and mentor them before and after they are placed in a job.” (at page 9)

The University submission concurred with various “principles of reform” identified and expressed an interest in helping to answer the “hard questions” posed. An example of the former is our intention to increase the number of Indigenous staff employed, and the latter is changing our employment practices to recruit and hold onto more Indigenous staff. UniSA supported the pragmatic assertion that: “[w]e want individuals to receive more comprehensive support to help determine a person’s interests, guide them to realistic employment expectations, train them to address gaps in skills and mentor them before and after they are placed in a job.”

It is expected that the report arising from the current Bradley Review will clarify the terrain within which the University’s Indigenous Employment Strategy is situated, especially in relation to the treatment of enhanced higher education workforce participation opportunities for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

¹¹ Information from site: <http://www.workplace.gov.au>

¹² Australian Government: *Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity: A discussion paper on the future of the CDEP and Indigenous Employment Programs* Canberra, May 2008 (quotes in the following paragraphs are from pages 6 to 9).

Effective Institutional Arrangements at other Australian Universities

Some good approaches are in place already in other Australian Universities. This attachment provides information on just three of these:

- *Griffith University* - for its clear cascading of Indigenous staff recruitment and retention responsibilities to appropriate operational managers;
- *Charles Sturt University* - for its Indigenous Employment Incentives Scheme (practical steps to recruit and retain Indigenous trainees or staff);
- *Sydney University* - for Assisted Merits Based Recruitment.

1. Griffith University – Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy 2004

Three goals are identified as key focus areas in Griffith University's Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy (2004). They relate to Recruitment, Retention, and Community Relations. The overall thrust of Griffith's Strategy resonates strongly with the recommendations in the current UniSA Report. Of particular interest is the clear manner in which responsibilities are cascaded to appropriate operational levels, as shown here for the recruitment and retention categories¹³.

Goal 1 - Recruitment

To continue recruitment of Indigenous Australian staff such that the employment target achieved is representative of the Indigenous Australians in Griffith's catchment area. This target is to be achieved by 2007, and will be reflected across all general and academic staffing levels.

Performance Indicator

- Progress towards targets as set in the University strategic plan as demonstrated in all areas.

¹³ The Griffith Strategy is available at: http://www.griffith.edu.au/equity/pdf/indig_employ_strat.pdf

Strategy	Responsibility
Actively explore and encourage the use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cadetships, • academic internships • traineeships in various elements & in key job categories. 	Faculty Deans, Administrative Directors and Centre Directors
Use workforce profiles and student data to identify employment opportunities for Indigenous Australian, particularly in academic positions.	Faculty Deans, Administrative Directors and Centre Directors
Contact the Indigenous Australian Employment Coordinator to discuss recruitment options and strategies to source applicants for positions.	Faculty Deans, Administrative Directors and Centre Directors
Where appropriate continue the practice of identifying positions for Indigenous Australians.	Faculty Deans, Administrative Directors and Centre Directors
Use workforce planning information to liaise with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment providers • GUMURRII Centre • Existing indigenous Australian staff to assist in skill development & employment readiness for potential applicants 	Indigenous Employment Coordinator
Work with managers to establish selection techniques for filling vacancies that assess potential to meet criteria rather than focussing on knowledge of existing systems.	HRM

Goal 2 – Retention

To encourage existing staff to develop their career opportunities by ensuring that their unique needs as Indigenous Australian staff are reflected in University policies and practices related to career and professional development, and by supporting them to undertake relevant programs and activities.

Performance Indicators

- *Retention rate of Indigenous Australian staff is appropriate when compared to universities in the Innovative Research Universities Group.*
- *Retention rate of Indigenous Staff is the same as non-Indigenous Staff in similar positions.*
- *Participation rate of Indigenous Australian staff in appropriate and relevant development opportunities.*

Strategy	Responsibility
Encourage and assist academic Indigenous staff to apply for ASEDIP release and access Academic Study Programs.	Heads of elements
Ensure that Indigenous staff are encouraged & supported in participating in postgraduate courses, mentoring programs, and in relevant training & professional development activities.	Relevant supervisors
Ensure that induction & orientation programs for Indigenous staff assist in “translating” the Griffith culture.	Relevant supervisor
Continue to develop cultural awareness about Indigenous Australian cultures and the interface between these and western cultures amongst Griffith University staff.	HRM, Supervisors and Directors of elements.
Explore possible secondments for Indigenous Australian staff, particularly in academic positions.	HRM

