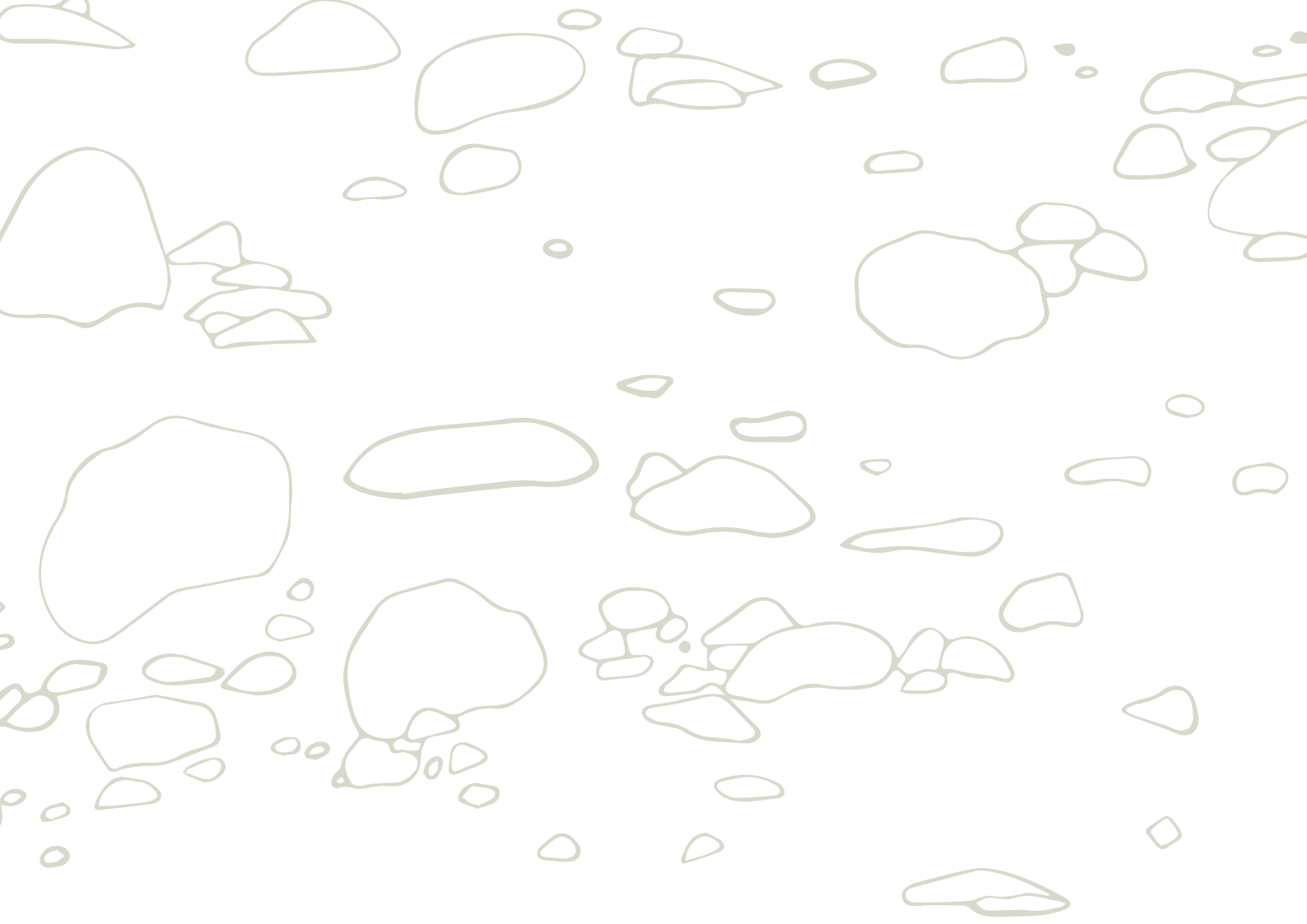




# University of Tasmania

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN  
2021-2024





We acknowledge our University campuses are located on the traditional lands of the *palawa/pakana* peoples of *Iutruwita* (Tasmania), as well as the Gadigal people as traditional owners of the land for our Sydney campuses. As traditional owners and custodians of land, we pay respect to the deep and continuous connection to land, seas, and waterways for Aboriginal peoples.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal peoples of these areas who have engaged in teaching, learning, and researching for at least 40,000 years, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present, and future leaders.

