

# INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STATEMENT 2011

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND (USQ)

### Director, Indigenous Education

#### SECTION 1 OBJECTIVES FOR INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION

Please supply a statement of:

- Your approach to improve higher education outcomes for Indigenous Australians and how this is being implemented.
- Whether/how Indigenous perspectives are embedded in your strategic plan and/or other key institutional documents. If you have developed an Indigenous education strategy, we invite you to include a copy in this statement, or provide the web address.

USQ's approach to improving higher education outcomes for Indigenous Australians begins with reaching out to prospective students, including through outreach with local high schools; through the provision of enabling/preparatory programs, including through the culturally-appropriate Indigenous Higher Education Preparatory program (IHEPP); retaining students through the active involvement of student support officers and mentors within the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) and the faculties; embedding Indigenous perspectives in the curricula of the academic programs; enhancing and extending the opportunities for studying Indigenous cultures through Indigenous Studies; and increasing and enhancing the career and employment opportunities of Indigenous Australians at USQ.

Indigenous perspectives are embedded in the following key institutional documents:

- *The USQ Strategic Plan 2009-2013* ([www.usq.edu.au/aboutusq/org/strategicplan](http://www.usq.edu.au/aboutusq/org/strategicplan)) includes as Goal 7: "Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion" that acknowledges the need to continue to improve higher education participation and employment participation by Indigenous Australians (*USQ Strategic Plan 2009-2013*, p.18). In particular:
  - Objective 2: "Equity embedded into all aspects of operations and practice at USQ" of Goal 7 requires that Indigenous Studies be promoted across the institution and that Indigenous perspectives be embedded in the curriculum; and
  - Objective 3: "Improved access, transition and support for groups from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds" of Goal 7 acknowledges the need to develop a comprehensive Indigenous Education Strategy.
- *The USQ Learning and Teaching Plan 2009-2013* proscribes that Indigenous perspectives will be embedded in USQ courses and programs as a key element of the 'Vertical Integration and Support Materials Project'. See Attachment 1.

*The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* was developed under the auspices of the USQ Social Justice Committee and approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011. See Attachment 2.

Key initiatives arising from this Plan in the area of Indigenous education include:

20. That the DARE mentoring program<sup>1</sup> for Indigenous secondary students be fully implemented in 2011 and 2012.
21. That the development of "Indigenous Studies" courses be seen as a priority of the

<sup>1</sup> DARE (Dream, Aspire, Reach & Experience) is a new mentoring program that will be implemented during Semester 2, 2011. It will involve Indigenous students in years 9-12 from seven LSES secondary schools located in the communities of USQ's Fraser Coast, Springfield and Toowoomba campuses. Students will be selected to participate in a school-based homework centre mentoring program. Mentors will be USQ second year students enrolled in arts, sciences and education programs who will receive credit for their active participation in the program. The program will also include on-campus tours and activities. An appointment has been made to the position of DARE Project Manager located in CAIK (IEU).

University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.  
22. That the Social Justice budget fund an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012.

## **SECTION 2 ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY (AEP) GOALS IN 2010 AND PLANS FOR FUTURE YEARS**

Please provide evidence of:

- strategies you have implemented toward achieving the AEP goals and evidence that these strategies are working
- constraints on your ability to achieve the AEP goals and
- plans for future improvement to existing strategies or new strategies to meet each of the AEP goals relevant to higher education.

**The AEP goals (paraphrased) relating to higher education are to:**

- 1 Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Indigenous peoples in educational decision-making.
- 2 Increase the number of Indigenous peoples employed, as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions.
- 3 Ensure equitable access of Indigenous students to higher education.
- 4 Achieve the participation of Indigenous students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of other Australians.
- 5 Enable Indigenous students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians.
- 6 To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Indigenous traditional and contemporary cultures.

Information in Section 2 should focus on key developments and be concise (dot points are acceptable).

### **1. Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision-making.**

Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:

- The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians involved in institutional **decision-making processes** and the **nature of their involvement**, i.e. memberships on boards, committees etc.
- If there is **no** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership on key decision making bodies, please **provide an explanation**.
- The **roles and responsibilities** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in your institution.
- The role played by your **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Unit** in decision making processes.

During this reporting period, Indigenous staff were represented on a variety of Committees:  
Director, Indigenous Education (= Director IEU; Academic Level D)

- Ex Officio membership of Senior Leadership Forum
- Ex Officio Chair Indigenous Affairs Committee;
- Ex Officio member USQ Social Justice Committee;
- USQ Staff Planning & Policy Committee;
- Faculty of Arts Faculty Board;
- Faculty of Arts Research and Research Higher Degrees Committee
- Dean's Advisory Group Faculty of Arts;
- Student Equity Community of Practice

In addition:

- An Indigenous Academic (Lecturer) is a member of Academic Board (the membership of Academic Board includes an Indigenous Australian staff member category)
- An Indigenous Academic (Associate Lecturer) is a member of the USQ Learning and Teaching Committee
- An Indigenous Academic (Lecturer) is a member of the Disability Advisory Committee
- An Indigenous Academic (Associate Lecturer) is a member of the Faculty of Arts Academic Program Committee
- An Indigenous professional staff member coordinates the conduct of the Fraser Coast Campus Community Education Advisory Committee
- An Indigenous community representative from the Toowoomba campus and

- An Indigenous staff member is a member of the 'Community for Community' (C4C) Community Reference Group<sup>2</sup>.

The Director Indigenous Education (DIE) is responsible for leadership regarding Indigenous education and Indigenous affairs, reporting to the Dean Faculty of Arts on Indigenous academic matters and the PVC Social Justice on Indigenous affairs.

The IEU at USQ is titled the *Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges* (CAIK: [www.usq.edu.au/caik](http://www.usq.edu.au/caik)) and has two contiguous operating environments:

1. The provision of Indigenous student support services and delivery of a pre-enrolment enabling program titled the Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP). Indigenous Student support services and IHEPP are managed by the Director Indigenous Education. Indigenous affairs across the University are managed by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Social Justice). In this regard, the reporting relationship to the PVC (Social Justice) is managed through the Indigenous Affairs Committee, reporting to the Social Justice Committee.
2. Teaching associated with the delivery of a core compulsory Australian Indigenous Studies course in the Faculty of Education's Pre-Service Teacher Education undergraduate program, a minor in Indigenous Studies in Education, Arts, Business and Sciences, and a Graduate Certificate Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing program in the Faculty of Arts. Apart from the core compulsory Education course, all undergraduate and postgraduate degree level academic matters are managed through faculty academic committee processes, auspiced by the Dean Faculty of Arts. CAIK does not have a capacity to accredit Indigenous studies courses in its own right.

With the support of the University, CAIK lecturer, Mr Stephen Hagan, is obtaining external employment experience with *The National Indigenous Times*. In this way, Mr Hagan is making a significant contribution on a range of Indigenous issues at the national level, building on his already established reputation as an Indigenous author through publications such as: *The N Word - One Man's Stand*, published by Magabala Publishing in 2005.\

Mrs Christine Young, USQ's Executive Officer for Indigenous Development at the Fraser Coast Campus was awarded an Indigenous Staff Scholarship by the Australian Government's Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council in 2010. Only five of these staff scholarships are awarded each year. The scholarship assisted Mrs Young to complete her Masters of Professional Studies.

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<sup>2</sup> Under the leadership of Professor Glen Postle AM, USQ has built a significant group of staff and doctoral students around the theme of Community for Community (C4C). Research on successful community-based initiatives is identifying principles for building community capacity that will be applied to addressing a range of social problems such as youth suicide and domestic violence.

## 2. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed, as academic and non-academic staff in higher education institutions.

Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:

- An outline of your active **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy** including details on how it was authored, how current it is and whether or not it is publicly accessible on the internet. (please provide a current link)
- Information on your **strategies for increasing** numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians employed at your university. (Please provide a link to your Employment statement).
- The **number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific positions** at your university, detailed by occupation and level.
- The **current number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at your institution** and their spread across the university (including numbers in academic and non-academic roles, and by level).
- The **role played by your IEU** in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at your institution.

As an outcome of enterprise bargaining negotiations in 2005, the Vice-Chancellor announced the establishment of a Representative Steering Committee to oversee the development and implementation of an Indigenous Employment Strategy. The committee included representatives from University senior management, the local Indigenous Australian community, academic and professional employees, staff within the Indigenous Education Unit, the NTEU, Human Resources and the Community Education Advisory Committee, Fraser Coast campus. The USQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy was approved for implementation by USQ Council in November 2005. The strategy can be found via the following link:

<http://policy.usq.edu.au/portal/custom/detail/indigenous-employment/>

The USQ is committed to increasing the educational, employment, training and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This commitment is conveyed through the USQ Enterprise Agreement 2010-2013, the employment strategy and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development and Employment Strategy Steering Committee. The University has found the recruitment of a qualified Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator (IESC) to be challenging. This has placed a constraint on the institution implementing its Indigenous Employment Strategy to full effect.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific positions**

Faculty/Division	Occupation	Level
Faculty of Sciences	Lecturer (Indigenous Support)	Academic Level B
USQ Centre for Rural and Remote Health <sup>4</sup>	Indigenous Nursing Research Fellow	Academic Level A
Queensland College of Wine Tourism	Indigenous Participation Project Mentor / Manager <sup>5</sup>	QCWT Certified Agreement (p/t)

<sup>3</sup> In March 2011, the University made an appointment to the position of Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator (IESC). As part of this role, the IESC is creating connections and developing networks between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the three USQ campuses as a basis for creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

<sup>4</sup> Jointly funded between Queensland Health and USQ's Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health (CRAAH: [www.usq.edu.au/crrah](http://www.usq.edu.au/crrah)).

<sup>5</sup> The current incumbent of this position is not an Indigenous Australian.

**Table 2 – Continuing and Fixed term positions**

Faculty/Division	Staff	Academic	Professional
CAIK <sup>6</sup>	9	4	5
Faculty of Sciences	2	2	
Facilities Management	1		1
School of Humanities and Comm.	1	1	
<b>Totals<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

The IEU continued to utilise fixed term contract arrangements to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for its core business function of Indigenous student support. The IEU funds two current continuing academic positions partially supported from a contribution by the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor's contribution (\$154,010) towards Indigenous education is supplementary to the allocated ISP.

**Table 2A – Traineeships (full time fixed-term)**

Faculty/Division	Staff	Academic	Professional
Queensland College of Wine Tourism (Indigenous Wine Industry Trainee)	7		7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>

USQ is a partner with the Queensland Department of Education and Training in the Queensland College of Wine Tourism at Stanthorpe. In 2010 the College delivered the national pilot Wine Tourism Indigenous Participation Project involving 10 trainees gaining a Certificate 2 in Food Processing (wine) and extensive industry experience over 12 months. Funded jointly by DEEWR and DEEDI to the extent of \$438,000, the project was completed with 7 of the 10 participants completing the project and most gaining full-time employment. This program, which is continuing in 2011, has received wide praise, including from Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development, Senator The Hon Mark Arbib: [www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Arbib/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_110524\\_105207.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Arbib/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_110524_105207.aspx)

- **Table 3 - Casual positions**

Faculty/Institute/Section	Staff	Academic	Professional
Domestic Recruitment & Admissions	1		1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>

The Indigenous position in Domestic Recruitment and Admissions is a casual position for a Project Officer (Indigenous Connections Project). This project is described below. Lastly, CAIK (IEU) does not have a direct role in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment at USQ. However, CAIK (IEU) continues to utilise fixed term arrangements to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for student support.

In terms of planned initiatives, *The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011 includes the following initiative:

22. That the Social Justice budget fund an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012.

<sup>6</sup> In addition, CAIK employ two professional staff who are non-indigenous.

<sup>7</sup> These numbers were supplemented in March 2011 by the Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator (IESC) employed in HR.



**3. Ensure equitable access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher education.**

Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:

- Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers for 2010 (access rate) as compared to 2009 (please provide an all student comparison).
- Programs run, through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit or the University, to improve access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Details on outreach activities and their success in including and attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. (See table).
- Details of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific and other scholarships offered by your university. (See table).
- Promotion of scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and take-up rates, including reasons for low take-up.
- The role played by your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit in seeking to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to your institution.

• **Commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students\***

	2009	2010 <sup>b</sup>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	162	173
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	8069	8377

	2008	2009	2010
<b>% Indigenous (Access)</b>	<b>1.38%</b>	<b>1.89%</b>	<b>2.02%</b>

CAIK (IEU) continues to administer the **Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program** (IHEPP: [www.usq.edu.au/caik/programs/ihepp](http://www.usq.edu.au/caik/programs/ihepp)) which is a pre-enrolment level mixed mode delivery program of 12 months 'full-time' study. IHEPP is a bridging program designed to give Indigenous students, particularly those students who are in first in family and who have not considered higher education as an option, the necessary skills to succeed in undergraduate programs offered by USQ. The Program operates essentially as a distance education program supplemented by a total of four compulsory Residential Schools over the life of a normal enrolment pattern. Successful completion of the Program permits a student to apply for direct entry in the degree program of their choice (apart from Engineering and a number of Sciences degree programs which have specific pre-requisites).

USQ's Open Access College offers a fully by-distance enabling/preparatory program titled the **Tertiary Preparation Program** that is undertaken by some Indigenous students who are unable to attend the on-campus component of IHEPP. TPP also conducts significant offenders in custody program that enables access to study by Indigenous offenders in custody.

CAIK launched *The Indigenous Family Guide to USQ* in 2009 which provides information about studying at university, the student experience and support services available at USQ – recognising the important role that the family and supporters play in assisting Indigenous students through study ([www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/2007/indigenousfamguide](http://www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/2007/indigenousfamguide)). The Faculty of Sciences USQ has developed a **DVD** that encourages the participation of the people from diverse backgrounds into the profession of nursing, with particular emphasis on Indigenous Australians and males. The Department of Nursing and Midwifery has used a **specifically designed brochure** for use with Indigenous student recruitment since 2006. **Scholarships** targeting Indigenous Australian students are published at [www.usq.edu.au/scholarships/indig/](http://www.usq.edu.au/scholarships/indig/):

- All enrolled Indigenous students are able to apply for one of USQ's Equity Scholarships which consist of \$3,000, a new laptop computer or a \$750 Book Bursary. All

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that a very large increase in non-disclosure for Indigenous/Non-Indigenous status was observed in 2010. While the total number of commencers not declaring their Indigenous/Non-Indigenous status in 2009 was 654 out of 8231 total commencers (7.9%); this figure rose to 2020 out of 8550 (23.6%) in 2010. (Note that non-declared individuals are counted in the 'Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' figure in the above table.) This increased non-disclosure rate makes it more likely that the actual number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is under-estimated. USQ enrolment and statistics staff are currently investigating this phenomenon with a view to introducing strategies to address it.

Scholarships are managed through the University's Scholarship Office.

- USQ offers two *John Ross Clancy Indigenous Student Book Bursaries* (\$750 each) for Indigenous students commencing full-time, on-campus study at Toowoomba campus.
- USQ offers two Scholarships a year to the value of \$2,000 each for Indigenous students commencing full-time study at any of USQ's three campuses.
- The *Faculty of Engineering and Surveying* offers one scholarship (\$8,000) to a full-time on-campus Indigenous student enrolling in any undergraduate degree program offered by the Faculty.
- USQ offers one Bursary for Indigenous Psychology students (\$750) for an Indigenous student who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Sciences (Psychology), Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), Bachelor of Sciences (Honours) in Psychology, or Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies programs.
- Students are also encouraged to enrol for the full range of USQ-wide scholarships and Indigenous scholarships offered by government and professional bodies.

