

Indigenous Student Success Program

2022 Performance Report

Organisation	James Cook University		
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1. Enrolments (Access)

What embedded ISSP strategies, activities and programs has the university implemented to support and improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2022? [if these strategies have been reported in previous years, please just note in summary]

IERC has a number of different strategies to improve access to university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2022 IERC continued with the Winter School program for students in years 10-12 and the Summer School program for year 12 students wanting to attend university in the coming year. These are capacity building programs that also familiarise students with the prerequisites needed for courses and the different pathways available for university study. The programs provides the opportunity for students to form connections with IERC staff and other students intending to study at JCU.

Another strategy to increase enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is the implementation of conversion calls to every Indigenous applicant to JCU, these calls allow IERC staff to explain course entry requirements, provide information on alternative entry, scholarships and support services while building rapport with prospective students.

Activities IERC held in collaboration with other organisations were:

- Hosting the QATSIF graduations on both Townsville and Cairns campuses. Students, teachers and school CECs attended these events. Students were provided with handouts on the IERC, support services and the Summer School program. The ongoing connection with QATSIF improves the awareness of university study options with students across the region.
- Contributing to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aspirations Program (ATSIAP). ATSIAP is an academic challenge for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students in Queensland state schools. The program builds upon students' creativity and critical thinking skills by providing opportunities to investigate solutions for real-world challenges. ATSIAP aims to raise students' expectations of themselves as learners and enhance post-school aspirations to include tertiary pathways.

- IERC staff participated in university open days held in 2022. The open days provide the opportunity for prospective students to discuss courses, pathways and support services with Academic and Professional staff.
- In 2021 IERC continued to foster our connections to local high schools and support organisations including Stars Foundation, QATSIF, Clontarf, Cowboys House, Connect n Grow, to promote our outreach programs.

Information on the JCU web and through brochures mailed out to schools and community organisations provides information on our outreach programs, scholarships, entry requirements, the application process, pathway courses and support services. Contact details for IERC student support are provided through these avenues.

ERC monthly Newsletter is sent to current students, Winter & Summer school participants, government and community organisation and schools. The Newsletter highlights student achievements and upcoming events with the aim of raising the JCU profile, providing links to contact IERC and normalising university study within our communities.

The variety of avenues provided for students to access information on the services and pathways for Indigenous students is intended to maximise the number of prospective students reached.

What new strategies, activities and programs has the university implemented to support and improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2022?

In 2022 IERC implemented a program targeting non-school leavers/mature students. The week long face-to-face program was held in both Townsville and Cairns and focused on capacity building in the areas of Maths, Chemistry and Academic Literacy. The program attracted small numbers but had a high conversion rate into university enrolments.

In 2022 IERC was involved for the first time with Indigenous Leaders Program run through the Far North Queensland Department of Education. The program gives Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students an opportunity to explore & build on their existing Cultural Identity, leadership qualities & provide them with a greater connection to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultures. They gain self-confidence and self-esteem in order to successfully participate and engage in school, community, further study, work force; and graduate as confident, healthy, resilient Australians. The Indigenous Leaders Program brought 2 groups of 60 Year 12 students to the JCU Nguma-bada campus to tour the facilities and learn about university options

How does the university utilise scholarships, bridging and enabling support and outreach services to improve access? What impact did this support have in 2022?

JCU offers four bridging courses for students who do not meet entry requirements into Bachelor degrees. The below programs are funded by JCU, with additional support for Indigenous students in these programs provided by IERC staff.

- JCU Prep is a pathway course for students who don't have an ATAR score or recognised experience and wish to gain entry into the Diploma of Higher Education. This online short course prepares students for university through four weeks of intensive online study and experiential learning activities.
- The Tertiary Access Course (TAC), is a pathway course for mature-age students and school leavers who do not have an ATAR Score or recognised experience. The course comprises 4 subjects studied fulltime over one semester or part-time over 2 semesters. There are no subject fees with TAC.
- Certificate of Higher Education (CHE) this course is designed for students who meet the entry score (ATAR) for their preferred bachelor degree but are missing one or two pre-requisite subjects. Student are able to study those pre-requisite subjects in short intensive block modes.
- Diploma of Higher Education (DHE) is designed to help students build skills of academic enquiry. Graduates who successfully complete JCU's Diploma of Higher Education meet the entry requirements necessary to enter into many JCU Bachelor degrees and may be eligible for advanced standing for some of the subjects completed as part of the diploma.