The term Aboriginal is used throughout this document, and respectfully includes both Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Message from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rufus Black**

*Two things shape our University in powerful ways – our place and our people*

Our mission to make a difference for lutruwita/Tasmania, and from Tasmania to the world, is a long-term one that requires a long-term plan. The contribution of Aboriginal people and their unique skills and perspectives in achieving our mission is paramount.

Tasmania's rich history and acknowledgment and respect for our First Peoples' means that Aboriginal staff both present and future play a key role in helping the University achieve its goal as a place-based university. We are a University for Tasmania and strategically placed to do vital things from Tasmania for the world.

We recognise the University's responsibility to develop and grow the career opportunities for our staff and the communities we serve. We embrace creating such opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our University.

Increasing the employment of Aboriginal staff at the University required a collective and collaborative effort across all functions and colleges and involving all staff. This plan will help us create and strengthen these critical activities, pipelines, and new employment pathways, coupled with a safe place to work.

We acknowledge achieving this still faces social, cultural, educational, and economic disadvantage by Aboriginal communities today. The University's Aboriginal Employment Plan reflects our commitment to shifting the under-representation of Aboriginal people employed in the higher education sector, which continues to remain at unacceptable low levels, and the Australian Government's national priority of 'Closing the Gap' on Aboriginal people's disadvantage.

Together with the University's Strategic Plan of Aboriginal Engagement, the Aboriginal Employment Plan focusses on increasing our staffing numbers and the actions needed to deliver those outcomes.

I hope the information in this document helps communicate and promote our commitment to Aboriginal employment at our University and I am very pleased to fully endorse the Plan and its objectives.

## **Message from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership, Professor Greg Lehman**

The University of Tasmania has an ambitious vision for engagement with Indigenous people over the coming years. Perhaps the most important facet of this is to shift the focus of responsibility for what we call 'Aboriginal Business.'

Since the establishment of Riawunna in 1992, this responsibility being mostly carried by the small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed by the University. Our vision is to shift the focus of responsibility to become core business for everyone. It is only through such a transformation in how we embrace the challenges of more successfully responding to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal Tasmania that we will be able to achieve sustained impacts across student support, teaching and learning and research. However, this does not mean that will rely less on having Indigenous staff. Quite the opposite. We will need many more. Not only on the front line engaging with the students, families and communities we are here to serve, but also working with colleagues across our Colleges and Divisions.

The greatest need for the University of Tasmania if we want to succeed in the Indigenisation of curricula, in graduating more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and in empowering Indigenous communities to drive research agendas and benefit from this activity, is to open ourselves up to Indigenous leadership. This will be the key to understanding and celebrating the diversity of Indigenous knowledges, values, and ways of working across all our higher education programs. Building this leadership will take a concerted effort. Recruitment through internships and other diverse entry points, investing in and retaining talent, maintaining culturally safe working and learning environments, and committed succession planning - these are some of the things that will all be required to proliferate Indigenous leadership across the University.

This Employment Plan provides the pathway to achieving these goals by growing the number of outstanding and passionate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. I invite all in the University of Tasmania Community to join with us in making this a pathway to success.

## Message from the Chief People Officer, Jill Bye

*We aim to increase the participation of Aboriginal staff at our University.*

Our goal is to extend the pace and progress of our cultural growth, so the whole community in Tasmania prospers. This requires us to continue to develop as an inclusive University committed to embedding measurable actions that strengthen participation and attainment in higher education and that build respectful relationships with Aboriginal people.

We aim to offer employment opportunities and set a bold population parity target of 3% employment participation by 2024. This can be achieved by attracting new Aboriginal staff to join our Institution by creating opportunities in different ways and promoting the retention and advancement of our current Aboriginal staff through career development opportunities and initiatives.

