

# Indigenous Centre Operational Plan 2017-2019

The Indigenous Centre has a University-wide remit to deliver key elements of the University's Statement of Strategic Intent to embrace diversity and bring about enduring benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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## Our Mission

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James Cook University's scholarly activities are inspired by its locations in the tropics. The University brings perspectives and understanding to our local communities that are informed by our interactions globally, while our window on the global tropics is framed by our experiences locally.

### **People and Place**

We want James Cook University to be an employer of choice for staff and a university of choice for students. We are committed to building an environment that makes excellence possible, values equity and diversity, and fosters community spirit and personal wellbeing. James Cook University will build on its reputation for being socially responsive and, in particular, meeting the needs of people in rural, remote, Indigenous and tropical Australia.

### **Development, More Sustainably**

Sustainable development finds expression in how we deal with global challenges such as climate change, diminishing biodiversity, food security, human rights, poverty alleviation, multiculturalism and global security. We believe that social, environmental and economic sustainability must be embedded in our daily practices and integrated in everything we do. Sustainable development comes from respect for our natural and social contexts, and from the knowledge that we will be judged by future generations according to our success in realising our sustainability goals.

### **Connecting, Locally and Globally**

As a regionally-based university, we recognise our obligation to engage with industry and government and to share our research findings. We form partnerships with other research organisations to get the most out of our research effort. James Cook University recognises its "power of place" and works within its own communities, promoting socially inclusive and sustainable regions.

## Our Goal

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A key goal for the University is to create a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference. This will be achieved through our focussed efforts in the following areas:

**Learning and Teaching:** To deliver high quality learning environments and programs that are inclusive, relevant and engaging, position students at the heart of the university experience and lead to excellent outcomes for graduates

**Research:** To undertake and deliver research and research education that is at the forefront of scholarly activity nationally and internationally. Our research will be visionary, generating discoveries that make a difference by advancing disciplinary knowledge, and benefiting the wider community, government and industry.

**Engagement:** The University through its staff, students, graduates, research outcomes and partnerships will engage with communities, industry and the professions in the tropics worldwide, and be recognised and acknowledged as a leading international university for and of the tropics.

To assist the University's goal, and to become a destination of choice for future students and staff, the operational plan of the Indigenous Centre will aim to:

1. recruit and increase the number of Indigenous people in the tropics with degree qualifications, and from across all programs and disciplines offered at the University;
2. help prepare non-Indigenous graduates of the University for professional work with Indigenous communities in the tropics;
3. engage in and support innovative research work that benefits Indigenous communities; and
4. build on existing strategies to increase and sustain the number of Indigenous people employed by the University in professional and academic roles.

## Our Enabling Framework

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To achieve these aspects of the University's Goals, the Centre will:

- create an inspiring and supportive environment on campus that celebrates the heritage, diversity and achievements of Indigenous people;
- assist Indigenous students to confidently participate in the academic and cultural life of the University;
- deliver a smarter learning support agenda that progresses Indigenous students through to completion of degree programs;
- adopt a progressive curriculum agenda that prepares all students to navigate the complexities of contemporary Indigenous situations in the tropics;
- design educational experiences that deliver an outstanding experience for all students, with exposure to research, and an engaging campus life; and
- engage in high quality research, intellectual scholarship, and research training in ways that enhance the traditional knowledge of Indigenous people and sustainable living practices for the tropics;

# Our Plan

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In line with the [Statement of Strategic Intent](#), the [University Plan 2013-2017](#), the [JCU Offer Strategy](#), the [JCU Learning & Teaching Blueprint](#), the [JCU Model](#), the emerging [Integrated Academic Plan](#), the [Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2015-2020](#), the [Indigenous Research working Group 2014 Report](#), the [Reconciliation Statement & the Reconciliation Action Plan](#) the Centre will prioritise its work in the following four areas.

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## 1. Student Progression & Completion

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### **Key Objective**

Provide high quality, tailored learning support services to enhance Indigenous students' capacity to complete their studies successfully.

### **Key Activities**

The Centre will work strategically with the Colleges to:

Refresh the marketing and recruitment strategy to maintain a cohort of 800 Indigenous enrolments each year, or 5% of domestic student population at the University.

Build upon existing outreach programs to engage Indigenous school students from Year 7 in STEM agendas appropriate to disciplines and degrees offered at the University.

Reinvigorate pathway programs for Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12, and develop Special Entry pathways with the Colleges for mature-age enrolments.

Improve the number of scholarships for full-time students.

Redesign the pastoral and learning support services for students to better address the capacity issues of Indigenous students and enable them to become independent learners.

Introduce Individual Learning Plans and specialised learning support services to achieve higher course completion rates.