In 2022 IERC supported 24 students in the TAC program, 3 students in CHE, and 96 in the DHE.

IERC utilises ISSP funded scholarships to support access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students. All commencing students receive a welcome pack that includes stationary supplies and information on the services provided by both IERC and JCU more broadly. Commencing students' enrolled fulltime received a scholarship of \$1000. To encourage full time enrolment and reward academic achievement, all continuing full time students with a GPA of four or above are eligible for an annual scholarship of \$1300.

IERC also offers 2 additional scholarships of \$5000 for up to 4 students the; Indigenous Education Costs Scholarship and the Indigenous STEM Scholarship

IERC continues Outreach programs at schools in our region, attending career days and other events and hosting school visits on both the Bebegu-Yumba campus (Townsville) and the Nguma-bada campus (Cairns) to raise awareness of IERC amongst students, teachers and community.

What other broad strategies does the university implement to increase access and enrolments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that does not rely on ISSP funding? (only one or two paragraphs are required)

Access to university is often hindered by financial concerns, JCU attempts to alleviate some of this with scholarships. JCU has 21 scholarship programs specifically for Indigenous students with 71 other scholarships open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. IERC Student Support staff assist Indigenous students to identify and apply for scholarships offered by JCU and external bodies. IERC also liaises with external support providers to identify internship and cadetships available to students. Scholarships, internships and cadetships are promoted through IERC's monthly newsletter.

Opportunity for casual work as an Indigenous Student Ambassador also provides some financial assistance to students. Whenever engaging students in this way IERC are mindful not to interfere with a student’s study commitments.

Academic achievement and course progression is encouraged through the annual Indigenous Academic Achievement Awards; this event was held in September 2022. This is a significant event in the calendar attended by IERC staff, JCU Executive and College staff, Students, Traditional Owners and community members. The awards recognise one male and one female student with the top academic results in thirteen different disciplines with an Achievement Certificate and \$1000. In addition to the academic awards, two students who have demonstrated perseverance, persistence and commitment to their studies are presented with the Spirit Award.

The culturally safe and welcoming environment at both campus centres gives students a sense of belonging and connection to the university which encourages them to continue with their studies. Staff are on hand to discuss any issues students may be experiencing and the kitchen facilities and supplies are available to students 24 hours a day.

Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2022 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ²	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ³					10000	10	10000	10
Undergraduate ⁴	45000	9			238300	190	283300	199
Post-graduate ⁵								
Other								
Total	45000	9			248300	200	293300	209

2. Progression (outcomes)

IERC has a number of strategies to support students to progress through their degrees.

IERC student support staff create an Individual Learning Support Plan (ILSP) for every student at the beginning of each semester. The ILSP is an outline of how the IERC will support students in their studies and includes information on their academic and pastoral needs.

IERC undertakes individual case management of all Indigenous students at JCU, this entails contacting each student at least every 3 weeks to gain information on the current personal circumstances in order to adjust our support services to address their needs.

Using the WillowSoft platform information is recorded on a students’ current circumstances including areas such as financial situation, course engagement, accommodation, health etc. This enables staff to individualise the support a student is receiving.

Progression is supported through the provision of free one-on-one tutoring to all students. IERC also holds group workshops in subjects that have been identified as having high failure rates.

IERC student Support Staff have built connections with academic staff throughout the JCU Colleges to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of the demands of different courses including

important dates for assessment items and examinations. Where necessary staff are able to liaise with the subject coordinators on behalf of students should external pressures be impacting a student's ability to attend classes and/or submit assignments.

Through review of JCU Analytics IERC staff can monitor a student's engagement with the course and their access to Learn JCU. IERC staff are then able to contact students who are falling behind before fail grades are recorded.

The Success of our strategies is monitored through JCU's data analytics (COGNOS) and IERC's case management platform (WillowSoft) both data bases provide information on enrolment, progression and completion.