We aim to recognise and include prior learning and life experiences relating to the transfer of skills relevant to specific positions, and respect for Aboriginal knowledge systems and processes and recognition of the significant contribution of this knowledge to the University. This Plan is underpinned by equity of access for recruitment, retention, selection and promotion, in both mainstream and identified career pathways for Aboriginal people.

This Aboriginal Employment Plan outlines our commitment to deliver on our promises via actions. The University has an opportunity to be a nationally recognised leader in Aboriginal employment. This aspiration requires the collective support, resources, and ownership of delivery of actions across the University.

I look forward to supporting the implementation of this Plan together with the University.



## About the Artist

### CONNECTIONS

A series of photographs and digital artworks that reflect the connections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with Country, what those connections teach us and what those teachings afford us through different opportunities by self-taught digital and visual artist, Caleb Nichols-Mansell.

Caleb Nichols-Mansell is proud *pakana* man living and working in *pataway*/Burnie on the North West of our island state. Caleb is currently studying a Bachelor of Business and was the successful submission for student artwork to represent this Aboriginal Employment Plan.

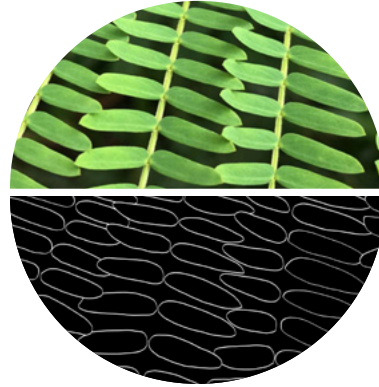
Caleb's passion lays within photography and digital art where he explores his relationship with Country and captures those intimate details within the landscape. The inspiration behind these works, like all of my creations are the intricate details in Country. Country creates opportunity, not only for the Aboriginal people, but for non-Aboriginal people as well. Country is what the University sits on, creating opportunities for all.

The four images and their variations represent my connection to Country and the relationship I have with both coastal and inland Country. The University has sites on both coastal and inland country and this institution creates opportunities for our People, just as Country does. These opportunities are both apparent and not-so-much, particularly for our mob who often have preconceived perceptions of institutions such as universities.



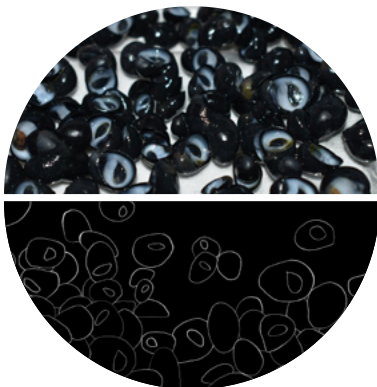
### **KUNANYI GUMS**

You can hear their voices, the voices of our Old People as the wind winds its way through the Gums on *kunanyi*/Mount Wellington. Stay for a moment, listen and learn. This Country is our classroom our Ancestors are our teachers.



### **SILVER WATTLE**

Bush Country... Silver wattle reminds me of summer and the flowers were a reminder for our Old People that *tara*/kangaroo were breeding and carrying young in their pouches. During this time our Old People did not kill *tara*.



### **BLACK CROWS**

You will find these on coastal Country. Plentiful, just like our Old People in mobs gathered around the state. These are my favourite shells and were used by our Old People as a source of food and decoration, strung and worn as necklaces by both the men and women.



### **MILAYTHINA LUNAWUNA (BRUNY ISLAND)**

In a far northern corner of the island, you'll find this beautiful bay, get here at the right time and these rocks will be exposed, hosting home to cultural foods and resources our Old People once used to sustain themselves.

## Introduction

This Aboriginal Employment Plan (Plan) has been written in consultation with past and current Aboriginal employees, senior and key stakeholders across the University of Tasmania, and aligns with national narratives for Aboriginal Employment strategic direction and for best practice, state based considerations.

We would like to thank and acknowledge the participation and input shared across a range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff across the University, which has greatly assisted in the creation of a Plan that is truly reflective of the needs of our staff, our organisation, and future Aboriginal employees.