All enrolled and commencing students are advised by CAIK Student Relationship Officers at the beginning of each semester of available scholarships. Apart from the Faculty of Engineering & Surveying Scholarship, all USQ scholarships were taken up in 2010.

CAIK, in concert with an Indigenous Marketing and Outreach Officer, has developed a **range of outreach initiatives and activities** aimed at three target groups: years 9-12 school age Indigenous students; school leavers and mature age Indigenous men and women. These include: Uni-Tasters; School visits; Marketing Events; Careers Days and Expos; and in-situ student support (for school students studying 1 IHEPP course). At the USQ Springfield campus there is also the unique opportunity to develop a special relationship with the new **Greater Springfield Hymba Yumba Community Hub** opening in the World Knowledge Centre adjacent to the campus. The development boasts a crèche, vocational education services, accommodation and specialised curriculum including cultural lessons from Indigenous elders ([www.hymbayumba.qld.edu.au/](http://www.hymbayumba.qld.edu.au/)).

The **Indigenous Coordinator of the Department of Nursing** is active in making personal contact with potential students and providing recommendation from current or recently graduated Indigenous nurses. She reports that she finds this the most effective encouragement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to enrol, and this strategy has met with considerable success. USQ has also found that **its success in Indigenous Nursing** (see below) has, itself, proven to be a boon to recruitment. The level of University support for Indigenous students and its successful outcomes in nursing have been recognised and disseminated not only through the Murri grapevine but through media to Indigenous support personnel in regional secondary schools. It has been the resultant level of enquiries that have lead to the recognition of and desire to develop an overarching and inclusive program into the secondary school system to encourage and support academic interest at school as well as transition Indigenous students into higher education.

This project objective is also reinforced by the Faculty of Science appointing a senior **Academic Liaison Officer** to facilitate and support schools in the Darling Downs and Southwest region through a range of outreach activities. The range of activities have involved academics, researchers and current university students in face-to-face workshops and presentation, for school staff and students as well as community members, including Indigenous Community Education Counsellors (CEC) and Indigenous Education Workers (IEW), within their own school and community environment. The role of the Academic Liaison Officer also incorporates the facilitation and management of a range of on-campus school activities such as the student experience days specifically for Indigenous students, PICSE<sup>9</sup> events and teacher professional development days.

**The Indigenous Connections Project**, developed by USQ, is aimed at assisting Indigenous young people in rural and remote communities in southern Queensland to have greater knowledge and understanding of opportunities available to them at universities and

<sup>9</sup> Primary Industry Centre for Science Education: [www.picse.net/HUB/index.htm](http://www.picse.net/HUB/index.htm)

are encouraged, supported and motivated to take up and sustain tertiary study. The project has two components: **the Deadly Motivator's (DM) program** is targeted at Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working to improve education outcomes for Indigenous young people in regional communities in southern Queensland. In 2010 some 40 teachers and teacher aides in south-east Queensland participated in workshops on 'cross cultural training' and 'Indigenous project development'; including grant application writing and mentoring. People attending the Deadly Motivator's program receive support and skills to increase their ability to motivate and encourage Indigenous young people to take up and maintain university study. Deadly Motivators assist in promoting and supporting the second component of the project, Dhuuloo-Yala-Two-Daya (DY2D) in their communities and schools.

**Dhuuloo-Yala-Two-Daya (DY2D)** is a workshop-based program held at the USQ Toowoomba campus (2 day program) and the Springfield campus (1 day program) in October 2010. Its aim is to provide Indigenous young people with a range of motivational, aspirational and learning experiences to encourage them to view university study as desirable, achievable and a pathway to supporting their long term goals. Young people participate in motivational workshops with Indigenous people who are leaders and high achievers in their fields. Eight current USQ Indigenous students also served as mentors in the DY2D program. (One of these students has gone on to be appointed as a USQ Student Ambassador<sup>10</sup>.) In addition to this, USQ faculties implement a range of workshops that provide experiential learning opportunities for participants to give them insight into studying in a particular field. Around 160 students attended the Toowoomba DY2D program in 2010 and 120 at Springfield.

The Fraser Coast campus conducts an **Indigenous Student Experience Day** that aims to give Year 10 Indigenous students from the local region a positive and fulfilling university experience that raises their aspirations to complete their high school education and consider further and higher education thereafter. Around 40 school students engaged with current USQ students, experienced a tutorial and lecture, and received information on careers and university services.

In terms of planned initiatives, *The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011 includes the following initiative:

20. That the DARE mentoring program<sup>11</sup> for Indigenous secondary students be fully implemented in 2011 and 2012.

**4. Achieve the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of other Australians.**

Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:

- The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments for 2010, compared to 2009 (please provide an all student comparison).
- Details of your institution's **strategies to address** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation.
- The **role played by your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit** in seeking to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to your institution.

<sup>10</sup> Student Ambassadors promote USQ through sharing their experiences with prospective students who will be making choices about their future and tertiary study. Student Ambassadors are responsible for assisting with University recruitment activities including campus tours, Open Days and visits to TAFEs and high schools. It provides an opportunity to inspire others to consider tertiary education as an option for their future. Recruitment activities occur throughout the year, and training is provided to Ambassadors who are paid casual positions with a payment rate of \$23.95/hour. The Student Ambassador program provides Ambassadors with skills that will be attractive to future employers who desire graduates with excellent communication and organisational skills. The experience gained from participating in the Student Ambassador program enhances these students' employment prospects.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Footnote 1 on page 2 of this Statement



- The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments for 2009 and 2010 is as follows:

	2009	2010 <sup>12</sup>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	340	371
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	18758	19616

	2008	2009	2010
<b>% Indigenous (Participation)</b>	<b>1.43%</b>	<b>1.70%</b>	<b>1.86%</b>

In addition to a continued steady increase in Indigenous participation, USQ is also pleased to report that the distribution of Indigenous students across enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate programs remains healthy – with a growing number in PG1, a growing proportion in PG2, a good proportion of its Indigenous students in undergraduate study (of 70%), and a good turnover of enabling/preparatory students of around 10-15% of total Indigenous student numbers<sup>13</sup>.

#### Indigenous Enrolments by Program Level (including %age of total enrolments)

Program Level	2008	2009	2010
<b>PG1</b>	5	6	9
<b>PG2</b>	30 (10.5%)	31 (9.0%)	48 (12.7%)
<b>UG1</b>	216 (75.3%)	252 (73.5%)	260 (70.0%)
<b>Enabling</b>	32 (11.1%)	53 (15.5%)	56 (14.9%)
<b>Non-award</b>	4	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>377</b>

#### USQ has experienced particular success with participation in its Nursing program<sup>14</sup>.

The nationally recognised achievements of USQ's Indigenous Nursing Student Support Scheme has prompted the USQ Faculty of Sciences to work towards implementing similar programs in the other health, science and technology-based disciplines of the Faculty.

While the initial recruitment of Indigenous nurses into university programs is not difficult; the problem is retaining them until they graduate and qualify as a registered nurse. To address this challenge, the Indigenous Health academic within the Nursing and Midwifery Department of the Faculty of Sciences has implemented a number of support retention strategies, notably the "Helping Hands" retention tool, to keep their cohort of Indigenous nursing students progressing in their nursing program until they graduate. (A description of these retention tolls is included in Stuart, L., Nielsen, A.-M. & Horner, V. (2008). 'Support strategies that graduate Indigenous nurses – a dreaming journey', *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 95-100 – see Attachment 3).

<sup>12</sup> As noted for commencing student numbers, a very large increase in undeclared identification was observed in 2010. While the total number of students not declaring their Indigenous/Non-Indigenous status in 2009 was 711 out of 19098 total students (3.7%); this figure rose to 2167 out of 19987 (10.8%) in 2010. This is under investigation.

<sup>13</sup> A problem for USQ's Indigenous education program in the 1990s was having a very large proportion of Indigenous students in enabling studies who did not transfer over in to undergraduate programs. Over the past decade this situation has been well-and-truly rectified.

<sup>14</sup> The Indigenous Nursing Program team were awarded a USQ Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in 2010 ([www.usq.edu.au/learn/teach/path/grantsawards/ltawards/usqawards](http://www.usq.edu.au/learn/teach/path/grantsawards/ltawards/usqawards)).

**5. Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in higher education as for other Australians.**

Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:

- o The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completions at Bachelor level and above in 2010, compared to 2009 (please provide an all student comparison).
- o Support mechanisms you have in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- o The role of your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involvement

The total number of graduations at Bachelor level and above in 2009 and 2010 are as follows:

	2009	2010
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	26	38
Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:	2406	2636

	2008	2009	2010
<b>% Indigenous (Graduation)</b>	1.12%	0.97%	1.42%

Reports on Indigenous Australian student performance are regularly reviewed by the Social Justice Committee with a view to ensuring the regular monitoring of Indigenous recruitment, retention, progression and completion data to serve as a basis for the regular review of the strategies in place.<sup>15</sup>

There is a variety of support mechanisms at USQ dedicated to student support ([www.usq.edu.au/student-services/](http://www.usq.edu.au/student-services/)). These are supplemented by a range of culturally-appropriate support arrangements for Indigenous students provided by CAIK ([www.usq.edu.au/caik/currenstudents](http://www.usq.edu.au/caik/currenstudents)). CAIK still manages the Individual Tailored Student Support Program (ITSSP), although the level of resourcing to this program has been reduced. Since 2007, the Department of Nursing and Midwifery in the Faculty of Sciences at USQ, has developed and implemented a package of retention and support strategies, called ‘Helping Hands for Indigenous Nursing Students’ (refer to the response to section 2, part 4 above). This indigenised nursing support package has contributed to a large growth in enrolments and graduations, with the annual graduation rate over the period 2007-2011 being nearly six times that for the previous 17 years. In 2006, there were seven commencing Bachelor of Nursing students and three commencing postgraduate students (1 PhD, 1 Masters of Nursing, and 1 Masters of Mental Health). Since then Indigenous nursing commencing enrolments have increased markedly in the Bachelor of Nursing program with a total of 61 being admitted over the four year period to 2010. During this period only six students departed prior to completion.

In 2010, the Department hosted its largest graduation to date with 13 Indigenous registered nurses (RNs) graduating. Key industry stake holders at Queensland Health advised the Head of Department, Professor Cath Rogers–Clark, that “USQ is now a leader in the educational preparation of Indigenous nurses and midwives in Australia”. **This provides a model for success that could be readily applied to other higher education learning contexts.**

<sup>15</sup> From 2011, Academic Board has introduced, as part of its routine monitoring and continuous quality improvement role, the regular review of participation, retention and success of Indigenous Australian students via an annual report from the PVC (Social Justice).

6. To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for Indigenous traditional and contemporary cultures.
- Your response to this goal needs to address but is not limited to the following points:
- Details of how and to what extent **Indigenous perspectives are reflected in curriculum at your institution.**
  - How the University address the cultural competency of its staff and students.
  - The **Universities involvement with Indigenous community** members in working toward this goal.
  - The role of your **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit** in enhancing the status of Indigenous Knowledges and overseeing cultural competency at your institution.

CAIK currently offers **five undergraduate courses in Australian Indigenous Studies** that can be taken as electives in four of the five Faculties and a **Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing** for non-Indigenous health practitioners. EDC2200 Indigenous Perspectives ([www.usq.edu.au/course/synopses/2011/EDC2200.html](http://www.usq.edu.au/course/synopses/2011/EDC2200.html)) is a core course for all pre-service teaching students.

USQ's Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had an Indigenous nursing academic lecturing position within the nursing program on a continuing basis for over a decade. In addition to lecturing, this position encompasses a supportive role to provide **academic and cultural support for Indigenous nursing students** enrolled in the nursing programs. The lecturing component of this position is to teach an Indigenous Health & Cross Cultural Care Course for all undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program at USQ. The content of this Indigenous course focuses on three main areas, Indigenous Health, Indigenous History and Cross Cultural Care for Indigenous Australians within the healthcare setting. Within this framework teaching resources, discussions and assessment are selected and designed to give students a deeper understanding which facilitates respect for Australian Indigenous and contemporary cultures.

The Faculty of Education collaborates with the Senior Recruitment Officer (Education Queensland) to support **pre-service teachers to secure placements at Identified Indigenous Schools** in the Torres Strait, North Queensland and Indigenous communities. These opportunities require a commitment for seeking employment in Indigenous communities as this placement process involves expensive airfares and the availability of accommodation.

There is no existing mechanism within USQ to evaluate 'cultural competencies' for staff or students. CAIK has been awaiting the recommendations from the IHEAC administered pilot projects regarding 'cultural competencies' in the higher education sector. However, steps are taken to ensure that the importance and uniqueness of Indigenous Australian culture is promoted. For example:

- Under the leadership of the Director Indigenous Education, USQ employs a range of strategies to engage with the local Indigenous communities: (Refer to [www.usq.edu.au/caik/community/](http://www.usq.edu.au/caik/community/)) In particular:
  - The Faculty of Arts Butchulla 'On-Country' learning program for International full-fee paying students enrolled in a BA commenced in June 2010. Many of the same group involved in teaching in the 'On-Country Learning Course' are active members of the Fraser Coast Campus Education Advisory Committee established under the auspices of CAIK and reporting directly to the Provost at Fraser Coast with additional input from Aboriginal community members from that region.
  - The Jarowair and Giabul Traditional owners for the country in which the Toowoomba campus is situated provide a 'Welcome to Country' at significant USQ events and assist interested students and staff in understanding the traditional history of the Toowoomba region. This is supplemented by CAIK's attempts to engage with historical elders in the Toowoomba region and the establishment of an Elders Room at CAIK.
  - The traditional elders and custodians for the Springfield campus region are significant participants in all campus events and outreach engagement activities

with elders is a continuing focus for Springfield based CAIK Student Relationship Officers.

- Acknowledgement of country is practiced routinely at the opening of events.
- USQ's communities celebrate NAIDOC Week each year.
- At the Toowoomba campus the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag are flown every day in the University's central quad.
- USQ is building a bush tucker and medicine garden at a prominent location on its Toowoomba campus – the Gumbi-Gumbi garden - to promote an improved understanding of Indigenous women and health issues ([www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/gumbigumbigarden](http://www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/gumbigumbigarden)).
- The Fraser Coast hosts Indigenous Corporate Breakfasts in the Wide Bay-Burnett region designed to alert the community to the barriers Indigenous Australians face regarding education and employment and to encourage strategies to overcome these barriers.
- USQ Toowoomba campus hosts major Indigenous events such as the Southern Downs Indigenous Elders' Conference in late 2009 and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission triennial State Indigenous Conference in 2010 – the latter involving 170 participants from Queensland and New South Wales.
- USQ is a strong supporter of Indigenous Art and hosts numerous art exhibitions, including the National Indigenous Art Exhibition and Auction in August 2010 ([www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/indigenousartexhibition](http://www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/indigenousartexhibition)). USQ's own Art collection – which is maintained for socio-cultural, educative and aesthetic functions (<http://policy.usq.edu.au/portal/default/detail/university-art-collection/University%20Art%20Collection.pdf>) – is also well represented for significant Indigenous artworks.
- From time to time Vice-Chancellor's Committee, Academic Board and other forums highlight Indigenous issues; for example, the recognising and celebrating the Prime Minister's Apology.
- USQ Marketing and Recruitment staff regularly receive *Koori Mail* and *National Indigenous Review* to keep up-to-date on Indigenous news and issues.

