

Indigenous Student Success Program

2023 Performance Report

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1. Declaration

In providing this Performance Report, it is acknowledged that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Terminology

Throughout this report the terms “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” and “Indigenous” are used interchangeably. Some contributors also use the term “First Nations” in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The use of abbreviations and acronyms to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is not acceptable and should never be used, however the term “ATSI” has been used in this report in the data sets presented in Figures 3 and 4, as this is how it is automatically generated by the University’s reporting system.

Introduction

Wirltu Yarlur Aboriginal Education Unit is dedicated to the provision of Indigenous student support at the University of Adelaide. The unit is responsible for recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to foundation and degree programs, as well as administering academic mentoring programs and access to pathway and outreach programs. This includes the Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway program. In addition, Wirltu Yarlur facilitates a diverse range of activities to support students during their educational journey and supports the broader University to better understand Indigenous cultures and histories through the delivery of the Indigenous Knowledges units. The unit also works across and with divisions and faculties to support the University in meeting its commitment regarding the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, while simultaneously providing support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Indigenous Portfolio Review Project

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Engagement (PVCIE) completed a comprehensive review of the University’s Indigenous Portfolio at the end of 2023. The key deliverables included a new strategic framework for achieving excellence in Indigenous higher education. Student support services will be a critical part of the new direction. The IPR included a comprehensive review of Indigenous student support at the University, and a key recommendation arising from the project is the development of a new Indigenous Student Support Framework.

Table 1: Indigenous Student Data – Performance and Comparative Position

Indigenous Student Success Program	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Actual	Position	Actual	Position	Actual	Position	Actual	Position
EFTSL	182.03	30	211.85	30	212	30	192	31
EFSL – Regional & Remote	43.19	33	44.28	32	34.9	35	30.61	36
Success Rate <small>(units passed/units attempted)</small>	75.5	24	70.19	31	71.95	30	73.89	30
Completions* <small>(head count)</small>	34	34	36	31	46	31	40	31

* Variations in the timing of data requests account for differences in completion numbers across tables in this report.

A trend analysis of data spanning from 2019 to 2022 revealed mixed results across various performance metrics (see Table 1 above). Enrolment data displayed consistent growth from 2019 to 2021, indicating a positive trend in both attracting and retaining students. However, 2022 witnessed a slight decline. On the other hand, the success rate has shown a steady upward trajectory over the past three years. Wirltu Yarlu remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining this positive trend.

Conversely, the number of completions does not exhibit a clear trend over the four-year period, showing variability without a consistent pattern of growth or decline. Despite these fluctuations, it is important to note that the University of Adelaide’s position relative to other institutions participating in ISSP has been maintained in regards to success rate and completions from 2021 and 2022. Furthermore, over this 12 month period, our position relative to other institutions has seen improvement in terms of access.

2. Enrolments (Access)

The University of Adelaide has enhanced its standing among institutions participating in the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) in terms of the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. While Wirltu Yarlu remains dedicated to expanding opportunities for First Nations Australians’ access to higher education, we recognise that our growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment requires much improvement to achieve national population parity. Wirltu Yarlu continues to play a crucial role as the University's support unit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, advocating for higher education among Indigenous Australians through various initiatives aimed at fostering access, participation, and success. Wirltu Yarlu also advocates for a whole of university responsibility regarding First Nations student recruitment and completions.

While Wirltu Yarlu utilised Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funding for access initiatives, rather than ISSP funds, there were various initiatives and approaches implemented in 2023 aimed at bolstering access to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These included:

- **The Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program** which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10, 11 and 12/13 as they transition from high school into university. The program provides students with access to one-to-one mentoring through the Wirltu Yarlur Academic Mentoring Program (WYAMP), which is available to all Indigenous students at the University of Adelaide. In 2023 there were 33 participants from Year 10-12, and 18 Year 12 students who graduated from the program. The Karnkanthi Education Program also provides scholarships to students, awarding \$15,000 in 2023. Over \$23,000 in additional financial support was also provided.

The Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program has been instrumental in familiarising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with the institution and higher education sector, while simultaneously fostering confidence-building initiatives. By providing tailored mentoring, scholarships, and a diverse range of activities, the program equips students with the skills and support needed to navigate academic pathways with confidence. This ultimately empowers students to excel in their educational journey and beyond.