2. Charles Sturt University: Guidelines - Indigenous Employment Incentive Scheme 2008

Charles Sturt has several useful reference points for practical mechanisms through which to recruit and retain Indigenous staff. The section of text provided here describes the Indigenous Employment Incentive Scheme 2008¹⁴. The particular value of this example is that it is an attempt to support the retention of Indigenous staff through targeted funding for Indigenous recruitment, including rolling employment over from fixed term to continuing positions, and to enable a career path for Indigenous trainees. \$200,000.00 was provided for this purpose in 2008, and which is flagged for renewal in 2009.

The practical efficacy of this opportunity is discernible in the following description.

“This funding will be used as an incentive to encourage targeted recruitment of Indigenous applicants to continuing (establishment) positions in the HEW level 4-7 range. Faculties and Divisions may apply for 50% of the salary in the first year for an Indigenous staff member appointed under this scheme. The objectives of the scheme are to:

- 1) increase the percentage of Indigenous staff at middle management levels and professional positions at CSU, consistent with Indigenous Employment Strategy and Employment Equity Plan 2007-2011;

¹⁴ <http://www.csu.edu.au/division/humres/equal/indigenous.htm>

- 2) provide career paths for Indigenous staff through enhanced opportunities for staff on traineeships to move into continuing appointments at HEW level 4 and above;
- 3) build confidence among supervisors in selecting and retaining Indigenous staff;
- 4) encourage appointment of Indigenous staff in continuing positions (as opposed to fixed term); and
- 5) foster a work culture that enables Indigenous staff to succeed.

The scheme will be:

- 1) mainstreamed in the recruitment process under clause 5.1 (g) of the Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedures which provides for targeted recruitment under a *Designated Employment Plan of the University*; and
- 2) guided and managed by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator (IEC) through the following processes:
 - o IEC promotes the Incentive Scheme across Schools and Divisions;
 - o IEC is notified of any resignations at HEW levels 5-7 to explore appointment under the scheme;
 - o IEC works with managers on job design and recruitment processes;
 - o IEC promotes the position to community networks and job market agencies;
 - o IEC coaches managers to develop Individual Development Plan as part of the induction and probation processes.

The Indigenous Employment Incentive Scheme will be evaluated and reviewed in August/September 2008 in preparation for the 2009 budget.

Payment Process:

An account code will be established for the scheme and 50% of the appointee's salary will be debited from this account on a fortnightly basis until the one year anniversary of the appointment, at which time the primary cost centre will become responsible for 100% of the salary.

Administration Process

This scheme is sponsored by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic as Presiding Officer EO/AA Committee and overseen by the Executive Director Human Resources.

The Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator will promote and market the scheme to Primary Cost Centre managers and work with the Director, Recruitment and officers to manage the scheme."

3. Sydney University – Assisted Merits Based Recruitment

Several Sydney University Indigenous employment initiatives will be subject to further exploration (e.g. targeted entry level recruitment). Described here, however, is the approach taken to what is described as Assisted Merits Based Recruitment¹⁵.

Assisted Merits Based Recruitment is a collective name for a series of affirmative action initiatives designed to place Indigenous Australians on a level playing field when applying for mainstream positions at The University of Sydney. These initiatives will provide potential Indigenous Australian employees with the skills and confidence required for them to compete on equal terms with other job applicants.

Due to the social benefits associated with encouraging diversity, cross-cultural awareness and understanding across its workforce, the University of Sydney is committed to increasing the representation of Indigenous Australians in mainstream or 'non-identified' positions.

Information Forums

The Indigenous Employment Officer will enlist the support and assistance of local Indigenous Australians Job Network Providers in presenting on-site Information Forums to educate job seekers on how to apply for positions at the University of Sydney.

These forums will include information on how to complete an appropriate application (ensuring that all the selection criteria have been addressed, listing referees and providing contact details), resumes and covering letters. The Indigenous Employment Officer will develop example or template applications and resumes to present to and discuss with job seekers.