JCU provides the opportunity for all students and staff to improve their cultural competency by providing free access to the Cultural Competence training developed by Centre for Cultural Competence Australia.

JCU also provides information to students and staff on cultural protocols to ensure respectful interactions with Indigenous students, staff and communities. This can be found at: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/staff/cultural-protocols-guide>

IERC teaching staff assist Course and Subject coordinators across the university to include Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the courses offered at JCU. IERC offers all students the opportunity to undertake an Indigenous studies subject, course minor or major and Post graduate offerings. Details of the subjects offered can be found at <https://www.jcu.edu.au/ierc/indigenous-studies>

Strategies not funded through ISSP include

- Regular student lunches and the provision of healthy snacks, tea coffee etc. in both Centres helps to develop a sense of inclusion and build connections with staff and fellow students.
- Our Centres are open to Indigenous students 24 hours a day through swipe card access, this allows students to study or relax in a welcoming and culturally safe environment and helps to build a connection with the university.
- Annual Student Awards Night provides an opportunity for students, staff and community members to come together and recognise the achievements of students. Speeches from past students and senior Indigenous university staff demonstrates to current students that progression through their studies will result in better outcomes for themselves and their families now and into the future.
- The Indigenous Subject offerings available to all students at JCU demonstrates the universities commitment to including Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum.
- Research projects undertaken through IERC demonstrates the commitment to improving outcomes for Indigenous communities through research that is relevant to the needs of community.
- IERC has strong collaborative engagement with CSIRO who regularly attend IERC events and support our programs, providing information to students on post-study employment opportunities. It is important for students to see the possible benefits of completing their studies and promoting graduate opportunities at CSIRO and many other government and non-government organisations, is a good way of demonstrating to students that successful completion of their studies will lead to better futures.
- Other external organisations that IERC regularly connects with include, Cowboys House, Clontarf, Career Trackers, and many other organisations offering scholarships, cadetships and internships. These connections assist in building an awareness of JCU in the community.

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2022

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ⁶	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷	Total hours of assistance ⁸	Expenditure ⁹ (\$)
Enabling	77	1211	1211	\$65,660
Undergraduate	270	5310	5310	\$287,958
Post-graduate	35	160	160	\$8,675
Other				
Total	382	6681	6681	\$362,293

❖ Each session is 1 hour so number of sessions attended and number of hours of assistance are equal.

3. Completions (outcomes)

Completions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student fell slightly in 2022 with disruptions to studies caused by COVID-19 affecting all students. Higher levels of part-time study in 2020 & 2021 due to the impacts of COVID-19 has delayed completion for some students.

However, since the establishment of the Indigenous Education and Research Centre at JCU completion rates have doubled. The implementation of individual case management of every Indigenous student at JCU has been core to achieving this result.

IERC staff contact all students every three weeks and record the information gathered in a specifically designed platform called WillowSoft. This personal contact and the information gathered enables intervention strategies to be implemented as required rather than waiting for lag data such as attrition rates and subject results.

Another strategy that has been implemented is for IERC staff to encourage students to study full time where possible as research shows that part-time students complete at lower rates than those studying full time. Advice on scholarships and internships can assist with the promotion of full time study as this reduces the hours of paid employment students need to undertake.

IERC has arranged for a representative of Abstudy to visit the Centre during O'week and the first few weeks of each semester to provide assistance for students applying to Abstudy.

Completed in Last 6 Years	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Indigenous	74	75	106	144	150	124	115
Non Indigenous	4544	5176	5440	5315	5780	5551	5424
Total Graduates	4618	5251	5546	5457	5927	5675	5539
Indigenous % of Total	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%

4. Regional and remote students

As a regional University JCU students are predominately from regional or remote areas and all students studying on a JCU campus are residing in a regional area. The strategies to improve access to university for this group of students has been outlined in Section 1 of this report.