In terms of planned initiatives, *The USQ Social Justice Report and Plan 2010-2012* approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee in January 2011 includes the following initiative:

21. That the development of "Indigenous Studies" courses be seen as a priority of the University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.

**Section 2 must also include information that demonstrates the following conditions of eligibility for ISP funding:**

- Implemented strategies for improving access, participation, retention and graduation of Indigenous Australian students
- Increased participation of Indigenous people in the provider's decision-making processes and
- Have an Indigenous employment strategy.

**SUMMARY OF USQ'S COMPLIANCE WITH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ISP FUNDING:**

**1. Implemented strategies for improving access, participation, retention and graduation of Indigenous Australian students<sup>16</sup>**

Reference is made to Section 2, parts 3-5 of this Statement for a description of the wide range of strategies in place to support improved Indigenous participation and completions at USQ, with performance data regularly reviewed for continuous quality improvement purposes, and performance outcomes reflecting continuous improvement in all areas.

**In particular, the strategies employed by USQ's Indigenous Nursing Program provide an exemplar of sector best practice in accessing, retaining and graduating Indigenous professionals.**

<sup>16</sup> USQ's commitment to Indigenous education is further reflected in the University nominating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as its 'second equity group' for consideration in its compacts negotiations with the Commonwealth.



## **2. Increased participation of Indigenous people in the provider's decision-making processes**

Reference is made to Section 2, part 1 of this Statement for a description of the significant Indigenous representation in USQ's decision-making processes, including on such bodies as Academic Board, Learning & Teaching Committee, Staff Planning & Policy Committee, Senior Leadership Forum, and the reference group for major community initiatives.

## **3. Have an Indigenous employment strategy**

The USQ Indigenous Employment Strategy can be found via the following link:  
<http://policy.usq.edu.au/portal/custom/detail/indigenous-employment/>

The appointment of a suitably qualified person to the position of Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator (IESC) has proved a challenge for the University. That an appointment was made in March 2011 – although outside of this reporting period – is significant in that it will now position USQ to improve its Indigenous employment situation even further.

The highly successful Wine Tourism Indigenous Participation project at Stanthorpe puts USQ at the forefront of promoting Indigenous traineeships leading to solid employment outcomes in Australia's wine industry. This program has been recognised nationally:  
[www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Arbib/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_110524\\_105207.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Arbib/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_110524_105207.aspx).

### **SECTION 3 EXPENDITURE OF INDIGENOUS SUPPORT PROGRAM GRANT**

Please provide a report on the expenditure of the provider's ISP grant for 2010. Where ISP expenditure does not match the audited annual financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2010 provided under section 19-10 of *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, please provide a reconciliation.

This ISP report is a legislated requirement, through the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 – Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2008 (DEEWR)*.

Use the following format (or similar), expanding to provide details on items where appropriate. Advice for completing items 3 and 6 is provided below.

Enquiries regarding this section should be directed to the Office of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janet Verbyla, via [Toni.Bryon@usq.edu.au](mailto:Toni.Bryon@usq.edu.au).

### **SECTION 4 HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please nominate contact officers for all policy and operational matters regarding your Indigenous education statement, including name(s), position title, phone number and email address.

Where your IEU has been consulted in the development of this Indigenous Education Statement, please provide the contact details of the relevant IEU staff member.

#### **University Officer**

Name: Prof. Peter Goodall

Position Title: PVC (Social Justice)

Phone Number: 07 46311093

Email: [peter.goodall@usq.edu.au](mailto:peter.goodall@usq.edu.au)

#### **Indigenous Education Unit Officer**

Name: A/Prof. John Williams-Mozley

Position Title: Director Indigenous Education

Phone Number: 07 46311991

Email: [williamm@usq.edu.au](mailto:williamm@usq.edu.au)

### **SECTION 5 PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT**

On approval from DEEWR, providers are to publish the Indigenous Education Statements on their website and on publication, provide DEEWR with a link to the statement for the DEEWR website.

On approval from DEEWR, USQ will gladly comply with this requirement.

## Summary of the USQ Learning and Teaching Plan 2009 – 2013:

### 2011 GOALS

#### **Goal Statement**

To enhance teaching performance and to provide high quality, flexible and inclusive learning experiences that promotes lifelong learning, critical enquiry and students' career opportunities.

#### **Objectives**

- Sustainable quality improvement of USQ curricula
- Enhanced position in open and flexible education
- Sustainable quality improvement of teaching performance
- Enhanced students' academic skills
- Enhanced learning and teaching management and policy framework

#### **Performance plan**

The quality improvement of USQ courses and programs will be achieved through **seven projects in 2011**. Each of these projects has an implementation plan with clear timelines and reporting requirements. KPIs will be used at the level of Section Plans and project implementation plans to monitor outcomes.

### **1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 2 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan).*

*Project leader: J Bundy*

This project will promote best practice (learning and teaching) through an integrated professional development program. This project will develop, implement and evaluate the following professional development strategies:

- Induction
  - Develop a more sophisticated integrated induction that promotes LTSU as a leader in learning and teaching but effectively engages other key HR, ICT, Library and technology arenas
  - Inductions to be conducted across all campuses
  - Review and consider the need and value of 2 day face to face induction supported by on line information
- Foundation online modules – coherent assessment is needed and alignment with Graduate Certificate
- Ongoing development of website teaching resources
- Tailored PD to be monitored

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) within LTSU and faculties should be sought as the L&T Visiting Scholar Program will have budgetary limitations
- Further integration with ICT to offer PD in the area of e-portfolios

## **2. ASSESSMENT AND ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 1 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project leader: S Hammer*

This project will ensure coherent planning within and between courses in programs with particular reference to graduate qualities and assessment. This project will include the development of guidelines and will address:

- Dissemination of innovative assessment practice through an exemplar website
- Development of an online rubric bank with exemplars for staff to download and adapt. The rubric builder component of this bank will be developed in conjunction with Drs Peter Evans and Megan Kek
- Ongoing links between online course specifications and accreditation documentation and assessment guidelines through Course and Program Mapping System (CPMS)
- Online CPMS 2011 including induction, PD and staff engagement through workshops
- Provision of continued support for faculties to map and align graduate skills with assessment
- Provision of support for faculties to develop strategies for communicating with students about USQ graduate qualities and skills
- Finalisation of assessment, foundation module (best practice)

## **3. TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 4 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project leader: M Sankey*

The goal of this project is to provide a cost-effective framework for technology-enhanced, flexible learning options in all USQ courses and programs, with particular reference to the top 16 programs. This project will address the implementation of:

- Moodle Development – Moodle2 rollout in 2011 which will require support materials and re-vitalisation documentation (including TEL workshops)
- Emergent technologies (ETAG) and investigation of Web 2.0 technologies – there will be a requirement for workshops (implication of external resource dependencies) as well as stronger connections with ICT, Moodle support and ADFI
- LTSU staff will be encouraged to attend technology workshops so as to be prepared for events being facilitated by LTSU as well as to understand the problems being faced by academics in their courses
- Continue to align and engage some key activities with the work of ADFI

## **4. VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT MATERIALS PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 1 and 2 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project team: I Weber, G Colclough, L Kimmins*

This project considers a values-led and discipline specific curriculum change. It is intended to embed in courses, as appropriate:

- Embed academic skills



- Indigenous perspectives
- Internationalisation of the curriculum – consider this in the context of inter-cultural and cross-cultural and provide guidance and examples on embedding internationalisation into their curriculum. It will be necessary to ensure this is included in the 2011 Faculty Learning & Teaching Action Plans as a priority area

Additionally, the project goal is to provide coherent and consistent systems of support for the development of academic skills for all students regardless of location. It is intended to engage staff and students in a cycle of continuous, evidence-based quality improvement and enhancing student academic skills through:

- Support Orientation processes (i.e. workshops, presentations)
- Work with faculty to develop “at-risk” strategies within the first-year student cohort
- Provide academic learning support for students within the faculty as part of the new support teams (i.e. workshops, one-to-one consultations)
- Promote avoidance of academic misconduct strategies – this will be Faculty led and through a pedagogical method such as demonstrated by the Faculty of business
- Develop a position paper for peer-assisted learning
- Develop a Maths support base through the Digital Tools Community Site
- Promote LTSU student support systems such as The Learning Centre, Meet-Up and ALS Online so as to enhance the student journey
- Re-develop ALS Online using a portal approach

## **5. BENCHMARKING AND EVALUATION PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 2 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project leader: M Kek*

The goal of this project is to revise USQ student feedback processes, address the difficulties of achieving good response rates from distance education students, enhance USQ learning and teaching indicators and develop post-evaluation strategies that engage staff and students in a cycle of continuous quality improvement of courses, programs, learning and teaching. This project will:

- Implement a benchmarking framework for learning and teaching (using the ACODE benchmarks) through the Pilot Inter-Institutional Benchmarking Project (PIIB) eventuating in a Benchmarking Summit to be held mid-2011
- Create a Moodle module on benchmarking in learning and teaching
- Propose a Teaching and Learning Indicator framework
- Introduce cross university transformative quality learning circles with the purpose of engaging academic staff in conversations and ideation about enhancing/ improving their courses to achieve better student experiences and learning outcomes. The learning circles will be underpinned by USQ Community of Practice guiding principles and method. The intention is that this program will serve as an extension of the CPR project by LTSU through the provision of post evaluation and L & T support and services to academic staff

## **6. LEARNING & TEACHING RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 2 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project leader: G Curro*

The goal of this project is to engage staff in reflective teaching practice and to facilitate high-end

learning and teaching scholarship through USQ research centres. This project will:

- Embed learning and teaching scholarship, as appropriate, in all USQ Research Centres through ADFI and the proposed CHER (specifically through Faculty of Engineering)
- Increase cross-campus Faculty engagement through more regular meetings of existing Early Career Research CoPs – Writers and Publishers. It is intended that this will enhance the deliverables of the year of Research (2010-2011) by promoting research resources and methodologies for HE Research
- Create a structure and sustainable direction for this project through action research, workshops on ethics, ERA rankings, good supervision practices
- Highlight and strengthen links between research (in HE) and learning and teaching practices

## **7. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (CoPs) PROJECT**

*Aligned with Objective 2 of the L&T Goal (overall USQ 5 year plan)*

*Project leader: J McDonald*

The goal of this project is to promote best practice in learning and teaching by engaging both academic and professional staff involved in learning and teaching and/or the support of staff and students in communities of practice. Activities include:

- Providing proven business processes to Communities of Practice (CoP) facilitators and members to establish and sustain CoPs;
- Mentoring CoP facilitators and members regarding CoP activities and opportunities to engage in institutional and personal enhancement processes;
- Workshops to enhance facilitator leadership skills and capacity;
- Create and sustain facilitator learning community to share and develop practice and build personal and professional knowledge and expertise;
- USQ and National activities with CoPs to promote CoP visibility and establish management, HR and staff recognition of CoPs playing a key role in promoting and supporting best practice in learning and teaching



University of Southern Queensland

**Social Justice Report  
and Plan 2010–2012**



**Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice)**

December 2010

## Executive Summary

Social Justice issues have lain at the centre of much of USQ's history and culture during the forty years of its existence. A number of factors have brought this about: the University's regional location and its recruitment of students from rural and remote areas; its catchment areas in parts of the state that have traditionally a low participation in higher education and contain large sectors of the population that are from low socio-economic status backgrounds (low SES); its origins in the "college" sector of higher education; and its early embrace of distance education, which tends, for different reasons, to enrol students from non-traditional backgrounds. It seems, therefore, likely that the strong recruitment of students from "equity" backgrounds will continue unless the University consciously makes the decision to reverse it. (At present, the University's enrolment of 32% of its undergraduates from low SES backgrounds is already 12% above the Commonwealth's target and 16% above the national average.) On the other hand, with a Commonwealth agenda that is fully supportive of the need to provide higher education for people from low SES backgrounds and a commitment to providing appropriate funds in support, the University has an opportunity to consolidate, perhaps even extend, its enrolment of students in this area. There is also the opportunity to perform this task in better ways, in ways that are more integrated and consistent with other operations of the University, and – perhaps the most significant of all – to enhance a leadership in the field based on large student numbers into a leadership based on quality, best practice, and on policy driven by research.

During the triennium 2010 to 2012, USQ will receive increasingly significant funding to support the participation of students from low SES backgrounds. Unfortunately – or fortunately – these funds have arrived at the same time as a downturn in student revenue from other areas. It is inevitable and proper that some of these funds will be used as part of "consolidated revenue" to fund the very services that low SES students, like all students, expect to receive. But it would be short-sighted to pass up the possibility of reinforcing the specific equity areas of the University to operate consistently to a planned agenda at a high level.

The report is accompanied by a number of recommendations and by a budget for 2011 and 2012 – the second year of this is indicative only. The recommendations of the report are grouped under a number of sub-headings. The report recommends that USQ continue to associate its brand and mission to the equity agenda and to fund a number of equity activities, even when they are not specifically related to the needs of low SES students. No change is proposed to the



current governance structure of the goal area. A number of recommendations are linked to “participation”, focussing particularly on the activities of the Open Access College. Several areas of “partnership” for USQ are recommended, not just with the school sector but with government departments such as Corrective Services. The report recommends that USQ maintain its support for a joint Queensland universities bid for partnership funds from the Commonwealth when details of the scheme are announced. A major emphasis of the report is to change the balance of social justice activity, seeking a greater input of the faculties, both in the form of social justice action plans for teaching and in research. As the University’s current position is that Indigenous students will be an indicator in the Social Inclusion part of the performance funding of the Mission Compact, there are a series of recommendations about the operation and funding of the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK).

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## **1. Background**

Throughout its forty year history, USQ has provided opportunities for a diverse range of people to access and succeed in higher education. As a regional university and a leader in online and distance education, USQ has attracted students from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, from a wide range of age groups and cultural traditions. Since its inception as the Queensland Institute of Technology in 1967 and later as the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (DDAIE) in 1971, USQ has remained one of the few universities in the sector that has a student body that is “over-represented” by both people from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds and students from rural and remote areas.

To support this student diversity, USQ provides annually over \$250,000 in equity scholarships and bursaries. USQ has also established a broad range of long-standing equity programs, activities and pathways such as the Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP). Established in 1988, TPP provides equitable access to tertiary study for people who have previously missed out on opportunities to qualify for entry into higher education. In addition, the English for Academic Purposes (EAPP) program provides a link to the University’s courses for students from non English-speaking backgrounds (NESB). The University also offers IHEPP, the Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program, a bridging program designed to give Indigenous students the necessary skills to succeed in their studies.