The Information Forums will also cover other expectations of the job seeker and common questions from Indigenous Australian applicants, including:

- Attire (personal appearance and attire pre and post employment);
- Matching skills and experience with employment vacancies;
- Where can I obtain relevant training? Who can assist me with training?
- How soon will I know if I have been short-listed?
- How many people will be on the selection committee?
- What type of questions will they ask me?
- How long after the interview will I know if I have been successful?

The Information Forums will be a further avenue to promote current vacant positions with the University.

Information Packages

The Indigenous Employment Officer will create an information package for potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This Information Package will be provided to potential applicants, and consolidate oral information given at the Information Forums. It will also be provided to Indigenous Australians people included in the Recruitment Pool or otherwise interested in employment at the University of Sydney.

¹⁵ http://www.usyd.edu.au/eo/indig_employ/recruitment.shtml

Application, Resume and Covering Letter

The Indigenous Employment Officer will meet with all interested potential applicants to discuss their application, resume and covering letter. The Indigenous Employment Officer will identify any gaps in information and offer suggestions for improvement. They will not write an applicant's application, resume or covering letter.

Mock Interviews

The Indigenous Employment Officer will also conduct mock interviews for interested applicants who are not familiar with the interview process. Once an applicant has been advised that they have been short-listed, the Indigenous Employment Officer will arrange a meeting with the applicant to discuss possible interview questions and encourage the applicant to think about appropriate responses. The Indigenous Employment Officer and applicant will discuss interview attire, introductions and the likely format of a University interview. If appropriate, the Indigenous Employment Officer will orient the applicant to the University environment by giving them a short tour of the relevant campus and showing them where the interview will be held.



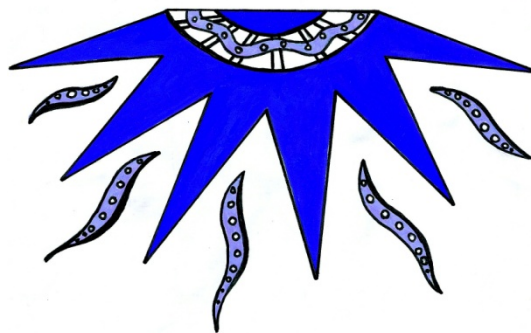
University of
South Australia

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Yaitya Warpulai Tappa

(Indigenous Work Path)

2008 – 2010



HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT



CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT

The University of South Australia’s founding Act requires the University to provide “such tertiary education programs as the University thinks appropriate to meet the needs” of Indigenous people, to promote access and equity for Indigenous people, and to “ensure that teaching and research programs identify, respond to and support their needs”¹⁶.

A range of symbolic and substantial initiatives demonstrate the University’s dedication, underpinned by its *Statement of Commitment to Australian Reconciliation*. Reconciliation is about acknowledging Indigenous culture, and recognising that different groups of Indigenous Australians may have different ideas about what respecting their culture means in the tertiary environment. As a fundamental step to Reconciliation, regular consultation with Indigenous people is essential.

The University’s commitment to Indigenous people is reflected in a number of policy and strategic documents including the Corporate Plan and the Academic & Professional Staff Collective Agreement.

The University of South Australia operates under both Australian and State Government legislation and has well-established policy and procedural responses in relation to equitable outcomes for Indigenous Australians in employment.

Addressing Indigenous issues within the University of South Australia is a responsibility for all members of the University community, and effective planning and action will lead to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working collaboratively in an environment of mutual respect.

¹⁶ University of South Australia Act 1990, section 5 (c)



The core Objectives of the Indigenous Employment Strategy are:

1. To **Attract and Recruit** Indigenous people to the University aiming to reach a target of 2% Indigenous employment across the University.

Attraction and Recruitment activities include:

- marketing, promotions and community engagement
- networking
- targeted campaigns and workforce planning
- targeted recruitment
- support structures

2. To **Retain** Indigenous employees and ensure equitable employment outcomes.

Retention strategies include:

- professional development funding
- career development opportunities
- mentoring
- culturally safe and inclusive work environments
- monitoring Indigenous employment data



ATTRACTION and RECRUITMENT

The University's commitment to attract and recruit Indigenous people is demonstrated by implementation of various targeted programs and initiatives. The purpose of these programs is to increase the number of Indigenous staff employed at the University, and are designed to connect positively with the broader community.