Various new activities were implemented in 2023 to improve access and participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as part of the Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program. These include:

- Leadership Camp
- Careers night
- South Australian Tertiary Application Centre (SATAC) Application Workshop
- Yarn and Paint
- Games Day
- Movie Night
- Graduation

- **The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway program** is an alternative entry method which provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples access to higher education where they may not otherwise qualify for university entrance. In 2023, the program resulted in 8 additional students successfully achieving university entrance. Tables 2 and 3 below set out application and enrolment numbers for the Access Pathway Program including the degree programs for enrolments.

Table 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway – 2023 Student Numbers

Access Pathway 2023	Semester 1	Semester 2	Total
Applications	16	4	20
Enrolments			8

Table 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway – 2023 Student Numbers by Degree

Enrolments through the Access Pathway	Enrolments
Bachelor of Laws	1
Bachelor of Arts	3
Bachelor of Health and Medical Sciences	1
Bachelor of Laws (double degrees)	1
Bachelor of Business	1
Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) /Bachelor of Mathematics and Computer Science	1

- **The Special Entry Pathway** provides special entry for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants into Oral Health, Dental Surgery, Medical Studies, and Veterinary Bioscience degrees. Special Entry Pathways exist due to these degrees not being accessible through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway. In 2023, the Special Entry Pathway resulted in 4 additional students successfully achieving university entrance. Table 4 below sets out application and enrolment numbers for the Special Entry Pathway Program including the degree programs for enrolments.

Table 4: Special Entry Pathway – 2023 Applications, Offers and Enrolments by Degree

2023 Special Entry Pathway	Applications	Offers	Enrolments
Bachelor of Oral Health	0	0	0
Bachelor of Dental Surgery	2	1	0
Bachelor of Medical Studies	7	5	3
Bachelor of Science (Veterinary Bioscience)	2	2	1

- **Outreach activities** including various campus tours and visits to several rural and regional high schools including Whyalla Secondary School, Port Augusta Secondary School, John Pirie Secondary School, and Port Lincoln High School. Wirltu Yarlu also participated in year 12 transition week at the South Australian Department of Education Workabout Centre and numerous other information sessions.
- **Aboriginal Career Exploration (ACE) Day**, a program co-delivered by Wirltu Yarlu Aboriginal Education and the South Australian Department of Education Workabout Centre. The Workabout Centre offers a range of programs and services to support Aboriginal students to make a successful transition from school to work, higher education or further training. ACE Day facilitates a full day of activities on campus which enables higher education aspiration and an experience of university life and students are also educated around the various pathways available to them. Approximately 200 students across 19 schools attended the 2023 iteration of this program.

- **The Ingekarni Wardli Technologies Camp** is a camp delivered in partnership between Wirltu Yarlur Aboriginal Education and the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology. It is a holiday program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students in Years 10 - 12 with an interest in STEM. The 2023 camp had 27 participants.

A breakdown of scholarships funded by ISSP can be found in the ISSP Report Tables at the end of this report. A total of \$161,500 worth of scholarships were awarded to 59 students in 2023. The Yakai Bursary, also supported by ISSP funds, provides financial assistance to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in any program at the University of Adelaide. Applications are assessed based on financial need and intended use of scholarship funds. As per Table 5 below, a total of \$12,000 was awarded to 6 students in financial need during 2023.

Table 5: Yakai Bursary Scholarship – 2023 Bursary Recipient Numbers and Payments

Yakai Bursary 2023	#	\$
Enabling	0	0
Undergraduate	6	\$12,000
Post-Graduate	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	6	\$12,000

The University also improves access through bridging and enabling programs, such as the University Preparatory Program (UPP) and the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) Foundation Year. The UPP is a free one year program for anyone who wants to prepare to enter university. It has been designed for those who have never been to university or have not studied for a long period of time. Wirltu Yarlur facilitates entry into this program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

CASM at the University of Adelaide is the only dedicated university-based centre for Australian Indigenous music in Australia, and the Foundation Year is a dedicated entry program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians wanting to study at university. CASM is part of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, and the Foundation Year offers an innovative program that responds to the learning needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Students at CASM are actively involved in a variety of music performance, composition and recording activities using the CASM studios, which house state-of-the-art facilities for rehearsing, music recording, and audio-visual production.