Student				
Year	Student Indigenous Status	Metro or Regional/Remote	Enrolments	EFTSL
2023	No	Regional/Remote	7,958	4,843.802
2023	No	Unknown/NA	5,124	2,529.232
2023	No	Metro	2,429	1,326.259
2023	Aboriginal	Regional/Remote	386	235.046
2023	Unspecified	Unknown/NA	382	225.173
2023	Unspecified	Metro	83	35.486
2023	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Regional/Remote	81	46.375
2023	Unspecified	Regional/Remote	81	35.907
2023	Torres Strait Islander	Regional/Remote	71	34.595
2023	Aboriginal	Metro	46	25.375
2023	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Metro	2	1.250
2023	Torres Strait Islander	Metro	2	1.125
2023	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Unknown/NA	1	1.000
2023	Aboriginal	Unknown/NA	1	0.042
Headcount: 16,647				9,340.666

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students¹⁰

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2021 Payments	26571	13	14856	4	347500	296	389927	313
B. 2022 Offers ¹¹	45000	9			248300	200	493300	209
C. Percentage ¹² (C=B/A*100)								
2022 Payments	45000	9			248300	200	493300	209

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

IERC implementation Plan for 2023-2025 is currently in development.

The Indigenous Education and Research Centre's previous plan outlines how IERC will increase the number of Indigenous students participating in higher education studies. The Plan outlines the cultural and academic support provided to Indigenous students to enable them to progress and complete courses that lead to a higher education award.

The previous plan, Indigenous Education & Research Centre Plan 2020-2022, can be found at https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1210934/IERCPlan2020-2022FINAL.pdf

JCU reconciliation plan can be found at https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/1113206/APPROVED-James-Cook-University-Innovate-Formally-Endorsed-From-RA-Website.pdf

JCU offer all staff and students the opportunity to complete Foundation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence training developed by Centre for Cultural Competence Australia.

JCU provides staff with a Cultural Protocols Guide which can be found at <https://www.jcu.edu.au/staff/cultural-protocols-guide>

The enrolment numbers of Indigenous students at JCU has remained relatively steady in line with overall enrolments, the percentage of Indigenous enrolments at JCU is higher than the national average.

Yearly Indigenous Enrolments	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Indigenous enrolments	850	840	831	835	769	815	702
Non-Indigenous enrolment		14141	13869	13387	13069	13642	12496
Indigenous % of total university enrolments	5.5%	5.6%	5.6%	5.9%	5.6%	5.6%	5.60%

Commencing Indigenous Enrolments	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total commencing Indigenous enrolments		258	245	246	194	258	182
Non-Indigenous commencing enrolment		3675	3615	3540	3639	4191	3564
		6.6%	6.3%	6.5%	5.1%	5.841%	5.0%

5.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

JCU has an Indigenous Workforce strategy which can be found at https://www.jcu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1967759/Indigenous-Workforce-Strategy-Action-Plan-2021-2025-Version-May-2022-UPDATE-1.pdf

The strategy details how James Cook University aims to have a strong workforce of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of our organisation, providing career growth opportunities, competitive pay and benefits, and a safe work environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy has been developed in the context of James Cook University continually seeking to enhance its relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Both the JCU Statement of Strategic Intent and University Plan (2018-2022) share a commitment to achieving genuine reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and increasing the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The Statement of Strategic Intent and the University Plan also affirm the University's commitment to a work environment that is culturally supportive and values diversity.

In 2022 JCU employed Indigenous people at senior levels including DVC and Associate Professor.

2022 Headcount Indigenous Staff

Row Labels	Permanent		Casual/Contract/fixed-term	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
HEWL01	0	0	0	19
HEWL02	0	0	0	9
HEWL03	0	0	0	7
HEWL04	0	3	0	12
HEWL05	0	6	0	6
HEWL06	0	13	0	10
HEWL07	0	1	0	2
HEWL08	0	8	0	5
HEWL09	0	2	0	1
HEWL10	0	1	0	0
AC-A	0	0	55	0
AC-B	4	0	3	0
AC-C	3	0	5	0
AC-D	1	0	2	0
AC-E	0	0	1	0
Senior	0	0	1	0
Special/other	0	0	1	0
Total	8	34	68	71

There has been an overall increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed at JCU from 96 in 2021 to 181 in 2022. Although the biggest increase was in casual staff this number also reflects an increase in permanent Academic and non-academic staff.