Extending this suite of enabling programs, are a number of specialist units, some of which report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice), which support and promote student equity and diversity. The Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK), since 2009 part of the Faculty of Arts, encourages and supports the further education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in whatever faculty they are enrolled. The Student Equity Office is a cross-institutional unit that aims to provide fair access and participation for students. The Disability Resources unit provides services, advocacy and support to students with a disability. The Open Access College also provides on-campus and distance courses and programs of study to international and domestic students that will give them the language and academic communication skills needed to participate successfully in tertiary study. In addition to these specialist units, the Multicultural Centre, established in 2005, strengthens USQ’s position as a leading multicultural university, and has developed a profile beyond the higher education sector in the business sector and in the broader community. USQ was the first university in Australia to develop a specific multiculturalism policy.

The University is, therefore, well positioned through these five specialist units and long-standing enabling programs, to support a culturally diverse student body composed of many equity groups. This operational arrangement is, in turn, strengthened by a strong governance and committee structure. Established in 2004, this structure consists of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (Social Justice), supported by an executive officer, and a Social Justice Committee, which meets six times per year and reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. The Social Justice Committee, chaired by the PVC (Social Justice), has the following sub-committees: the Indigenous Affairs Committee; the Status of Women in Employment & Education Committee; the Disability Advisory Committee; the Staff Equity Committee; and the Multicultural & Transnational Advisory Committee. This structure, which also includes an active Student Equity Community of Practice, ensures that the values and principles of equity, social justice and inclusiveness are at the core of University policy, planning and operation across all activities at all campuses.

## **2. Current Structure and Scope of Activities**

### **i. "Office" of PVC**

The co-ordination of Social Justice matters rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice), who combines the role with that of Faculty Dean. The Dean's EA provides secretarial support for the Social Justice Committee, and the Executive Officer (level 8) provides high level support for the planning and policy development of the area as a whole.

### **ii. Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK)**

The Centre was established in 2008. It is headed by the Director (Indigenous Education), who is supported by an executive assistant. There are three academic staff, who teach both in the Indigenous Pathways program and in the award Indigenous Studies courses, such as EDC2200, GCIMHW and the KNL courses. There are eight professional staff, who support the needs of Indigenous students across all faculties. Funding to the Centre comes from three sources: course load; an "off the top" allocation; and the Indigenous Support Program. In return for receiving funding under the Indigenous Support Program, the University must carry out certain activities, viz. operate a "Centre" with a community advisory committee, provide student support services for Indigenous students, and offer an enabling / pathway program for Indigenous students. The Centre would like to develop a research capability as well, as part of an alignment with mainstream University activities.

### **iii. Disabilities**

There are six staff in Disability Services (4.4 FTE), working across the three campuses. Approximately 400 students are registered with Disability Services and active each semester. However, this number fluctuates and the amount of accommodations and support required can vary depending on the types of assessment.

A range of accommodations and supports are provided during the semester: note-taking, participation assistants, alternative formatting and study skill support. During examinations, students are also provided with accommodations including extra writing time, rest breaks, scribes, readers, computers, examination papers in alternative format and provision to medicate.

**iv. Multicultural Centre**

The Multicultural Centre is headed by a Director, who reports to the PVC (Social Justice), and who is supported by an executive officer. From time to time, casual appointments are created to support specific projects and to extend the activities of the Centre. The focus of the Centre has historically been on international on-campus students, especially postgraduate students, and the core of the Centre's activities are the celebration of national and cultural diversity through "national days" and a major celebration during "Harmony Week" each year in March. The Centre has a particular interest in multi-faith activities and successfully lobbied for the establishment of a Multi-Faith Centre. Increasingly, its focus has turned to the support of domestic students from the various East-African refugee communities.

**v. Open Access College**

The Open Access College was established in 2008, bringing together five separate offices – the Tertiary Preparation Program, Uniprep, Foundation, ELICOS, the English Language and Culture Programs – which had previously had different reporting lines. A Director of Preparatory Programs was appointed, who reports to the PVC (Social Justice), and the name of the whole unit was changed to the Open Access College. Enrolments are very buoyant, especially in the Tertiary Preparation Program, which is the largest distance preparatory program offered by any Australian university, and which has an increasingly significant on-campus offering as well. The English for Academic Purposes program (EAP), which replaced both Uniprep and Foundation, enrolls students from non English-speaking backgrounds who have an IELTS of at least 5 and brings them up to University entry. ELICOS deals with students who have an IELTS score less than 5. Its numbers are closely linked to the broader fortunes of international education, but its numbers have risen in 2010 following a severe downturn in 2009. The English Language and Culture programs are short courses delivered on campus in Toowoomba to senior high school and first-year students, primarily from Korea and Japan. This program remains very successful and enrolls students from "prestige" institutions, such as Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. Historically, the various parts of the College were limited by a proliferation of low-level casual appointments. A major recruiting round was undertaken in 2009 and 2010 to stabilise staffing, and many staff now have doctoral level qualifications.



**vi. Student Equity**

USQ has two staff working in Student Services within the Student Equity Office (the Manager of Student Equity and Disability and the Scholarships Officer). The Student Equity Office performs tasks relating to the student experience to ensure a fair and safe environment for our students. The Scholarships Office performs administration tasks related to the allocation and distribution of scholarships. From the beginning of 2010, Disability Services reports through the Manager of Student Equity and Disability.

The Student Equity Office also performs duties around the safety of students including harassment, discipline issues, emergency loans advice, student representation on committees, advice to staff around student issues and policy, and advising students with low access to learning materials i.e. incarcerated students.

**vii. Staff Equity**

The Equity Office is located in Human Resources. It is headed by the Associate Director, HR Client Services and Centre Administration, who is assisted by the Staff Equity and Diversity Officer. The Office manages the Women and Leadership Mentor Program along with the Equal Opportunity (EO) Online training program. The mission of the Equity Office is to achieve, as part of the University's commitment to excellence in employment and education, equality of opportunity in the employment of staff and to assist in providing access to equity in tertiary education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### 3. Commonwealth Agenda and Funding Changes

In 2009, in response to the recommendations of the Bradley Review of Higher Education, the Government announced a phased 10-year reform agenda for higher education and research to boost Australia's national productivity and performance as a knowledge-based economy. A key reform of the Commonwealth is widening participation, which aims specifically to:

- *increase to 40% the number of 25–34 year olds with a qualification at bachelor level or above by 2025*
- *increase by 50% the number of high qualification completions (diplomas and advanced diplomas) by 2020*
- *increase higher education enrolments, at the undergraduate level, for low SES students to 20% by 2020.*

Participation rates for domestic undergraduate low SES students at USQ, using the Postcode Indicator (PI), are consistently above the national average. During 2009, low SES enrolments were 32% compared to 15.25% for the sector as a whole. This relative profile has been consistent since 2002. However, a new measure of low SES is currently being developed by DEEWR. The impact and implications of this new measure on USQ are uncertain at present. In the meantime, 2009 data, using the Collection District Indicator, is available. This indicator is derived from the number of domestic undergraduate students with home addresses in Census Collection Districts (CDs) that belong to the lowest SES quartile and the number of students who meet relevant eligibility criteria on selected Centrelink Student Income Support payments.

A comparison of the Indicators shows that the low SES participation rate for USQ has decreased by 2% to 30% under the CD Indicator. In contrast, USQ's rates for low SES retention, success and attainment have all increased under the same CD Indicator. Appendix 4 refers.

The 2009 low SES data provided in the draft 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (refer Appendix 5) show that USQ's retention rate of 76.8% compares favourably to the benchmark and State figures. While our success rate of 80.39% falls short of the State and Sector rates of 84%, USQ's attainment rate of 27.37% remains well above the benchmark at 21.58% and 13% above the Sector.

In terms of ratios, USQ's participation ratio (2.35) is twice that of the benchmark group and three times better than the sector. Our retention and success ratios remain marginally higher than the benchmark group (1.04), State (0.74) and Sector (0.40) figures.

**i. HEPPP: Participation Component**

To support the Commonwealth's higher education goals of widening participation, in 2010 DEEWR replaced the Equity Support Program (ESP) with the Higher Education Participation & Partnership Program (HEPPP). Under the ESP grant scheme, USQ received \$635,000 in equity funds for 2009, while equity funds received under the new HEPPP scheme amounted to \$1.7m in 2010. Funding arrangements for the Disability Support Program and the Indigenous Support Program remain unchanged for the moment.

The objective of the Participation Component of HEPPP is to increase the participation of current and prospective domestic students from low SES backgrounds. Under this scheme, USQ receives funds based on its share of the indicator of domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds. The fund, or enrolment loading, is intended to compensate providers for the higher costs associated with low SES students in terms of recruitment, learning & teaching, and support. Activities and programs higher education institutions may provide under this scheme include peer support, learning support and mentoring for first year LSES and Indigenous students; scholarships; awareness raising activities; and tertiary taste schemes. Funds may also be used for undertaking research and monitoring the impact of participation related activities.

Although USQ received \$1.7m in 2010 and should receive \$3.1m in 2011, it must be noted that only half of this funding was directed towards specifically social justice and equity programs and activities in 2010 and 2011. Funding from the Commonwealth for 2012 is expected to triple to an estimated \$4.4 million. The University, together with other higher education providers, will be required to report to DEEWR by 31 March 2011 on outcomes achieved in the 2010 calendar year concerning expenditure and activities relating to the Participation Component.

ii. **HEPPP: Partnership Component**

The objectives of the Partnership Component of the HEPPP are to increase the total number of people from low SES backgrounds who access and participate in higher education by means of effective outreach and related activities with a range of stakeholders such as schools, State/Territory Governments, VET providers and community groups. The intention of this program, which will run for four years, is to fund outreach initiatives and other strategies for changing the educational aspirations of low SES youth towards higher education. For USQ, these activities and programs will include such projects as the introduction of the TPP in Schools and Correctional Centres; IHEPP in Schools; supporting the Toowoomba Flexi-school programs; outreach to *communities* rather than schools, and aspirational building activities with low SES schools in the University's catchment areas.

Under this fund, USQ received the same amount as all universities in Australia in 2010, viz. approximately \$350,000. This amount will form the baseline of funding in 2011 with \$250,000 expected for 2012. While this fund is significantly smaller than the participation fund, higher education providers will be invited to submit bids for additional funding from 2011. The guidelines are yet to be released, but are expected shortly after Christmas.

In an effort to capitalise on this additional funding, USQ is currently exploring ways to work with other Queensland universities, through our involvement with the Widening Participation Working Group, which is part of the Queensland Higher Education Forum, on which all Queensland vice-chancellors sit. This group is working towards the development of a joint consortium bid, aimed at stimulating interest in higher education and widening the participation of low SES people and Indigenous Australians in Queensland. It is anticipated that a bid will be submitted to DEEWR in 2011 following a call for an Expression of Interest in January 2011.

The focus of the group's first outreach project, endorsed by Queensland vice-chancellors and underpinned by a memorandum of understanding, will be about *stimulating demand; the journey to uni, not the choice; building not selling; and the learner, not the brand*. The principles and strategic intent of this project acknowledge the decentralised nature of Queensland's population, its large number of low SES and

Indigenous citizens, and the large scale activity required to raise participation rates. Given the nature and size of the project, Queensland universities have divided the State between them, with all low SES schools grouped into eight geographic clusters, one for each of the State's universities. By working together, the presumption is that if enough demand can be stimulated, all institutions will get their usual share of students and will benefit by growth or a changing mix.

**iii. Mission Compacts and Performance Funding**

The objective of higher education performance funding is to ensure that universities are contributing in negotiated ways to the Commonwealth's attainment and participation goals and enhancing the quality of their teaching and learning by working towards agreed institution-level performance targets. Tied funding will be used to encourage universities to raise their efforts on teaching quality, and the Government will look closely at the indicators that drive improvement in this area. Potential measures and indicators may relate to the quality of teaching and learning, the student experience, attainment, and student participation and inclusion.

The participation and inclusion measure is designed to encourage universities' efforts in ways that contribute to the national target of lifting the participation of people from low SES backgrounds to 20% of undergraduate enrolments by 2020. The measure is also intended to encourage increases in the higher education participation of the general population, as this is tied in with the achievement of the Government's target that 40% of all 25–34 year olds will have at least a bachelor-level qualification by 2025. It is proposed that there be two separate indicators: one relating to the domestic undergraduate student population; and the other relating to the number of students in specific target groups, such as low SES students, and one other under-represented group nominated by individual universities. For USQ, this group has been identified as Indigenous undergraduate students. Targets will be set to maintain a base-line number of students in each of these student groups and to increase the access rate for each group.

Performance funding will be allocated to universities on the basis of targets for each university, which will be negotiated as part of compacts. Following agreement on targets, universities will receive funding in 2011, with funding related directly to performance against those targets to start in 2012.

**iv. TEQSA**

A core component of both the partnership program and the participation fund will be the establishment of a new national body for regulation and quality assurance, TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency). The Government will introduce legislation to establish the agency early in the autumn 2011 sitting of Parliament. It is envisaged that the agency will be operational from 2012. The agency will oversee the development of improved quality assurance arrangements and protect the overall quality of the higher education system. It will accredit providers, evaluate the performance of institutions and programs, encourage best practice, de-clutter current regulatory arrangements and provide greater national consistency. The impact of TEQSA will, therefore, lead to a focus on quality and research, not just numbers and funding: *“If we have equity targets, we must have quality targets” (Julia Gillard, speech at Monash University, December 2009)*



#### 4. USQ Goal Planning

##### i. Social Justice Goal Plan 2011

The Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion goal is directed towards raising the profile and enhancing the performance of the various groups of students and staff recognised by the Government as being "disadvantaged" in some way: students from low SES backgrounds, Indigenous students and staff, students and staff from non English-speaking backgrounds, students from rural and remote areas, female students in Science, Engineering and Technology, students and staff with a disability, and female academic and professional staff in the higher grades. These groups are often referred to collectively as "equity" groups. Although the Federal Government replaced an "equity support program" with a "higher education participation and partnership program", funded explicitly on the basis of a loading for enrolments of students from low SES backgrounds, the University has decided to continue to fund all the traditional equity areas rather than focus narrowly on the one group of low SES students. The reasoning behind this is that many students identify in more than one equity category.

The focus of activity in 2011 will be on the implementation of an articulated series of strategies designed to maintain and enhance the University's performance in a range of areas involving equity students: extending and improving participation of students, including recruiting and supporting students from non-traditional areas; improving retention and progression rates of students already in the system; and forming partnerships with other sectors involved in education, including other providers such as schools and other universities in Queensland. All areas of the University will be involved in this process, but, for obvious reasons, the Student Management Division, the Open Access College, and the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges will take the lead in 2011. These areas of the University constitute a kind of "front line" in the recruitment and transitioning to university study of low SES students. In 2012 and beyond, there will be a greater focus on the retention and progression of students, involving the faculties, the Learning and Teaching Support Unit, and other areas of University activity such as the Library.

Some of the key initiatives for 2011 include the establishment of a program for mentoring Indigenous students in a number of high schools in the catchment areas of

the various campuses of the University; the extension of the TPP to on-campus students and to students in a number of high schools; the provision of better support for students who are offenders in custody and the extension of recruitment and support to prisoners in systems outside Queensland; maintaining support for female students in science, engineering and technology and for female staff who are enrolled in doctoral programs.

**ii. Strategies and targets 2011**

Refer Appendix 1 – Social Justice Goal Plan: Strategies & Targets 2011.

**iii. 2011 and 2012 budget**

Refer Appendix 3.