This Plan is a component of the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement *milangkani rrala* 2021-2024, whilst closely aligning with the University's overarching commitments in the University's Strategic Plan 2019-2024, the People Strategy, and Staff Agreement, and aligns with the directives of the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) funding requirements to the University.

There has been previous commitment made which have either not being realised or achieved. As a result, the number of Aboriginal staff employed at the University has remained steady at an average 1.15% of the total University staff population over the last 4 years . Despite the challenges faced in increasing our Aboriginal staff employment numbers, the level of engagement and support across all levels of our University and broader community is significantly positive.

The future direction of the University will see a strong focus on the attraction, retention, and success of our Aboriginal workforce. To achieve this, a whole-of-university approach is required.





## What this Plan aims to achieve

We will work to:

1. Support our workplace environment and wellbeing
2. Increase the number of Aboriginal staff to 3% by 2024
3. Build a connected community to make this Plan successful
4. Resource provisions to ensure Plan is successful.

## Current staff profile

Aboriginal staff represent 1.27% of current continuing and fixed term staff of the total University workforce

(May 2021 – total headcount, excluding casuals and honorary appointments – Business Analytics).

Total number of Aboriginal employees (38) headcount

- 15 Academic and 23 Professional Aboriginal employees
- 61% female and 39% male Aboriginal employees

34% of Aboriginal employees are in mid-senior leadership roles (i.e. HEO7 and Academic C and above)

## Key Actions and Objectives



### *Support our Workplace Environment and Wellbeing*

Create a culturally safe and inclusive working environment for Aboriginal peoples, including demonstrating respect for diversity amongst Aboriginal peoples, respecting individual's cultural identity as they define it, and celebrating the cultural contributions that Aboriginal staff bring to our University.



### *Increase the number of Aboriginal Staff at the University to 3% by 2024*

A range of initiatives will assist in building our Aboriginal workforce, increasing employment opportunities, enabling career progression initiatives, and supporting our Aboriginal students to participate in employment at the University, including KPI's and targets for Colleges and Divisions.



### *Build a Connected Community to make the Plan successful*

Formulate a 'Shared Table' University working group with key stakeholders across the University to provide input and insight to make this Plan successful.



### *Resource Provision*

Deliver a range of resources to facilitate increasing Aboriginal employment numbers and provide wrap around support to make this Plan successful.

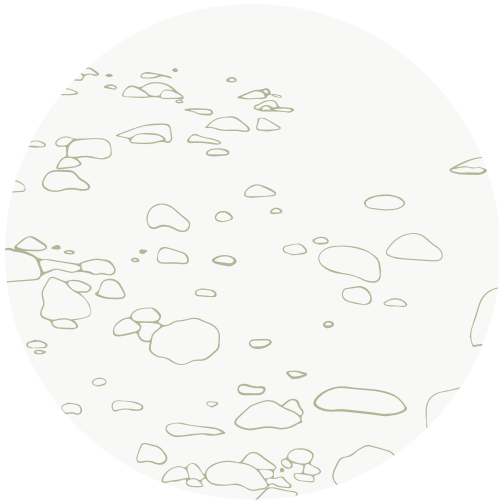


## Support our Workplace Environment and Wellbeing

Create a culturally safe and inclusive working environment for Aboriginal peoples, including demonstrating respect for diversity amongst Aboriginal peoples, respecting people's cultural identity as they define it, and celebrating the cultural contributions that Aboriginal staff bring to our University.

### Actions:

- Develop and embed support mechanisms and **reporting structures for Aboriginal staff to report cultural safety concerns**, and create an environment that celebrates Aboriginal diversity, people's cultural identity as they define it, with shared respect, meaning and knowledges.
- Engage with **cultural professional development opportunities**, to build and embed cohesive and safe Aboriginal staff relationships.
- Develop **cultural awareness and safety training** tools for all the University community to educate and develop sensitivity to cultural difference and cultural diversity including a specific provision for senior staff/manager training.
- Recognise the **unique contribution of knowledges and lived experiences** of Aboriginal peoples as important to the intellectual and social capital of the University.



