



**INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT
STRATEGY**

2009 - 2012

Griffith University Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy

2009 – 2012

Throughout its history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have significantly contributed to the life of Griffith University through academia, student participation, community involvement and staff performance. As we look towards implementing future goals and a vision for the University, it is imperative that we forge stronger links with local Indigenous communities and build upon the knowledge and expertise of Indigenous Australian staff already present within the Griffith community.

The Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy, as a key component of the University's Equity and Diversity Plan, outlines Griffith's commitment to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the provision of pathways to employment, professional development and retention strategies. Griffith, like other tertiary institutions, is in the distinct position to be able to empower and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the provision of high quality education and career options. This position provides a challenge and opportunity to which we reaffirm our commitment.

I look forward to working with the University community towards realising the aspirations and goals of the Griffith University Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Ian O'Connor
Vice Chancellor

Griffith University Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy 2009 – 2012

Griffith University continues to strive to achieve a real increase in the number of Indigenous Australians employed in both the academic and general streams of employment. Whilst the University has engaged in a number of initiatives over the past years to achieve this, we recognise that the continual engagement and commitment from all schools, faculties and offices across the university is needed in order to see long term success. This engagement and commitment is essential not only to increase the number of Indigenous Australian employees but will ensure that the workplace culture and environment into which people are recruited is one which embraces the strengths, experiences and background of all its employees. Our efforts in the area of recruitment will be redundant without concurrent focus on the retention, development and well-being of Indigenous Australian employees.

2009 -2012 Future Directions - The Challenge

Experience from our colleagues at other universities shows that the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Academic Centre within the University, coupled with the task of Indigenising the curriculum, will require a significant amount of work and dedication from both Indigenous and non Indigenous staff. As the University consolidates the role of student support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Griffith, ongoing work needs to be done to ensure that the engagement of Academic and general employees is undertaken across all areas to complement the progress made to date.

In recognition of the commitment required to implement this strategy faculties are asked to identify key staff members to promote and provide leadership on the Strategy's implementation. This commitment is invaluable in ensuring that the aspiration goals of the Strategy become a reality.

Targets

The University will continue to aim for 2.4% employment of Indigenous Australians into continuing positions against the whole staff population. Using current data (2008), this translates into an increase of 13 full time equivalent academic staff members and 6 general staff. Currently Indigenous Australian employment status in real numbers sees 13 fulltime equivalent academic staff members and 34 fulltime equivalent general staff members employed across the University. The targets in the Strategy are based on

current employment figures at the University of approximately 1017 academic staff and 1678 general staff members; an increase in these numbers will, in turn, increase the number of positions we are required to fill to achieve the 2.4% target. Elements are expected to set their own related targets, establish relevant strategies, monitor implementation, and report on progress made towards achieving them.

The Business Case

Age and Population

In contrast to the general Australian population, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a younger age profile that is likely to see their share of the total potential labour force grow, into the future. This inverse profile sees the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the age brackets of 15-19 years and 20-25 years account for 19% of the total Indigenous population in comparison to 8% of the general population. At the other end of the career cycle, statistics show that 18% of the general population is aged between 50 and 64 years of age compared with just 9% of Indigenous Australians.

Additionally, the Indigenous population grew by around 11% between 1996 and 2001, compared to the non-Indigenous population that grew by 6% over the same period. Forecasts from the ABS see the Indigenous population grow by between 15% and 31% between 2001 and 2009; in contrast to the total Australian population which is envisaged to grow by just over 8% between 2003 and 2011.

In general, labour market participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Australians are lower than for the rest of the population (52% compared to 64% for the general population in 2001). In a labour market where employers are competing to attract and retain employees Griffith University needs to engage with untapped sources of potential employees. The labour market environment may change in the coming years but population and skills level will still impact on the University's ability to attract and retain employees. In addition to the case for equitable employment, the fact is that there is a pool of potential applicants to which the University needs to promote itself as an employer of choice. Schools and Departments can take steps which actively seek to employ Indigenous employees in both the general and academic streams.

The Right Skills Mix

The social indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples show disparities across all the key indicators, which impacts upon the population demographics. This is equally evident when examining employment and education outcomes. Irregular employment and higher unemployment rates mean that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may have limited or less work experience than their fellow Australians. According to ABS Census data in 2006, 15.5% of Indigenous Australians were unemployed, compared to 5.2% of other Australians. In general, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are over-represented in jobs which do not require skills specialisation, with nearly a quarter employed as labourers or in unskilled occupations (compared to less than 10% of other Australians). Supported training programmes and on the job skills development are options available at Griffith that can be utilised to address this over representation.

Education

When considering the employment of academics the potential pool of applicants is sizably smaller with only 8% of Indigenous Australians (aged fifteen and over) having a bachelors degree (25% in the general population) and 1.2% having postgraduate qualifications (5.5% in the general population). In real numbers, this equates to 8161 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples indicating they possess a bachelor's degree and 1197 a postgraduate qualification.