## **5. Recommendations**

### ***General***

USQ's history and culture is bound very closely to servicing the needs of students from various equity backgrounds: 32% or thereabouts of its students come from low SES backgrounds, and whatever changes are made to the low SES indicators, it is inevitable that USQ will continue to recruit large numbers of its students from this cohort. Many of the equity categories overlap: for example, students from low SES backgrounds may be Indigenous and/or from rural and remote areas. More than half of the University's students identify in one equity category or another. The challenge for the University is likely to come from a slightly different direction. There are already substantial financial incentives for universities to recruit more low SES students, and some form of performance against targets in the social inclusion area will become mandatory as part of the establishment of mission compacts. It is clear that the government's ambitious targets of increasing the numbers and percentages of students with bachelor degrees cannot be met without recruiting in the non-traditional areas. All universities will face this challenge, exaggerated with the removal of enrolment caps in 2012. USQ may not find its position in the equity area of higher education unchallenged, perhaps even by universities with little experience in the past in this area. This is a threat, but it is also an opportunity for the University to assert its leadership in this field: not simply through the numbers of low SES students it enrolls but through the development of research, policy and the use of best practice in the retention and progression of its students.

1. That "social justice", including matters of equity, access and social inclusion, remain at the core of USQ's brand, mission and planning.
2. That USQ strive to enhance its leadership role in the area of social justice in higher education in Australia.
3. That USQ continue to fund all equity groups and activities.

### ***Governance***

There are various models in Australian universities for the policy development and operation of the Social Justice area – called by various names, with "Social Inclusion" a current favourite. In many universities, there is a designated equity office, sometimes headed by a Director. There are advantages of consistency and consolidation in this model, but there are a number of disadvantages that support retaining USQ's current structure. Those universities

that have a specific equity office frequently (although not always) have few other structures within the university to support the equity areas. At USQ, however, there are well-established offices throughout the University that support the equity agenda (e.g. the Multicultural Office, the student equity and disabilities sections of the Student Management Division, and the Staff Equity section with Human Resources). The dislocation involved in restructuring these offices at a time of urgent action would surely outweigh any advantages in co-locating them. Those universities that have an equity office headed by a director, do not usually have an “executive” head in the form of a PVC as well, although there are exceptions. Generally, it is felt that the current structure serves the University well and economically.

4. That the current executive responsibility and structure of the social justice goal area remain the same.

#### ***Focus on Retention and Progression***

Although USQ has a rich history of work in the Social Justice area, it is not unfair to say that the University has taken the view that it is an activity that exists within student management generally and, insofar that it has an academic dimension, then it is a “pathway” activity, carried out in the context of the Tertiary Preparation Program. The Commonwealth’s targets are, however, a mixture of participation, partnership and performance. Participation will continue to be a prime focus of HEPPP funding, but performance will be a critical part of the mission compact process that all universities will undertake with the government. There is a real need to shift the balance of social justice activities into the faculties, both in terms of teaching and research, and to take greater interest in the retention and progression of equity students.

5. That the PVC (Social Justice) work closely with the PVC (Learning, Teaching and Quality) and the PVC (Academic Programs) to address the issues of retention and progression for low SES students.
6. That faculties be funded to develop social justice action plans.
7. That LTSU receive funding to support the learning needs of low SES students.
8. That the learning needs of students from the East African refugee community in the Darling Downs region become a focus of USQ activity.

### ***Participation***

It is likely that USQ will continue to receive significant numbers of students from low SES and other equity backgrounds. This is a function of the University's regional role, its history in the "College" sector, its demographics and catchment areas, and the success the University has established in student support and in distance teaching. There is probably no need, therefore, for extravagant recruitment initiatives in the low SES area. Nevertheless, there may be different kinds of challenges. Other universities may take up an interest in this sector of the market, especially after the removal of enrolment caps in 2012. The Open Access College seems the obvious "portal" of the University, especially to low SES students, although there may be arguments for broadening the activities of the College outside of the social justice sphere. The College's Tertiary Preparation Program has very strong current enrolments, and could well extend them through on-campus offering and through the development of online teaching to complement other traditional distance methods.

9. That the Open Access College retain a primary role in the transitioning of low SES students into the University.
10. That the Open Access College enhance its connections with the faculties of the University through the development of diplomas that bridge the first-year work of the faculties with the enabling and foundational work of the College.
11. That the Open Access College enhance the operation of the Tertiary Preparation Program through extending its availability on-campus, where the business case justifies this, and the availability online, and its offer in selected secondary schools.
12. That the Open Access College offer the Tertiary Preparation Program to offenders in custody in states outside of Queensland and find ways to address problems with the delivery of course materials, especially those available online, into prisons.
13. That GO WEST (Women in Engineering, Science and Technology) be supported and funded as a regular social justice initiative.
14. That scholarship support for female students completing doctorates be funded.

### ***Partnerships***

The University has identified a number of areas and activities where it can develop new partnerships and maintain and grow existing partnerships. These include Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentoring programs with low SES schools across its three campus catchment areas;

the extension of the Tertiary Preparation Program to students in a number of high schools; the provision of better support for students who are offenders in custody; and the extension of recruitment and support to prisoners in systems outside Queensland; a mentoring and aspiration building program for female school students, including those in low SES schools, interested in pursuing studies in the Faculty of Engineering & Surveying. The Student Management Division has also received social justice funding to build new partnerships with low SES schools through the development and implementation of the following outreach programs: a low SES early intervention program for school students years 3–7; low SES intervention program for years 8-10; a low SES parent engagement program; and an Indigenous Connections Project, which consists of Dhuuluu-Yala-Two-Daya and Deadly Motivators, two low SES school outreach events.

In addition to these USQ branded partnership activities, the University will also be involved with other Queensland universities in a state-wide non-branded approach to widening participation. In 2009, the Higher Education Forum established the Queensland Widening Participation Working Group, consisting of representatives from all Queensland universities. This group is working towards the development and submission of a joint consortium bid, under the HEPPP Partnership program, aimed at stimulating interest in higher education and widening the participation of low SES people and Indigenous Australians in Queensland. The project is not about recruitment but about creating a non-branded tertiary awareness, and preparing middle and senior school students for higher education. The first project of this group, which has received the endorsement of Queensland vice-chancellors, will be aimed at undertaking a coordinated approach to ensure that all students in low SES schools have access to tertiary and preparation. Given the large numbers, and geographical spread, of low income schools, and the need to eliminate gaps and duplication in outreach efforts, each university will focus its widening participation efforts on a cluster of schools. It should be noted that agreeing to partner with a school cluster creates obligations for the university partner, not rights or territory. Moreover, this project will not impact on outreach activities USQ has already established with schools, or any current or future USQ branded outreach activities.

15. That USQ continue to support the concept of a joint bid from Queensland universities to the Partnership fund in HEPPP, but reserve the right to apply for partnership funds in its own right.



16. That USQ offer both TPP and IHEPP in selected secondary schools in the University's catchment areas and seek funding from the Partnership fund in HEPPP to support these programs.
17. That the Social Justice office and the Student Management Division work together to develop appropriate partnership projects in schools for low SES students.
18. That the Social Justice areas of the University work closely with the Toowoomba Community Capacity Building Project, led by Professor Glen Postle.

### ***Focus on Indigenous Issues***

Indigenous students are for most universities a special focus of social justice policy and operation, and they are usually (but not always) part of other equity groups, such as low SES and rural and remote cohorts. In most universities, Indigenous students are also the most difficult group to help, and outcomes are frequently disheartening. Nevertheless, USQ has performed relatively well in this area, off a very low base and with low benchmark comparisons. For this reason, the initial thinking is that the performance of Indigenous students should be one of the social inclusion performance indicators that the University is allowed to choose as part of the Mission Compact procedure. It is vital, therefore, that special attention is paid to the status, funding and operational viability of CAIK. These centres are a requirement of Commonwealth funding through the Indigenous Support Program. Currently, the student support function of the Centre is operating adequately, but there are some concerns about the volatility and quality of its academic staffing. It is the firm belief of the PVC (Social Justice) that the successful implementation of Indigenous Studies courses, and their wide acceptance in programs and awards for study by non-Indigenous students, is the vital other side of the support for students from Indigenous backgrounds. The world of Indigenous academics is a small one, and it is important that career opportunities for Indigenous academics, in all fields, not just Indigenous Studies, are enhanced.

19. That support and funding for CAIK be maintained as a priority of the University.
20. That the DARE mentoring program for Indigenous secondary students be fully implemented in 2011 and 2012.
21. That the development of "Indigenous Studies" courses be seen as a priority of the University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.
22. That the Social Justice budget fund an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012.

## **Research**

The University's historical position and its diverse student body, which includes a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, provides USQ with an opportunity to further develop and expand research in the area of social justice including equity, multiculturalism and inclusiveness. The Open Access College already has several staff members with doctoral qualifications and an active research group; in 2009, the annual conference of the Enabling Programs Network was held at the Toowoomba campus of the University, with delegates from across the world and a keynote speaker from the United Kingdom. To enhance USQ's research capability, the Social Justice Goal Plan includes the following research target:

*"To maintain and develop further research interest, expertise and outcomes in the broader area of social justice, in particular, by increase of 13 % of the number of symposia, conferences and seminars with a focus on research and further encouragement to conduct research investigation".*

A core element in further developing and extending USQ's social justice research capability will be the continuation and expansion of the University's internal Equity Incentives Fund (EIF) Grant Scheme. Established in 2005, the EIF is one of five internal competitive grant schemes available for USQ staff members to enable access to funding in order to undertake new and innovative projects in key priority areas at USQ. Since 2005, over 60 projects have been funded under the EIF scheme. A list of projects and project leaders is provided in Appendix 7. The fund continues to grow and generate an increasing level of interest each year. Over 30 proposals were received following the call for applications in 2010, compared with 20 proposals which were received in 2009. For 2010, \$180,000 has been allocated to 12 projects to be conducted at Springfield, Fraser Coast and Toowoomba campuses. A new development in 2010 was the "Equity Seminar" at the Toowoomba campus, which showcased a number of EIF initiatives and was web-streamed live and on demand to other universities.

23. That the PVC (Social Justice) work closely with the DVC (Scholarship) and the PVC (Research) to formulate a research policy and agenda in the Social Justice area.
24. That the "Equity Incentives Fund" be extended and promoted.
25. That the University support (and fund through the HEPPP budget) symposia and publications by staff in the Social Justice area.

26. That the University appoint a senior social scientist to lead research in the social justice area of higher education.
27. That close research connections be made between the appropriate parts of the Social Justice portfolio area and the Institute for Tertiary Education Participation (should it be established).

## **6. Summary of Recommendations**

1. That “social justice”, including matters of equity, access and social inclusion, remain at the core of USQ’s brand, mission and planning.
2. That USQ strive to enhance its “leadership” role in the area of social justice in higher education in Australia.
3. That USQ continue to fund all equity groups and activities.
4. That the current executive responsibility and structure of the social justice goal area remain the same.
5. That the PVC (Social Justice) work closely with the PVC (Learning, Teaching and Quality) and the PVC (Academic Programs) to address the issues of retention and progression for low SES students.
6. That faculties be funded to develop social justice action plans.
7. That LTSU receive funding to support the learning needs of low SES students.
8. That the learning needs of students from the East African refugee community in the Darling Downs region become a focus of USQ activity.
9. That the Open Access College retain a primary role in the recruitment of low SES students into the University.
10. That the Open Access College enhance its connections with the faculties of the University through the development of diplomas that bridge the first-year work of the faculties with the enabling and foundational work of the College.
11. That the Open Access College enhance the operation of the Tertiary Preparation Program through extending its availability on-campus, where the business case justifies this, and the availability online, and its offer in selected secondary schools.
12. That the Open Access College offer the Tertiary Preparation Program to offenders in custody in states outside of Queensland and find ways to address problems with the delivery of course materials, especially those available online, into prisons.
13. That GO WEST (Women in Engineering, Science and Technology) be supported and funded as a regular social justice initiative.
14. That scholarship support for female students completing doctorates be funded.
15. That USQ continue to support the concept of a joint bid from Queensland universities to the Partnership fund in HEPPP, but reserve the right to apply for partnership funds in its own right.

16. That USQ offer both TPP and IHEPP in selected secondary schools in the University's catchment areas and seek funding from the Partnership fund in HEPPP to support these programs.
17. That the Social Justice office and the Student Management Division work together to develop appropriate partnership projects in schools for low SES students
18. That the Social Justice areas of the University work closely with the Toowoomba Community Capacity Building Project, led by Professor Glen Postle.
19. That support and funding for CAIK be maintained as a priority of the University.
20. That the DARE mentoring program for Indigenous secondary students be fully implemented in 2011 and 2012.
21. That the development of "Indigenous Studies" courses be seen as a priority of the University and faculties encouraged to set such courses as core courses where appropriate.
22. That the Social Justice budget fund an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2012.
23. That the PVC (Social Justice) work closely with the DVC (Scholarship) and the PVC (Research) to formulate a research policy and agenda in the Social Justice area.
24. That the "Equity Incentives Fund" be extended and promoted.
25. That the University support (and fund through the HEPPP budget) symposia and publications by staff in the Social Justice area.
26. That the University appoint a senior social scientist to lead research in the social justice area of higher education.
27. That close research connections be made between the appropriate parts of the Social Justice portfolio area and the Institute for Tertiary Education Participation (should it be established).

## 7. Appendices

### *Appendix 1 –Social Justice Goal Plan: Strategies & Targets 2011*

<https://intranet.usq.edu.au/sites/qmf/Lists/2011OperationalPlanningSections/UniServices.aspx>

#### **Social Justice Strategies 2011**

##### **Overview**

The Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion goal is directed towards raising the profile and enhancing the performance of the various groups of students and staff recognised by the Government as being "disadvantaged" in some way: students from low socio-economic status backgrounds, Indigenous students and staff, students and staff from non English-speaking backgrounds, students from rural and remote areas, female students in Science, Engineering and Technology, disabled students and staff, and female academic and professional staff in the higher grades. These groups are often referred to collectively as "equity" groups. Although the Federal Government replaced an "equity support program" with a "higher education participation and partnership program", funded explicitly on the basis of a loading for enrolments of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, the University has decided to continue to fund all the traditional equity areas rather than focus narrowly on the one group of low socio-economic status students. The reasoning behind this is that many students identify in more than one equity category.

During 2010, the PVC (Social Justice) has brought drafts of a whole of university social justice plan, with accompanying budget for 2010-2012, to various meetings of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the University Social Justice Committee. A final version will be presented to VCC for formal approval in December 2010. The focus of activity in 2011 will be on the implementation of this plan. The plan is structured around an articulated series of strategies designed to maintain and enhance the University's performance in a range of areas involving equity students: extending and improving participation of students, including recruiting and supporting students from non-traditional areas; improving retention and progression rates of students already in the system; and forming partnerships with other sectors involved in education, including other providers such as schools and other universities in Queensland. All areas of the University will be involved in this process, but, for obvious reasons, the Student Management Division, the Open Access College, and the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges will take the lead in 2011. These areas of the University constitute a kind of "front line" in the recruitment and transitioning to university study of low SES students. In 2012 and beyond, there will be a greater focus on the retention and progression of students, involving the faculties, the Learning and Teaching Support Unit, and other areas of University activity such as the Library.