Build capacity of student support staff in regular workshops to deliver the learning support services.

Design an early intervention strategy across campus to enhance academic persistence.

Recruit data analytics to monitor and track students from their early outreach activities to completion of degrees.

Re-establish the vital role of tutoring services for students.

Host conferences on innovative learning support services and strategies for Indigenous students, publish leading scholarship papers in academic learning support areas in national and international journals and anthologies

### **Key Outcome Areas**

- a. Achieve retention rates of Indigenous students at levels equal to the sector average for all students.
- b. Achieve completion rates of Indigenous students at levels equal to the sector average for Indigenous students.
- c. Achieve participation rates of Indigenous students in STEMM disciplines at levels higher than the sector average for Indigenous students.
- d. Achieve financial support for at least 80% of full-time students.

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## 2. Learning & Teaching

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### **Key Objective**

Design high quality curriculum engagements and teaching strategies that prepare future graduates to work effectively with Indigenous communities in the tropics.

### **Key Activities**

The Centre will:

Design and develop a Minor and Major sequence in an Australian Indigenous Studies program for the Tropics so that it can be accessed by students from all disciplines in the Colleges.

Design and develop an Honours/Master x Research program at the Centre for postgraduate students with Indigenous topics as a pathway for PhD studies.

Design and develop Signature Subjects, in collaboration with the Colleges of the Academic Divisions and Indigenous communities, to demonstrate how the utilisation of Indigenous community issues in the tropics can enhance degree qualifications.

Design and develop a Comparative Indigenous Studies course focused on the international colonial experience.

Build capacity of Centre staff through regular workshops to deliver new learning & teaching programs.

Host conferences on the teaching of Australian Indigenous Studies in the tropics and international conferences on the Scholarship in Comparative Indigenous Studies.

Publish leading scholarship papers in the teaching of Indigenous Studies in national and international journals and anthologies.

## Key Outcomes

- a. Achieve 600 Indigenous and non-Indigenous enrolments in the Centre's Australian Indigenous Studies program each year.
- b. Achieve a fully articulated degree pathway at the Centre for students from undergraduate through to PhD levels.
- c. Achieve 5 Signature Subjects in the Colleges that enhance the preparation of graduates to work in Indigenous communities.

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## 3. Research

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### Key Objective

Undertake and support high quality, leading-edge research agendas at the Centre and in the Colleges of the academic divisions to directly benefit the Indigenous communities of the tropics.

### Key Activities

The Centre will:

Submit bids through nationally competitive funding schemes for projects that benefit the Indigenous communities in the tropics.

Collaborate and support researchers in the Colleges to achieve nationally competitive funds for projects that benefit Indigenous communities.

Compete for international grants in areas that enhance research engagements with Indigenous communities.

Obtain funds to support a cohort of 10 Indigenous PhD candidates and 4 Post-Doc Fellows.

Run grant-writing sessions for early career and Post-Doctoral Fellows with topics that involve Indigenous communities.

Offer Master classes to support all researchers with Indigenous topics.

Provide ongoing support for supervisors of students with Indigenous topics.

Arrange HDR student workspaces and scholarly environments at the Centre to grow our own capacity and sustain research careers at the University.

Host research conferences/symposia/events for national and international researchers working in the tropics.

Publish leading scholarship papers on funded research projects in national and international journals, anthologies & books.

### Key Outcomes

- Achieve \$1M of grants received by the Centre each year from 2017.
- Achieve \$2M of grants received by the Colleges each year from 2018.
- Achieve funding for 10 PhD stipends and 4 Post-Doc Fellows from 2018.
- Achieve higher rate of publication in top tier journals.

## 4. Connected to Community

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### Key Objective

Engage Indigenous communities and their organisations on projects that can enhance self-determination agendas to improve their communities.

### Key Activities

The Centre will work strategically with the Colleges to:

Establish working relations with Indigenous communities, their leaders and their development plans to enable access to the scientific expertise at the University.

Collaborate with Indigenous communities and their leaders to enhance the University's curriculum areas and research projects.

Engage industry leaders to collaborate on projects that benefit Indigenous communities in the tropics.

Cooperate with government agencies to assist the national campaign to 'close the gap' in education, health and employment areas.

Organise an annual two-day celebratory event with a Gala evening on campus to recognise the achievements of students and staff who collaborate with Indigenous communities and industry partners.

Establish a monthly bulletin for the Indigenous communities to keep them informed of the collaborative engagements, achievements and activities between communities, industry and JCU.

Publish website information on strategic community engagements to encourage further engagements with Indigenous communities in the tropics.