## Increase the number of Aboriginal Staff at the University to 3% by 2024

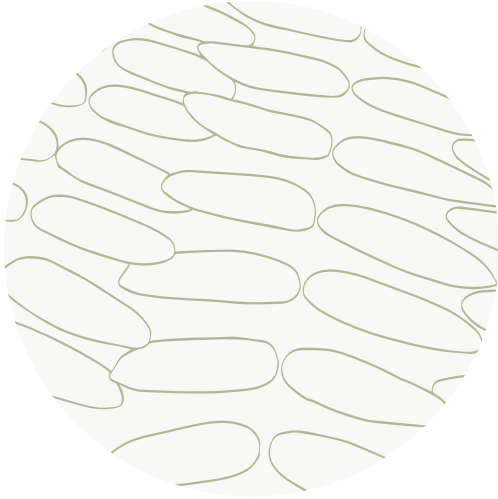
A range of initiatives will assist in building our Aboriginal workforce, increasing employment opportunities, enabling career progression initiatives, and supporting our Aboriginal students to participate in employment at the University, including KPI's and targets for Colleges and Divisions.

This target aligns with Universities Australia's commitment, and our current Staff Agreement. It is an ambitious target, as just over 1.27% of our current workforce are Aboriginal yet the Tasmanian population figure is 4.6%.

### Actions:

- Build **KPIs and targets for Aboriginal employment** for each College and Division.
- Focussed and flexible **attraction and selection initiatives** including building talent pools and identifying levers to reduce employment barriers. **Create targeted positions** to recruit adequately qualified and competitively appointed Aboriginal professional and academic staff.<sup>1</sup>
- Implement **internal talent support initiatives**, including developing career pathways, succession planning pathways, identifying internal talent and support their growth. Implement **personalised exit surveys** to better understand high staff turnover. Develop an **Aboriginal alumni** and promote success stories.
- Develop employment initiatives including **Aboriginal Student Employment Pathways** including graduate, intern, cadetship, research assistant programs, and more research fellow academic positions to support PhD students.

<sup>1</sup>These positions are in addition to Identified positions where the inherent function of the role includes working extensively with Aboriginal people and communities.



## **Build a Connected Community to make the Plan successful**

Formulate a 'Shared Table' University working group with key stakeholders across the University to provide input and insight to make this Plan successful.

### **Actions:**

- Establish a quarterly Aboriginal Employment Shared Table working group to:
  - Share expertise, ideas and advice on approaches and initiatives to improving Aboriginal employment participation at the University.
  - Monitor and oversee progress against the Plan.
- Work with University leaders to gain input for plan design and key stakeholder input into initiatives, including funding commitments.
- Build on the commitment provided by key and senior stakeholders across the University for the opportunity to 'work together'.
- Explore mentoring opportunities aligned with UTAS considerations
- Design an evaluation tool to assess success of the Plan.



## Resource Provision

Deliver a range of resources to facilitate increasing Aboriginal employment numbers and provide wrap around support to make this Plan successful.

### Actions:

- People & Wellbeing to provide staffing resources to support specialised recruitment and management of employment initiatives to support talent pools and student employment pathway programs.
- Build information and resources on program initiatives to share with Colleges and Divisions and support building capacity to implement employment opportunities.
- Funding provisions to commit to KPI target measures within Colleges and Divisions.

## **Accountability and Reporting**

The Vice-Chancellor is the Sponsor of the Plan on behalf of the University's Executive Team.

The Chief People Officer has overall responsibility for implementing the University's Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Executive Deans and Divisional Heads are accountable for supporting the initiatives, championing, and implementing actions within their College or Division.

To ensure achievement of our 3% employment target, progress against this Plan will be monitored and evaluated regularly and will include consultation with Aboriginal staff and key stakeholders within the University's community.

The People and Wellbeing team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and reporting on progress annually in the implementation of the Plan to the University's Executive Team; and
- Developing an Operational Action Plan with timeline with appropriate KPIs in consultation with the Executive Deans and Divisional Heads.





## **Contact**

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