Some of the key initiatives for 2011 include the establishment of a program for mentoring Indigenous students in a number of high schools in the catchment areas of the various campuses of the University; the extension of the Tertiary Preparation Program to on-campus students and to students in a number of high schools; the provision of better support for students who are offenders in custody and the extension of recruitment and support to prisoners in systems outside Queensland; maintaining support for female students in science, engineering and technology and for female staff who are enrolled in doctoral programs.



### Strategies for Goal Plan

Strategy	Target
Develop and implement a whole of University Social Justice Plan	Development and adoption by VCC of Social Justice Plan by January 2011. Development of an Implementation Plan by June 2011 Deployment of plan starting June 2011
Establish a research agenda and profile for social justice, equity and inclusion for 2011-2014.	Improve attraction and retention of Low Socio Economic Students in line with the HEPPPP guidelines Increase joint funding for social justice, equity and inclusion research projects.
Embed the Staff Engagement Framework in annual planning of functional areas	2011 SEF plans completed for all goal areas; 2012 SEF planning embedded in operational planning
Accelerating development of Open Access College	Open entry Diploma pathways to be implemented from S1, 2011. Preparatory Program in Schools (PPIS), targeting Year 10 students, to be implemented in secondary schools adjacent to all three campuses in 2011.
Community Capacity Building Project (VC / Postle)	Community Capacity Building Project (CCBP) - Community of Practise established and nurtured CCBP Research Action Plan implemented
Adoption and implementation of a USQ Global Strategic Marketing Plan (GSMP) for all channel considerations based on comprehensive market intelligence, analysis, risk assessment and due diligence.	Adoption of GSMP by January 2011 Implementation of GSMP throughout 2011 Review of GSMP December 2011

## 2011 Targets and Strategies

Targets	Strategies
<p>To consolidate recent improvement in Retention Ratio for Indigenous Australians of 0.99</p>	<p>CAIK will continue to administer the Centre's Individual Tailored Student Support Program to ensure all enrolled Indigenous students' academic and personal study needs are met in a timely and appropriate manner</p>
<p>To improve retention for people from refugee-backgrounds such that the Apparent Retention Ratio for non-English speaking background students is 0.91</p>	<p>The Open Access College is in the process of appointing a 0.5 Refugee Student Support Officer, replacing the existing 0.2 African Student Support Officer position. The expanded role of the new position will provide support in all aspects of refugee student recruitment, enrolment, academic progression and retention. The position will liaise extensively with the refugee community, as well as administrative and academic staff of the University, and act as a negotiator when a need arises. The position will also convene weekly study sessions, a basic computing group, an online community site as well as directing students to the various specialised support services of the University.</p>
<p>To maintain Indigenous Australian representation at 2% of student body</p>	<p>CAIK will continue to coordinate a range of outreach, recruitment and marketing strategies directed at high schools, Indigenous community based organisations, public and private sector employers, and TAFE Institutes across the three regional campus locations to promote USQ programs to Indigenous men and women and school leavers.</p>
<p>To maintain Students with Disability representation at 4% of student body</p>	<p>Access and participation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disability Resources will be providing information to schools and community organisations to increase the awareness of supports offered to students with disabilities who may otherwise consider tertiary education out of their reach. This information will be distributed to schools via the guidance officers in conjunction with the Schools Liaison Team, Domestic Marketing and Recruitment and Admissions (Domestic) within the Student Management Division.</li> <li>2. Students who identify as having a Disability through the application process (QTAC or Direct Entry) will be contacted and advised of the supports available at USQ.</li> </ol> <p>Retention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. USQ will continue to maintain the current high levels of individualised and timely service of SWD, for example, alternative formatting, examination accommodations, advocacy, and disability support workers in order to provide the opportunity for success and progression in student's studies.</li> <li>4. Disability Resources staff will actively engage with Faculties and SRO's in the Student Support team to facilitate the appropriate support to the student population and increase staff awareness around Students with Disabilities.</li> </ol> <p>Relationship:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Facilitating and building on relationship capacity building for students with the broader university network to enable SWD to self advocate and build meaningful partnerships with key USQ departments, e.g. Student Relationship Officers, Faculty Disability Contacts and academic contacts.</li> </ol>

<b>Targets</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
To maintain % of Women in Engineering at 8%	Continued support for programs such as GO WEST to encourage increased representation of women in Engineering and Surveying.
To maintain representation by Indigenous Australians at 1.3% of staff body	The USQ Indigenous Career Development and Employment Strategy Steering Committee will be operationalised in early 2011. The Committee will review the 2007 Strategy and, in association with the Indigenous Employment Coordinator, re-develop an implementation plan for Indigenous staff recruitment and employment.
To achieve female representation at Level E of 21%	A tailored and targeted Women's Development Program will be launched in 2011. The Program will incorporate a range of strategic initiatives specifically targeted and designed to support the promotion and career development of Academic women including: a Women in Leadership Program; doctoral completion and post-doctoral Fellowships and a senior academic mentoring and shadowing program aimed at Academic women Levels C and D to assist them and support them to progress to Level E. Targeted recruitment practices will also be explored.
To achieve female representation at Level 10 of 44%	The Women's Development Program will incorporate specific modules aimed at aspiring professional women in order to provide them with specific strategic leadership skills required for advancement in the organisation. It is envisaged that modules will include a Leadership and Mentor Program, Future Leaders Program and peer coaching workshops for those women currently employed at USQ Levels 7-9. Targeted recruitment practices will also be explored together with a critical analysis of recruitment and selection policies and processes and family friendly policies and practices, including leave and flexibility.
To maintain and develop USQ recognised leadership in multiculturalism by expanding external contacts and increase delivery of programs by 10%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To maintain and develop contacts and cooperation in the area of multiculturalism with governments at all levels.</li> <li>2. To develop cooperation with external non-government organisations.</li> <li>3. To develop the USQ Multicultural Centre by increased necessary resources.</li> <li>4. To initiate new, innovative multicultural programs.</li> <li>5. To promote the benefits of multiculturalism.</li> </ol>

<b>Targets</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<p>To maintain and develop further research interest, expertise and outcomes in the broader area of social justice (including equity, multiculturalism and inclusiveness) in particular by increase of 13 % of the number of symposia, conferences and seminars with a focus on research and further encouragement to conduct research investigation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To realise the needs for research investigations in the area of social justice from institutional perspectives and their impact on university development and planning.</li> <li>2. To maintain the number and quality of social justice symposia with research component as delivered in 2010 and increase the number in 2011 with a focus on applied research and developed scholarship.</li> <li>3. To establish of register of staff and postgraduate students with research record and interest in social justice.</li> </ol>
<p>Improve attraction and retention of Low Socio Economic Students in line with the HEPPP guidelines as laid down in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2010). This includes Rural and remote students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.)</p>	<p>Attraction and Aspiration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Western Careers &amp; Employment Outreach (rural &amp; remote LSES secondary students)</li> <li>2. USQ Schools Partner Program (HEPPP initiatives: LSES early intervention, parent engagement)</li> <li>3. TPP in Correctional Centres</li> <li>4. TPP in schools</li> <li>5. Flexischool Partnership</li> <li>6. NESB community partnership - outreach support through Multicultural Centre</li> <li>7. Supporting incarcerated students</li> <li>8. Providing study materials in formats for all students to access</li> </ol> <p>Participation and Retention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welfare Officer (housing, accommodation, community relations and case management)</li> <li>2. Printing subsidies</li> <li>3. Postage fees for LSES students</li> <li>4. Residential Colleges - regional scholarships</li> <li>5. Equity Scholarships for rural and remote and/or low SE Students</li> </ol>

## ***Appendix 2 –Sections and associated equity activities***

### **Office of Social Justice**

- Policy
- Operational coordination of social justice, equity and inclusion strategies, targets and associated sections
- Management, oversight and allocation of HEPPP funds including the Equity Incentives Fund Grant Scheme
- Maintenance and development of research interest, expertise and outcomes in social justice

### **CAIK**

- Indigenous Mentoring Program in Secondary Schools (DARE)
- Extension of IHEPP in Schools
- Indigenous Executive Officer, Fraser Coast
- Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Academic program in Indigenous studies, embedding “Indigenous perspectives” in curriculum
- Indigenous Employment Strategy Coordinator, Human Resources/CAIK
- Indigenous traineeships and/or cadetships

### **Multicultural Centre**

- Outreach program for domestic Students from non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB).
- Focus on outreach to East African refugee migrant community in Darling Downs
- Establish appointment of part-time Multicultural Programs Development Officer
- Core multicultural events and activities

### **Open Access College**

- PPIS in Schools
- TPP in Correctional Centres
- Diplomas with Faculties
- Correctional Centre Support Officer
- Refugee Support Officer
- Partnership with Toowoomba Flexischool
- Correctional Centre Resource Distribution Program.

### **Student Services**

- Disability Action Activities
- Tertiary Taster & outreach programs
- Equity Scholarships
- Scholarship program, including early scholarships to year 10 students,
- Welfare Officer: Housing and accommodation
- Discretionary support for practical and clinical placements for low SES
- Increased early careers counselling

**Faculties**

- Targeted, specific programs to increase low SES enrolment and improve progression.

**Facilities management**

- Social Club Meeting Room for students.

**Fraser Coast Campus**

- Indigenous Executive Officer
- “On Country Learning” course, developed with participation of Butchulla community on Fraser Island.

**Library**

- Textbook return scheme for LSES

**LTSU**

- Targeted, specific programs to increase low SES enrolment and improve its progression from 2012

**Springfield Campus**

- Indigenous Executive Officer (from 2012)
- BEAMS Mentoring Program for secondary students (coordinated from Springfield)

**Student Guild**

- Small grants for students to establish social clubs
- Discretionary support programs: job searching skills, personal development programs

**Student Management Division**

- Widening Participation – Dhuuloo-Yala and Deadly Motivators Events & Workshops
- Schools Partner Program: LSES initiatives, early intervention and parent engagement activities.

**SWEE (Status of Women in Employment and Education)**

- Scholarships for women staff to complete doctorates and postgraduate studies
- Explore extension of faculty-based equity scholarships

**Women in Science, Engineering and Technology**

- Go WEST
- Girls in Engineering and Science School and Scholarships
- Faculty of Engineering & Surveying school-based mentoring and ambassador program.
- Social Justice & Equity Scholarships

*Appendix 3 – Budget 2011-2012*



SJ BUDGET  
2011-2012 Social Just

***Appendix 4– Comparison of CD Indicator and Postcode Indicator for participation, retention, success and attainment.***

Source: Institutional Performance Portfolio (Draft 1 December 2010)

<b>Student participation rate</b>			
<b>Low SES students (CD Indicator)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Low SES students (Postcode Ind)</b>	<b>2009</b>
USQ	30.12%	USQ	32.05%
Benchmark	23.70%	Benchmark	23.94%
State (Qld)	17.38%	State (Qld)	18.94%
Sector	15.28%	Sector	15.25%

<b>Student retention (engagement) rate</b>			
<b>Low SES students (CD Indicator)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Low SES students (Postcode Ind)</b>	<b>2008</b>
USQ	76.79%	USQ	71.34%
Benchmark	77.19%	Benchmark	73.40%
State (Qld)	78.13%	State (Qld)	74.87%
Sector	80.69%	Sector	78.13%

<b>Student success (achievement) rate</b>			
<b>Low SES students (CD Indicator)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Low SES students (Postcode Ind)</b>	<b>2009</b>
USQ	80.39%	USQ	78.17%
Benchmark	81.33%	Benchmark	80.83%
State (Qld)	84.06%	State (Qld)	83.99%
Sector	84.80%	Sector	85.32%

<b>Student attainment rate</b>			
<b>Low SES students (CD Indicator)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Low SES students (Postcode Ind)</b>	<b>2009</b>
USQ	27.37%	USQ	26.32%
Benchmark	21.58%	Benchmark	20.88%
State (Qld)	15.53%	State (Qld)	16.31%
Sector	13.71%	Sector	13.69%



## Appendix 5 – Low SES Participation Data

Extract taken from the 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (Draft 1 December 2010), pp. 38-43

### LOW SES PARTICIPATION UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

#### Undergraduate Students from a Low Socioeconomic Status Background (New Measures)

- A new measure of low socioeconomic status (SES) is currently being developed.
- In 2010, an Interim Indicator of Low SES was used by DEEWR to allocate funding under the participation component of Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program.
- The Interim Indicator is derived from the number of Domestic Undergraduate students with home addresses in Census Collection Districts (CDs) that belong to the lowest SES quartile and the number of students who meet relevant eligibility criteria on selected Centrelink Student Income Support payments.

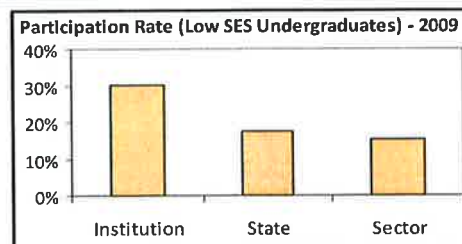
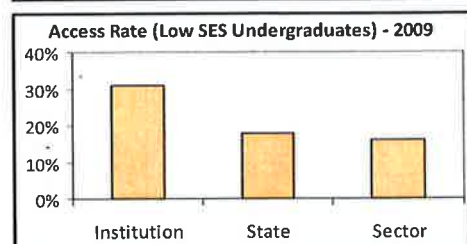
#### Student Participation (Interim Indicator)

Low SES Students (Interim Indicator)		2009
Low SES Undergraduates (Interim Indicator)	University of Southern Queensland	2 831
	Benchmark Group	13 186
	State - Queensland	16 498
	Sector	78 169
Participation Rate	University of Southern Queensland	23.30%
	Benchmark Group	21.69%
	State - Queensland	15.08%
	Sector	14.13%

\* The participation rate is the proportion that the Low SES Interim Indicator represents of all Undergraduate students.

#### Student Participation (Collection District Indicator)

Low SES Students (CD Indicator)		2009
Low SES Undergraduate Commencements (CD Indicator)	University of Southern Queensland	1 381
	Benchmark Group	6 854
	State - Queensland	6 688
	Sector	29 821
Access Rate	University of Southern Queensland	30.79%
	Benchmark Group	24.85%
	State - Queensland	17.65%
	Sector	16.02%
Low SES Undergraduate Enrolments (CD Indicator)	University of Southern Queensland	3 660
	Benchmark Group	19 340
	State - Queensland	19 017
	Sector	84 555
Participation Rate	University of Southern Queensland	30.12%
	Benchmark Group	23.70%
	State - Queensland	17.38%
	Sector	15.28%

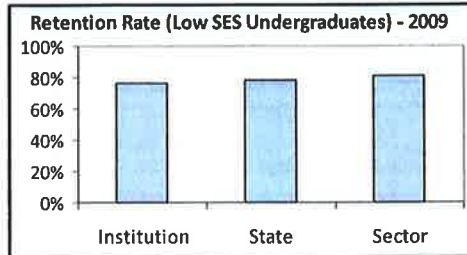


\* The access rate is the proportion of all commencing Undergraduate students who are from Low SES CDs.

\*\* The participation rate is the proportion of all Undergraduate students who are from Low SES CDs.