### Key Outcomes

- a. Achieve 5 Signature projects between Indigenous communities, industry and the University that can markedly improve opportunities for Indigenous people.
- b. Achieve 5 Signature Subjects in the Colleges that enhance the preparation of graduates to work in Indigenous communities.
- c. Achieve an annual 2-day event on campus to celebrate the University effort across campus to advance the interests of the Indigenous people of the tropics.

# 5. Indigenous Employment Priorities

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## Key Objective

Assist the progress of the University's commitment to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2015-2020.

## Key Activities

The Centre will work strategically with HR to:

Create and recruit an Indigenous employment position at Level 9 in 2016 to develop, implement and support commitments across the university to the Workforce Strategy.

Develop a Graduate program to support Indigenous students throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate studies and into full-time employment.

Establish a traineeship, internship, cadetship program in professional and academic areas with industry partners and the University.

Obtain resources to support a minimum cohort of 10 PhD candidates and 4 Post-Doctoral Fellows each year.

Establish a Professional Development budget for Indigenous staff and career progression.

Engage all Division leaders to provide opportunities for Indigenous staff rotation through their areas of responsibilities to broaden their skills and knowledge of the University.

Establish annual Spirit awards for staff members across the University who have demonstrated innovative processes on campus or with industry partners to benefit Indigenous students or their communities.

Create an Employment page on the Centre's website to feature professional and academic staff and online distribution arrangements with Indigenous networks for posting jobs of interest to students and staff on and off campus.

Participate in the Reference Group, and be accountable to the Goals of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2015-2020.

Publish annual achievements in Centre reports and make available on the Centre's website for viewing by the Indigenous communities.

## Key Outcomes

a. A concerted University-wide Graduate Program, for growing our own Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students, that leads to employment and career progression.

b. Achieve funding to sustain an annual cohort of 10 PhD candidates and 4 Post-Doc Fellows from 2018.

c. Achieve 10 internship, cadetships and traineeships funded by the University and Industry partners for Indigenous students from 2016.

## 6. Capabilities, people & organisational culture

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### Key Objective

To be the leading learning support provider for Indigenous higher education studies in Australia and the Employer of choice for Indigenous people.

### Key Activities

Support each section of the Centre with administration systems that enable them to be more student/client focused.

Provide a supportive work environment that combines integrity and professional values with health and well-being programs in our work culture.

Structure operations and procedures for each section of the Centre to enhance the performance review and improve cycles.

Invest in the capacity of all staff to enhance the services provided at the Centre.

Work collaboratively with all entities across the University.

Develop high valued relationships with the Indigenous communities of the tropics.

Expand linkages and partnerships with industries, community organisations, governments, and the professions.

Collate information and data for annual reports.

Benchmark achievements against the Indigenous Centres in Queensland, in Australia's regional universities, and in the Innovative Research Universities (IRU).

Publish annual achievements on the Centre website for public viewing.

Commission and manage external reviews of the Centre's performance at required intervals.

### Key Outcomes

- a. Annual achievements are in line with University's Statement of Strategic Intent.
- b. The Centre operates efficiently within the budget envelope to achieve the planned outcomes for each section.
- c. All Centre activities are in compliance with University's systems and procedures.

# 7. PVC Indigenous Education & Engagement

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## Key Objective

Work strategically with DVCs to achieve genuine and sustainable reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the wider community.

## Key Activities

The PVC will work closely with DVCs to:

Create a university environment where Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and members of the wider campus community, work, study and live together with mutual respect and understanding.

Foster an environment where all students and staff feel safe and valued, regardless of their background.

Recognise and value cultural diversity as an asset which enriches the life of the university community.

Incorporate Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and cultures within the physical structures and spaces of the University.

Address racism and prejudice by highlighting university policies, providing an accessible complaints process, and by educating all students and staff about issues of racism, equity and equal opportunity.

Integrate Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, perspectives and experience across the curriculum through consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

## Key Outcomes

- a. Achieve a cohort of 800 Indigenous student enrolments each year.
- b. Achieve Indigenous retention and completion rates at levels equivalent to all students.
- c. Achieve Indigenous enrolments in STEMM areas that are higher than the sector average for Indigenous students.
- d. Achieve a cohort of 10 Indigenous cadetships, 5 Indigenous internships & 3 Indigenous traineeships on campus.
- e. Achieve a cohort of 10 Indigenous PhD enrolments each year and 4 Post-Doctoral Fellows from 2018.
- f. Achieve \$2M of research grants each year that can benefit Indigenous people.
- g. Achieve 5 Signature curriculum projects that can best demonstrate how to include Indigenous priorities in degree programs.
- h. Achieve 5 Signature research projects that can best demonstrate engagements that lead to improvements in Indigenous communities.
- i. Achieve an annual event that can mark the achievements of students, staff, colleges, industry, and Indigenous communities in advancing Indigenous priorities at JCU.