This has a number of implications for Griffith in both the academic and general staff areas. As the pool of applicants to draw from is significantly smaller than the general population the University must ensure that its internal culture, recruitment practices and workforce planning are proactive. This takes active engagement on the part of managers. Griffith University provides culturally competent student support and liaison through the GUMURRII student support unit, which can be supported by Faculties and schools by ensuring that the Indigenous profile of their staff reflects the compositions and needs of the students enrolled with them.

Underpinning Principles

This Employment Strategy forms part of the wider strategic initiatives supporting diversity and equity principles at Griffith University. Underpinning all diversity and equity initiatives in the University is a commitment to principles of social justice.

Social justice is what faces you in the morning. It is awakening in a house with adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to school where their education not only equips them for employment but reinforces their knowledge and understanding of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choices and opportunity, free from discrimination.

Mick Dodson
Annual Report of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 1993.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Australians hold a unique position in the history of Australia as nations of people who have been subjected to policies, practices and beliefs which, by intention or result, caused irrevocable disruption and schism which still has resonance today. This was recognised by the Prime Minister, in his Apology to the Stolen Generations on the House of Representatives on the 13th February 2008.

"...let us remember the fact that the forced removal of Aboriginal children was happening as late as the early 1970s. The 1970s is not exactly a point in remote antiquity.... It is well within the adult memory span of many of us. The uncomfortable truth for us all is that the parliaments of the nation, individually and collectively, enacted statutes and delegated authority under those statutes that made the forced removal of children on racial grounds fully lawful."

This Employment Strategy goes some way towards redressing the past practices that have contributed to the unequal status of Indigenous Australians when compared alongside their fellow Australians. In the area of employment, Indigenous Australians from urban to remote communities endure a complex web of social issues, which influence their ability and readiness to enter the workforce and subsequently maintain their employment. The principles of social justice are evoked as a call for all employees of Griffith as members of the Australian community to strive for parity in these key areas. Our success in implementing this strategy will contribute to the social capital and future empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Australians. As a university committed to social justice principles, this is one of the highest benchmarks we can set and strive to achieve.

Goal 1: Recruitment

To recruit Indigenous Australians such that the employment target achieved is representative of the Indigenous Australians in Griffith's catchment area. This target is to be achieved by 2012, and will be reflected across all general and academic staffing levels.

Performance Indicators

- *Increase in percentage and real numbers of Indigenous Australians recruited to all levels.*
- *All schools and faculties actively involved in workplace planning and recruitment activities for Indigenous Australian staff*

Strategy	Responsibility
<p>Actively engage with Schools and Departments to use various pathways to employ new staff at Griffith University :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadetships through (NICP) • Traineeships/ New Apprenticeships • Student Work Placements • Graduates • Recruitment into vacancies (option to use specified/identified position) 	<p>Element Managers Group HR Managers Head of School Dean Academic/Faculty</p>
<p>Early Career Indigenous Australian Academic Positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 positions per year from 2009 -2011 (9 in total) 	<p>Group PVC Head of School/Department</p>
<p>Liaise with external agencies and internal bodies to promote Griffith University as an employer of choice amongst Indigenous Australian</p>	<p>Employment Coordinator External Relations</p>
<p>Develop targeted branding for recruitment</p>	<p>HRM</p>

Goal 2: Retention

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

Performance Indicators

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

Strategy	Responsibility
Provide support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Academics Research network.	Employment Coordinator Senior DVC Academic and DVC Research
Ensure that Indigenous staff are encouraged & supported in participating in postgraduate courses & in relevant training/development activities.	Relevant supervisors
Develop induction & orientation tools for Indigenous staff that assist in “translating” the Griffith culture.	HRM
Encourage network meetings of Indigenous staff with the support of line and University management	Indigenous Employment Coordinator
Enhance cultural competency in managers and staff	HRM, Senior staff

Goal 3: Community Relations

To encourage the promotion of Griffith University as a place to work and study. This will be achieved by demonstrating Griffith’s commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and through the enhancement of community perception and awareness of Griffith as a place in which educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous people and their communities are possible”.

Performance Indicators

- *Community perceptions of Griffith are generally positive.*
- *Reconciliation statement is actioned across the University*

Strategy	Responsibility
Liaise with external agencies to promote Griffith University as an employer committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.	Indigenous Employment Coordinator Professor of Indigenous Community Engagement – Partnerships and Policy Head, GUMURRII Student Support Unit
Develop and distribute policy guidelines on research in Indigenous issues.	University Ethics Committee
Build upon relationships with community Elders to encourage involvement in and support for Griffith initiatives.	ATSIAC Head GUMURRII SSU Professor of Indigenous Community Engagement – Partnerships and Policy

Implementation Monitoring Group

The Employment Strategy will be overseen by a monitoring group, which will report to the Senior DVC Academic.

The group will meet three times a year to assess progress against the stated targets and provide feedback and strategic direction for the Indigenous Employment Coordinator and the University on strategic and significant issues. The implementation monitoring group will consist of:

- Indigenous Employment Coordinator
- Two Indigenous staff members (General)
- Two Indigenous staff members (Academic)
- Senior staff member (General)
- Senior staff member (Academic)
- Principal Adviser Equity, Diversity and Policy Implementation