**Student Engagement (Collection District Indicator)**

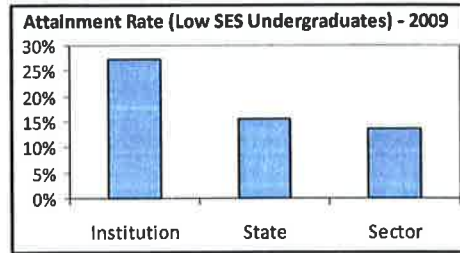
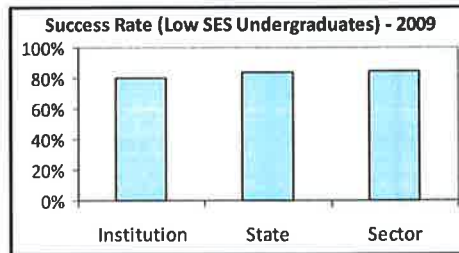
Low SES Students (CD Indicator)		2008
Retention Rate	University of Southern Queensland	76.79%
	Benchmark Group	77.19%
	State - Queensland	78.13%
	Sector	80.69%



\* The retention rate is the proportion of students from Low SES CDs studying in the given year that returned in the following year, excluding those that completed their studies.

**Student Achievement and Attainment (Collection District Indicator)**

Low SES Students (CD Indicator)		2009
Success Rate	University of Southern Queensland	80.39%
	Benchmark Group	81.33%
	State - Queensland	84.06%
	Sector	84.80%
Attainment Rate	University of Southern Queensland	27.37%
	Benchmark Group	21.58%
	State - Queensland	15.53%
	Sector	13.71%



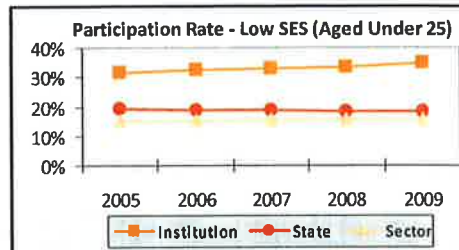
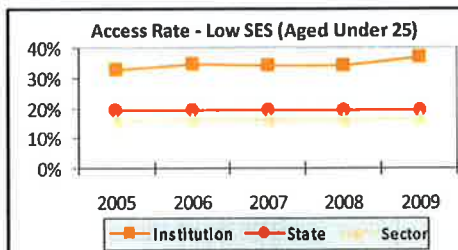
\* The success rate is the EFTSL of units passed by students from Low SES CDs as a percentage of the EFTSL of all units attempted by students from Low SES CDs.

\*\* The attainment rate is the proportion of all Undergraduate students who completed their studies in a given year who are from Low SES CDs

**Students from a Low Socioeconomic Status Background Aged Under 25 (Postcode Indicator)**

**Student Participation**

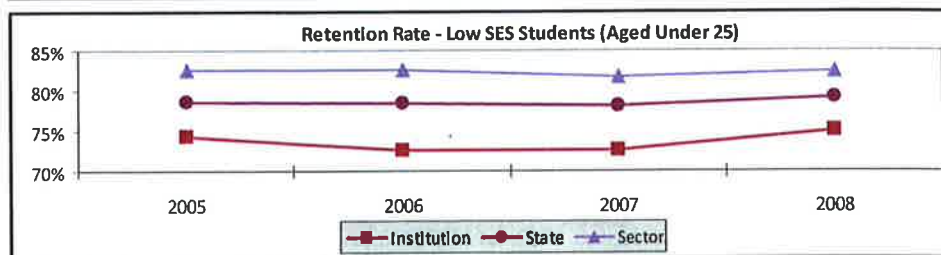
Low SES Students (Aged Under 25)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Access Rate	University of Southern Queensland	32.68%	34.43%	34.04%	34.06%	36.62%
	Benchmark Group	24.33%	25.47%	25.56%	25.38%	26.71%
	State - Queensland	19.33%	19.29%	19.33%	19.11%	19.12%
	Sector	15.85%	16.02%	16.18%	16.18%	16.34%
Participation Rate	University of Southern Queensland	31.74%	32.33%	32.72%	33.38%	34.91%
	Benchmark Group	24.81%	24.73%	24.84%	24.76%	25.28%
	State - Queensland	19.08%	18.83%	18.71%	18.37%	18.13%
	Sector	15.21%	15.24%	15.39%	15.36%	15.44%
Participation Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	3.93	3.85	4.05	3.64	4.05
	Benchmark Group	1.19	1.18	1.19	1.17	1.20
	State - Queensland	0.72	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71
	Sector	0.39	0.40	0.41	0.41	0.42



- \* The access rate is the proportion of all commencing students who are from Low SES postcodes under the age of 25.
- \*\* The participation rate is the proportion of all students who are from Low SES postcodes under the age of 25.
- \*\*\* The reference value for the participation ratio is the participation rate of students from high SES postcodes under the age of 25.

**Student Engagement**

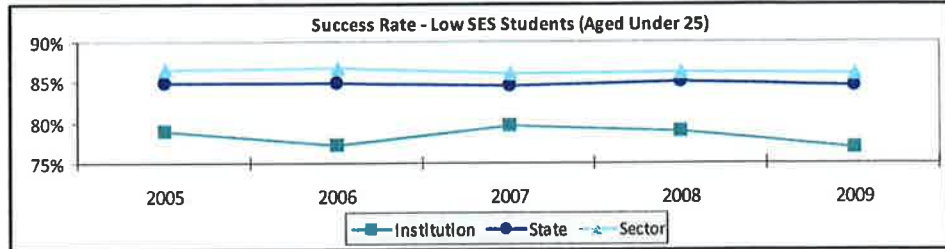
Low SES Students (Aged Under 25)		2005	2006	2007	2008
Retention Rate	University of Southern Queensland	74.38%	72.57%	72.62%	75.05%
	Benchmark Group	78.17%	77.93%	76.77%	77.30%
	State - Queensland	78.64%	78.48%	78.16%	79.08%
	Sector	82.52%	82.63%	81.75%	82.47%
Retention Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	1.03	1.01	1.02	1.02
	Benchmark Group	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.98
	State - Queensland	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.96
	Sector	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.97



- \* The retention rate is the proportion of students from Low SES postcodes aged under 25 studying in the given year that returned in the following year, excluding those that completed their studies.
- \*\* The reference value for the retention ratio is the retention rate for all other students.

### Student Achievement

Low SES Students (Aged Under 25)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Success Rate	University of Southern Queensland	78.98%	77.16%	79.59%	78.87%	76.92%
	Benchmark Group	83.06%	83.33%	82.37%	82.62%	81.94%
	State - Queensland	84.84%	84.86%	84.53%	85.13%	84.60%
	Sector	86.56%	86.71%	86.08%	86.31%	86.02%
Success Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.98
	Benchmark Group	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.97
	State - Queensland	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.96
	Sector	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	0.97

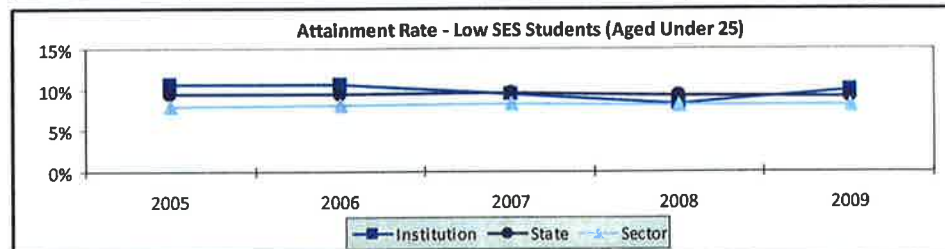


\* The success rate is the EFTSL of units passed by students from Low SES postcodes aged under 25 as a percentage of the EFTSL of all units attempted by students from Low SES postcodes aged under 25.

\*\* The reference value for the success ratio is the success rate for all other students.

### Student Attainment

Low SES Students (Aged Under 25)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Completions - Low SES (Under 25) Students	University of Southern Queensland	169	232	217	197	221
	Benchmark Group	1 608	1 658	1 800	1 665	1 765
	State - Queensland	2 139	2 279	2 309	2 150	2 194
	Sector	11 017	11 234	11 381	11 180	11 443
Attainment Rate	University of Southern Queensland	10.58%	10.61%	9.37%	8.33%	9.87%
	Benchmark Group	8.91%	8.92%	9.37%	8.76%	9.31%
	State - Queensland	9.51%	9.45%	9.64%	9.19%	9.11%
	Sector	8.00%	8.10%	8.18%	8.09%	8.10%

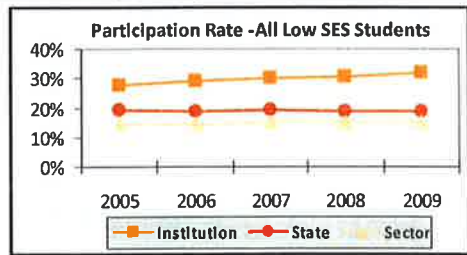
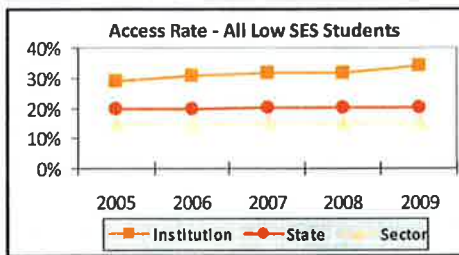


\* The attainment rate is the proportion of all students who completed their studies in a given year who are from Low SES postcodes under the age of 25.

**All Students from a Low Socioeconomic Status Background (Postcode Indicator)**

**Student Participation**

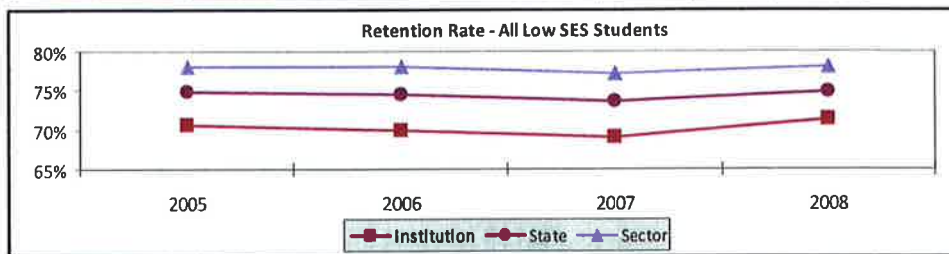
Low SES Students (All Ages)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Access Rate	University of Southern Queensland	29.07%	30.88%	31.91%	31.90%	34.07%
	Benchmark Group	22.85%	23.93%	24.41%	24.41%	25.41%
	State - Queensland	19.74%	19.88%	20.16%	20.19%	20.16%
	Sector	15.46%	15.69%	15.92%	16.05%	16.17%
Participation Rate	University of Southern Queensland	27.85%	28.98%	30.03%	30.69%	32.05%
	Benchmark Group	22.72%	22.91%	23.20%	23.36%	23.94%
	State - Queensland	19.06%	18.93%	19.06%	18.91%	18.94%
	Sector	14.68%	14.78%	15.02%	15.09%	15.25%
Participation Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	1.82	1.94	2.09	2.15	2.35
	Benchmark Group	0.94	0.96	0.99	1.00	1.04
	State - Queensland	0.70	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.74
	Sector	0.37	0.38	0.39	0.40	0.40



\* The access rate is the proportion of all commencing students who are from Low SES postcodes.  
 \*\* The participation rate is the proportion of all students who are from Low SES postcodes.  
 \*\*\*The reference value for the participation ratio is the participation rate students from high SES postcodes.

**Student Engagement**

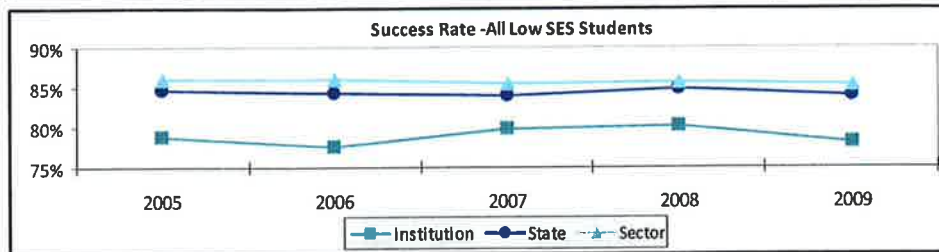
Low SES Students (All Ages)		2005	2006	2007	2008
Retention Rate	University of Southern Queensland	70.56%	69.95%	69.11%	71.34%
	Benchmark Group	73.84%	73.45%	72.41%	73.40%
	State - Queensland	74.91%	74.45%	73.58%	74.87%
	Sector	78.10%	78.06%	77.25%	78.13%
Retention Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	1.04	1.03	1.01	1.02
	Benchmark Group	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.98
	State - Queensland	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.96
	Sector	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97



\* The retention rate is the proportion of students from Low SES postcodes who were studying in the given year that returned in the following year, excluding those that completed their studies.  
 \*\* The reference value for the retention ratio is the retention rate for all other students.

### Student Achievement

Low SES Students (All Ages)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Success Rate	University of Southern Queensland	78.85%	77.54%	79.81%	80.17%	78.17%
	Benchmark Group	82.62%	82.42%	81.44%	82.04%	80.83%
	State - Queensland	84.62%	84.31%	83.96%	84.85%	83.99%
	Sector	86.08%	85.98%	85.47%	85.68%	85.32%
Success Ratio	University of Southern Queensland	0.99	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.98
	Benchmark Group	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.97
	State - Queensland	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.96
	Sector	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.96

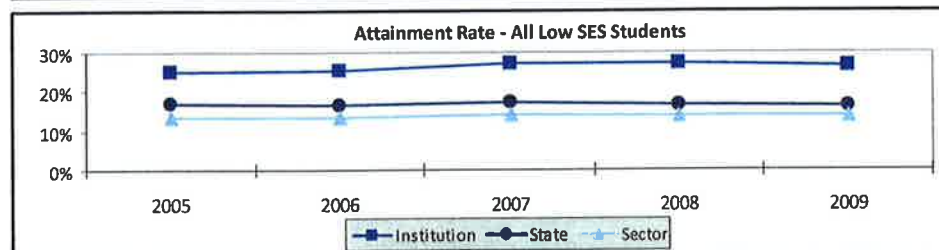


\* The success rate is the EFTSL of units passed by students from Low SES postcodes as a percentage of the EFTSL of all units attempted by students from Low SES postcodes.

\*\* The reference value for the success ratio is the success rate for all other students.

### Student Attainment

Low SES Students (All Ages)		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Completions - All Low SES Students	University of Southern Queensland	398	554	626	645	589
	Benchmark Group	3 664	3 767	4 118	3 905	3 959
	State - Queensland	3 805	3 991	4 159	3 857	3 926
	Sector	18 590	18 828	19 519	19 069	19 346
Attainment Rate	University of Southern Queensland	24.91%	25.34%	27.02%	27.28%	26.32%
	Benchmark Group	20.31%	20.27%	21.43%	20.55%	20.88%
	State - Queensland	16.92%	16.55%	17.36%	16.48%	16.31%
	Sector	13.50%	13.57%	14.03%	13.79%	13.69%



\* The attainment rate is the proportion of all students who completed their studies in a given year who are from Low SES postcodes.