JCU is aiming to further increase the number of Indigenous staff with business level objectives to:

- Increase the number of senior Indigenous researcher staff with track records in the national competitive grants schemes to at least 7 FTE from 2023-2025.
- Increase the number of Indigenous academic staff in the Academic Division by 5 FTE each year from 2023-2025.

5.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The Indigenous Education and Research Centre operates under the guidance of Prof Martin Nakata AM, in recognition of the ongoing improvements in Indigenous student outcomes the JCU executive raised the role from Pro-Vice Chancellor to Deputy Vice Chancellor in 2021

The IERC is managed through the Management Committee, this committee meets the requirements of section 11 of the ISSP guidelines as the committee has a majority Indigenous membership with both the senior academic and senior executive roles filled by Indigenous people. All members of the committee are appropriately qualified with the skills and experience necessary to fulfil their responsibilities. The committee has responsibility for making recommendation, reviewing and monitoring the use of the ISSP funds. The Committee structure is formalised through a charter that outlines the criteria for membership.

The IERC Management Committee currently consists of 4 senior staff, 3 of who identify as Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Education & Strategy) – Prof Martin Nakata

Head of the Centre’s Teaching Program – A/Prof Felecia Watkin-Lui

Head Indigenous Student Support – Mrs Virginia McHugh

Indigenous Education and Research Centre Manager – Mrs Manola Chong

Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Education & Strategy) was a member of a number of committees tasked with decision making at JCU and/or providing advice to the Vice Chancellor:

- University Executive senior leadership group (UE)
- Vice Chancellor's Academic Group (VCAG)
- Vice Chancellor's Operations Group (VCOG)
- JCU Academic Board
- JCU Student Advisory Forum
- JCU Master Planning Committee
- Assistant Dean of Research (ADR) & Directors Committee
- Indigenous Reference Group, future campus master plan.
- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Management Committee
- JCU Traditional Owner Representative Group
- JCU Indigenous Action Group – Reconciliation Australia Plan (RAP) and Indigenous Employment Strategy
- Indigenous Workforce Strategy Working Group

Manager, Centre Operations is responsible for the operational performance of the Centre coordinating initiatives and activities across the Centre and is a member of the below committees:

- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Management Committee
- JCU Indigenous Action Group - – Reconciliation Australia Plan (RAP) and Indigenous Employment Strategy
- e-recruitment and casual appointment project - managing the people side of change Working Group

Head, Indigenous Teaching Program is responsible for the teaching and learning and was a member of the following governance committees:

- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Management Committee
- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Research Committee
- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Education Committee
- JCU Academic Board
- JCU Education Committee
- JCU Research Committee
- Division of Tropical Environments and Societies Board of Studies
- Theme Convenor, Indigenous Futures Cairns Institute.

Head, Indigenous Student Support is responsible for student support services and community engagement, and was a member of the following governance committees:

- Indigenous Education & Research Centre Management Committee
- JCU Student Advisory Forum
- College of Medicine & Dentistry Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Strategic Committee
- Curriculum Management & Accreditation Committee
- Academic Calendar Committee
- Indigenous Medical Student Interview Panel
- SSAF Income Allocation Working Group
- JCU Commonwealth Indigenous Scholarships Committee
- Townsville Hospital & Health Service Indigenous Scholarship Committee
- JCU Access Fund Committee
- Divisional Finance Committee
- HEPPP Priority Grant Assessment Panel

5.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

JCU's Indigenous Governance Mechanism is the IERC Management committee, the members are shown above in section 5.3 of the report.

The Financial acquittal is provided by JCU's Treasury and Corporate Finance department.

The Management committee confirms that the information provided in this report is accurate to the best of their knowledge as of the date of submission.

Virginia McHugh,
Head Indigenous Student Services

Additional information for completing the template

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2022. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2022 should be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.

² This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.

³ Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.

⁴ Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁵ Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.

⁶Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

⁷ Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).

⁸ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

⁹ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.

¹⁰ Only record amounts which required payment during the 2022 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.

¹¹ Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2022 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2022 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2021 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).

¹² This data confirms the university's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.