Marketing, Promotions & Community Engagement

The University participates and encourages participation in:

- The Indigenous and broader community to promote UniSA as an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians
- Community events, employment expos and conferences
- NAIDOC and Reconciliation events

The University will:

- Promote and communicate the strategy across UniSA and the broader tertiary sector
- Publicise and market the actions taken to achieve the strategy

Networking

The University develops and maintains effective communication with:

- Indigenous employment networks
- Government and non-government organisations
- Community groups and broader networks

Targeted Campaigns & Workforce Planning

The University is committed to:

- Encouraging Indigenous student applications for the UniSA Graduate Program
- Implementing an Indigenous Cadetship program
- Promoting Indigenous Traineeships to community and to University work sites to host placements

Targeted Recruitment

The University will continue to:

- Explore opportunities for designated employment positions for Indigenous people
- Implement the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and associated access to flexible funding packages for Indigenous recruitment
- Implement the DEWR Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP) funding
- Promote the University's status with DEWR as a *Corporate Leader for Indigenous Employment*

Support Structures

The University ensures:

- Indigenous representation and community input into the University's Indigenous Employment Strategy via the Indigenous Employment Advisory Group
- Indigenous representation on selection panels for employment positions targeting Indigenous staff
- The Consultant: Indigenous Employment and Development position is maintained to coordinate the Indigenous Employment Strategy



RETENTION

The University continues to implement targeted programs and initiatives to retain Indigenous staff and to ensure Indigenous staff have access to personal and professional support and advice. Initiatives will be aimed at providing culturally safe and inclusive workplace environments.

Professional Development

The University will continue to:

- Promote and implement UniSA's *Professional Development Fund for new Indigenous Staff*
- Promote and encourage Indigenous participation in *Women and Leadership* opportunities
- Collaborate with the Organisational Learning and Development Team to respond to the training needs of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff

Career Opportunities

The University will continue to promote:

- Opportunities for Indigenous staff to access internal and external career planning advice and support
- Appropriate induction for Indigenous staff including Corporate Induction
- Opportunities for Indigenous staff to work across other sites of the University including secondments and higher duties

Mentoring

The University will ensure that:

- Indigenous staff are supported individually in the workplace by both internal and external mentors
- Indigenous staff have access to a Mentor Register of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, both internal and external to the University

Culturally Safe and Inclusive Work Environment

The University will provide:

- Cultural Awareness programs for staff at all levels and explore their practical implementation in the context of workplace environments
- Opportunities for Indigenous staff to connect with and support each other through regular meetings of the Indigenous Networking Group
- Exit interviews to Indigenous people leaving employment with UniSA, conducted by the Consultant: Indigenous Employment and Development

Staff Data

The University will monitor and record:

- Engagement and retention rates of Indigenous staff
- Indigenous employment data across the University



MONITORING & EVALUATION

The University's **Indigenous Employment Advisory Group** has responsibility to advise on and monitor the *Indigenous Employment Strategy*. The Group meets quarterly to monitor progress of the initiatives and provide advice in relation to implementation and engagement with community.

The **Indigenous Employment Advisory Group** includes external members from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community, along with UniSA staff.

The Pro Vice Chancellor: **Organisational Strategy and Change** is responsible for the implementation of the *Indigenous Employment Strategy* and is a member of the advisory group.

The Director: **Human Resources Unit** maintains responsibility for the management of the strategy and is a member of the advisory group.

The Human Resources Unit and the Consultant: Indigenous Employment and Development monitor the day-to-day activity of the strategy and work collaboratively with the University's Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, community and government in the promotion and implementation of the strategy.

The University regularly monitors and reports on activity and progress of the initiatives, services and programs through a range of forums.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

* *University of South Australia*

www.unisa.edu.au

- Indigenous Employment

www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/equity/cultural.asp

- Equity and Diversity

www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/equity/edinfo.asp

* *Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

www.dewr.gov.au

- Cadetships
- Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP)
- Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment

* *National Tertiary Education Union*

www.nteu.org.au

* *National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC)*

www.naidoc.org.au

* *Reconciliation Australia*

www.reconciliation.org.au

Consultant: Indigenous Employment & Development

Human Resources Unit

Level 3

101 Currie Street

Adelaide SA 5000

Phone: (08) 8302-1643

Fax: (08) 8302-1666