## *Appendix 6 – 2005-2011 Successful EIF Projects and Recipients*

### **2010/2011**

Burton, L - *Working in partnership with the Toowoomba Flexischool to facilitate student's career choices.*

Conwell, W - *Mentoring and language initiative for mature-age students from refugee and migrant communities.*

Hammer, S - *Extending support to NESB students by developing a core group of intercultural communication trainers at USQ.*

Hoare, N - *Enhancing career development learning for senior school students from rural and remote areas.*

Louth, S - *Birrbam Gambay / Buranga Gambay - Play together / Learn together.*

McDonald, J - *Community Crew Project.*

Johnson Morgan, M - *Getting into University.*

Oliver, M - *Building resilience: facilitating success for first year students from low SES and /or rural backgrounds.*

Perrin C & Terwijn, R - *Intersectional identification and support of HVP students at USQ.*

Young, C - *Indigenous students experience day.*

Thorpe, D - *Enhancing the student experience for low SES and non traditional students at USQ Springfield.*

### **2009/2010**

Hossain, D -- *Identifying key factors that impact on rural and remote student participation in higher education at USQ.*

Burton, L - *Developing a community outreach strategy to broaden participation in higher education.*

McDonald, J - *Go WEST: extending networks and activities.*

Thorpe, D - *Identifying low socio-economic status students and maximising their educational pathways.*

Conwell, W - *USQ Indigenous and Sudanese volleyball/basketball sport clinics.*

Clarke, J - *Developing awareness raising materials using Adobe.*

Conwell, W - *Enhancing equitable education pathways for NESB students.*

Erwee, R - *Scholarships for women staff and students to complete doctorates and higher degrees.*

Bayley, S - *UniLIFE.*



Neville, J - *Wine tourism industry Indigenous participation project: employee induction and orientation to tertiary study.*

Bull, D - *Promoting and supporting TPP in NSW correctional centres.*

Clarke, J - *Refugee background student support officer.*

Conwell, W - *Mentoring for mature age women refugee students.*

#### **2007/2008**

Lawson, K - *University Study: an achievable option. Assessing the benefits of promoting university study to secondary school students with a disability through the testimonials of USQ students with disabilities.*

Bull, D and Postle, G - *Reaching out to local, marginalised youth: access and participation at USQ.*

Bedford, T - *A study of strategies to address factors that contribute to the non-progression of students from USQ's Tertiary Preparation program (TPP) to USQ undergraduate programs.*

Cretchley, P - *Project EMU-EXT: Identifying and supporting at risk external mathematics students at USQ*

Richards, P - *UniLIFE*

Clarke, J - *Supporting success for USQ's Sudanese student population at the University and in the community - pilot.*

McDonald, J - *Building a professional network to mentor rural and regional women in science, engineering and technology.*

Conwell, W - *Mentoring and language initiative for mature-aged women students from refugee communities in the Toowoomba Darling Downs region.*

Hatoss, A - *Exploring social, cultural and linguistic barriers to tertiary studies among Year 12 students from refugee backgrounds.*

Nutter, H & Rogers-Clark, C - *Culturally inclusive curriculum design in the Bachelor of Nursing program: meeting the teaching and learning needs of culturally diverse student groups.*

Bull, D - *Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) online learning community: from noWhere2learn to nowHere2learn.*

Thorpe, D - *Maximising pathways for second-chance learners at USQ Springfield.*

#### **2006/2007**

Clarke, J - *Identifying strategies for improved learning performance of Sudanese undergraduate students based on an improved understanding of the learning needs and styles of this group.*

Richards, P - *USQ Fraser Coast Year 10 Equity Access Program.*



Keeffe, M and Postle, G - *Lifelong learning for disadvantaged youth: access and participation at USQ.*

Khatri, Y - *Bridging the gap: identifying needs to facilitate entry to USQ.*

St Hill, R - *Towards equity through researching and promoting inclusive assessment practices in tertiary education.*

Toombs, M - *20 years on, where are our students now?*

Kiernan, E - *First year students' perception of inclusive practices in learning and teaching.*

#### **2005/2006**

Dashwood, A - *Using English language effectively: a workshop series for NESB academic staff.*

McLachlan, D - *USQ graduates with disabilities workshop.*

Erwee, R and Collins, P - *Upgrading USQ Women's Network Inc., Meeting Room.*

Clearly, M and Rogers-Clark - *Nursing is for Everyone: encouraging diversity in USQ nursing.*

Ison, H - *A taste of science: participation in Year 12 biology workshops at USQ, Fraser Coast.*

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## **Support Strategies That Graduate Indigenous Nurses – A Dreaming Journey**

*by Lynne Stuart, Anne-Maree Nielsen and Vicki Horner\**

### **Abstract**

*The University of Southern Queensland's (USQ) Department of Nursing and Midwifery is leading the way in the recruitment, retention and graduation of Indigenous students into both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs. The Indigenous nursing academics within the Department are proactive in providing academic and cultural support to help Indigenous nursing students advance toward graduation. The team of three Indigenous nursing academics has implemented strategies from the Indigenous Nursing Support (INS) model Helping Hands to support the retention of Indigenous nursing students. This retention tool is a highly successful and proven means of intervention, as demonstrated by USQ's national leadership in enrolments and graduating students. Indigenous nursing enrolments at USQ have grown from 10 to 60 over a two year period, and USQ is now preparing to host the largest graduation (to date) in 2010, of 13 Indigenous registered nurses.*

### **The beginning of the USQ Dreaming Journey**

The University of Southern Queensland's (USQ) Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had a significant increase in Indigenous nursing enrolments recently, as a result of targeted recruitment drives and strong partnerships with Queensland Health, Aboriginal Medical Services, regional high schools, and the Indigenous Higher Education Preparation Program (IHEPP) located within the Centre of Australian Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) at USQ. The recruitment of Indigenous nursing students is a vital first step for, as Goold (in *Dragon 2007: 23*) states, "it is important to recruit and retain more Indigenous nurses to provide the most appropriate care for Indigenous people".

However, recruiting Indigenous nurses into nursing programs at any university is not the most difficult task. Across the board, the most common problem is retaining them within the nursing program until they graduate and gain their qualification as a registered nurse. Goold and Usher (2006) note that there are large numbers of Indigenous nursing students in schools of nursing, but to retain these students until graduation is difficult.

To address this challenging retention problem, a number of support retention strategies have been implemented by the Indigenous nursing academics within the USQ's Nursing and Midwifery Department. The results have been outstanding, with 13 Indigenous registered nurses due to graduate in 2010. This paper describes the strategies used by USQ's Nursing and Midwifery Department to retain Indigenous students and support them as they advance toward graduation and matriculation into postgraduate studies.

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USQ's Department of Nursing and Midwifery has had an Indigenous nursing academic lecturing position on a continuing basis for over a decade. In addition to lecturing, this position encompasses a supportive role to provide academic and cultural support for Indigenous nursing students enrolled in the nursing programs. Because of the burgeoning numbers of Indigenous nursing students enrolling at USQ, the Department has recruited two additional part-time Indigenous nursing academics to meet the cultural and academic support needs of this rapidly growing cohort. It must be acknowledged that the initially employed Indigenous nursing academic, Odette Best, was the main instigator of the USQ Dreaming Journey over a decade ago. Odette is now a USQ PhD candidate who holds the position of Indigenous Nursing Advisor to the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer, Queensland Health. This pioneer Indigenous nursing academic made in-roads where there were none and established the foundation of an Indigenous nursing support model advancing the first cohort of Indigenous nursing students to become registered nurses. The three nursing academics who currently sit in these Indigenous nursing academic positions at USQ are derived from the first student cohort.

The Indigenous nursing support (INS) model in use at USQ, Helping Hands, was conceived and developed by Odette Best. Through using this model, the USQ Department of Nursing and Midwifery is now a national leader in recruiting, training, educating and graduating Indigenous registered nurses. Over the years, the model has been extended and refined into a working student support model that caters to the ever changing needs of Indigenous nursing students (Stuart 2009).

Helping Hands consists of a custom-made concept map which has been developed at USQ and is specifically designed for face-to-face teaching to support Indigenous nursing students in their USQ Dreaming Journey. This method of learning works well for Indigenous students. As Goid (2004: 1) states, "we are an oral people and we are face-to-face learners". The Helping Hands model has taken into consideration that Indigenous nursing students' learning styles are different from mainstream nursing students and has, therefore, adapted support strategies for Indigenous nursing students to remain enrolled, make progress and graduate from higher education. This approach is congruent with Bush and Van Holst Pellekaan (1995: 224) who state "traditional societies, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), emphasize observation, memory, calculation of such concepts as distance, and most important, use knowledge of the natural world to learn".

Five major issues emerged at USQ as influencing the retention of Indigenous nursing students within the Bachelor of Nursing program:

1. Students need financial, academic and program support to progress
2. Students need to know that there is a way back when they go off track, without being judged
3. Students need time management guidance
4. Students need to make a commitment to themselves and a mentor to stay motivated

5. Student need to know that someone cares whether they succeed or not.

To counteract these issues, Helping Hands contains a series of support tools for Indigenous nursing students. This paper focuses on one of these tools, the Helping Hands retention tool, and the five strategies that are used in conjunction with it. The Helping Hands retention tool has been tested and measured, and is highly effective in retaining Indigenous nursing students within the Bachelor of Nursing program until they graduate.

### **The Deadly Dilly Bag**

The Deadly Dilly Bag is a survival kit which addresses three key areas: (a) students need substantial financial support, (b) students need academic support in the form of an ITAS (Indigenous tutorial assistance scheme) tutor, (c) students need to know how to progress with their studies. The Deadly Dilly Bag addresses these issues through three related strategies. (a) Indigenous nursing academics assist students in applying for financial assistance until they are successful recipients of financial support in the form of a scholarship or cadetship. The Indigenous nursing academics source the scholarships and cadetships, help with the completion of applications, and advocate for the students' selection. (b) The Indigenous nursing academics ensure culturally appropriate ITAS tutor services are engaged to support students academically, and provide back-up support. (c) Progression direction is mapped out for each individual student to provide them with an academic progression timetable so they know how to progress with their studies. We believe that, if every Indigenous nursing student has this basic survival kit, they can remain and progress within the nursing program.

### **The Boomerang Tracker**

The Boomerang Tracker is a strategy designed to help Indigenous students who go off track and don't understand the implications of their absence in relation to their study responsibilities. There are a variety of reasons why students may go off track, and the reasons are too complex to be addressed within this paper. However, it can have a severe impact on their study progression, and needs to be addressed. The Boomerang Tracker consists of a student contact protocol, which is a repetitive process of contacting students without judging them. The protocol consists of e-mails, phone calls, text messages, post, enlisting the support of the Indigenous student support person at CAIK, and involving other Indigenous nursing students, ITAS tutors, mentors and relatives of the student. This protocol is repeated every 48 hours until contact is made. This strategy has proven to be the most effective method of communication to which Indigenous students respond. This intense approach is designed to make students aware of their responsibilities towards their study obligations.

### **The Academic Footprint Tracker**

The Academic Footprint Tracker is a strategy used by the Indigenous nursing academics to monitor a student's academic progress in order to pinpoint areas of concern for early intervention. The strategy is designed to address the issue that Indigenous students are often not aware of the importance of time management and time constraints in relation to assessment and compulsory attendance. Through the Academic Footprint Tracker, the Indigenous nursing academics initiate contact with students for student consultations to outline important assessment criteria and provide guidance as required. This involves formulating an individual assessment calendar and a compulsory attendance timetable factoring in ITAS tutor arrangements. In addition to this, mainstream nursing academics within the nursing department are notified of Indigenous students enrolled in their course so that their academic progress can be monitored. These nursing academics are then asked to advise the Indigenous nursing academics of any concerns with assessment pieces and compulsory attendance. During student consultation times, the Indigenous nursing academic assists the student's preparation for clinical placements and guides them in navigating the technical issues of the university environment. The intensity of the Footprint Tracker strategy is dependent upon the student's individual needs.

### **The Heartprint Handwritten Contract**

The Heartprint Handwritten Contract is a strategy to enlist a commitment from the Indigenous nursing student, in conjunction with their mentor, to complete their university Dreaming Journey. It is designed to address the issue that commitment to university study wanes when assignment deadlines, exams stress and life and other pressures build. Entering into this contract at the beginning of their university studies helps Indigenous students to cope with building pressures and remain focused on their studies. The Contract is the single most effective strategy within the retention tool of the Helping Hands model. It ensures that students keep their university studies as a number one priority, which enables them to fulfil future aspirations and dreams. One Indigenous nursing student stated:

The Indigenous coordinator in the nursing department encouraged all of us to sign a heart print contract with her saying that this is the journey that we've undertaken and we're going to stick with it and seek the help that we need. The contract is up in a little box in her room, it's sort of a constant reminder that we've got a commitment here and the commitment is bigger than just ourselves. We've got community out there, we've got family, and we've got social stereotypes. There are a whole lot of things that have impacted upon every Indigenous student's decision to study and gain their qualification, whether it's nursing or whatever, every student is making a huge statement in the bigger world saying, "I'm an Indigenous person, I can make it and I can cope along with anybody else".

Another student also appreciated the value of entering into a Heartprint Handwritten Contract, and said:

In the first year I thought about that contract that we'd written and I thought, to me that is like entering into a mortgage or buying a car because I'd actually written it on paper. By making that promise it was putting my family's reputation at risk by doing that. So if I didn't do that, I'm letting down my family, my tribe, my whole culture and that's not good enough.

This student has now proceeded to update their Heartprint Handwritten Contract to include matriculating into postgraduate studies at a Master's level (Stuart 2010).

### **The Cockatoo Alert**

The Cockatoo Alert is a strategy which instigates a fully unified call for support for the Indigenous nursing student. It is activated when an Indigenous student is at risk of falling through the cracks or has expressed an intention to withdraw due to a myriad of pressures affecting their study. The Cockatoo Alert is sounded!!! It involves support from the three Indigenous nursing academics, fellow nursing academics within the department, CAIK student support staff, the ITAS tutor, mentors, other Indigenous nursing students and family of the at risk student. This alert status does not stop until the at-risk student is stabilised and progressing once again. When students resume their studies following the Cockatoo Alert, they say they did so because they understood that others cared about whether they succeeded or not, and this made them feel that people believed in them and wanted to see them succeed. The outcomes of the Cockatoo Alert have been excellent. However, at times the student at risk has needed to take leave of absence for a period of time. In this case, a re-activation plan is initiated by the Indigenous nursing academics and the student is monitored during their absence until they are back on track and progressing once again toward graduation.

### **Conclusion**

The Helping Hands retention tool is an essential component of the USQ Nursing and Midwifery Department's work as national leaders in recruiting, training, educating and graduating Indigenous registered nurses. But for USQ, there is a lot of work still ahead in matriculating undergraduates into postgraduate studies and beyond. Omeri and Ahern (1999: 151) state that "very few Aboriginals ever reach a position where they can realistically consider education at a higher level". However, we have exceeded this expectation by now having the highest number of postgraduate Indigenous nursing enrolments nationally from undergraduate nursing to postgraduate studies. Indigenous nursing students are enrolled in undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Nursing Practice (Rural and Remote), Masters of Nursing, Masters of Mental Health, Masters of Midwifery and PhD.

The future predictions for enrolments over the next three years for Indigenous nurses at USQ are astronomical, and our ability to support and graduate these Indigenous students as registered nurses is evidenced by our 'deadly' blueprint of success. And so continues the USQ Dreaming Journey ...

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