Table 6 below sets out enrolment data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in both the UPP and CASM Foundation Year for 2023.

Table 6: Enabling Programs – 2023 UPP and CASM Student Numbers

Enabling Programs 2023	Semester 1	Semester 2	Total
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UPP	4	4	8
CASM Foundation Year	4	3	7

Student Testimonial

“To those who are debating the prospect of attending university, I encourage you to take the chance. University can seem a little overwhelming and slightly daunting, but I assure you that you can navigate it successfully. The University of Adelaide is well equipped to guide you throughout your journey, and Wirltu Yarlū is a friendly and open environment with many who were once in your shoes. I challenge you to bet on yourself because it is truly the best decision I ever made” – Latisha Sykora, Bachelor of Oral Health graduate/Bachelor of Dental Surgery student

3. Progression (Outcomes)

While enhancing access to university is a crucial objective, it is equally important to guarantee that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have an outstanding educational experience during their time at The University of Adelaide. The engagement and academic achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University are shaped by various personal, cultural, social, educational, and financial factors. Wirltu Yarlū Aboriginal Education serves as a significant support system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University of Adelaide, offering academic, social, and cultural assistance. This unit fosters a sense of belonging and serves as a hub for community connections for students.

We acknowledge the potential to enhance the current student experience and engagement, ensuring that the entire University community supports and contributes to the success and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, thereby enriching the overall quality of their educational journey. By doing so, we can further strengthen a sense of belonging and ensure students feel culturally supported and secure. In 2023, the success rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by six (6) percent from 2022, and the retention rate increased by four (4) percent. This highlights the tangible impact of our recent efforts and commitment to progression.

Key initiatives and approaches implemented in 2023 to bolster success and progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students included:

- **The Wirltu Yarlū Academic Mentoring Program (WYAMP)**, a free program offered to Indigenous students which strives to enhance and develop their professional, personal and academic strengths. Mentors can assist with coursework, referencing, exam revision, and broader study and research skills. WYAMP is delivered by the peer mentoring app Vygo, and sessions can be conducted digitally through the platform or on-campus. The impact of the program is measured through mentor ratings, and in 2023 the average student mentor rating was 4.9 out of 5. Students also provided feedback, reporting they:
 - Felt more knowledgeable
 - Gained practical skills
 - Had an increased understanding of content

- Felt more comfortable with ideas and concepts
 - Increased their communication skills
 - Experienced greater confidence
- **Free online textbooks through Kortext** to support first year undergraduate students with their educational expenses. Kortext is an e-textbook supplier and platform company, and Wirltu Yarlū provided all core readings in e-textbook versions to this cohort through this platform. In 2023, 70 e-textbooks were provided to students. They were provided in perpetuity for the students to access for the duration of their program degree. Students beyond first year who disclose financial hardship to support staff also have access to this program. Student Services Officers are currently reviewing the program to determine how to increase uptake and ensure best usage of the platform.
 - **Access to Studiosity**, which provides on-demand study help from subject specialists and is offered to students to use in collaboration with WYAMP and Academic Skills activities.
 - **One on one consultations** provided by Student Services Officers. Student Services Officers are available to meet with students for pre-arranged appointments, as well as urgent matters without prior booking. During these consultations, students can access pastoral support, as well as referrals to other services where appropriate.
 - **The Wirltu Yarlū Cadetship Program**, which provides on-campus work placements. The program was reviewed extensively in 2023 by the Indigenous Employment Officer. During 2023, there were two cadets supported by this program. One cadetship was in psychology, and the other in media. The revised Cadetship Program is being relaunched in 2024 with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) as the primary host organisation. Wirltu Yarlū assists by brokering the relationship between host organisations, faculties, and students. These cadetships are about building pipeline to employment, creating career aspirations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and generating income for students while engaging in “on the job” learning.
 - **The Student Ambassador Program**, a program which equips Student Ambassadors with leadership and public speaking skills. The ambassadors provide a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They also offer leadership and mentoring to Karnkanthi students and commencing first year and UPP students, and support to prospective students through school visits, expos, and other activities both on and off-campus.
 - **The Elders in Residence Cultural Advisor Program**, which is an opportunity for students to receive guidance and pastoral support. The Cultural Advisor also provides advice to senior managers and executives across the University. In 2023, the Cultural Advisor was critical in:
 - Cultural mentorship
 - Cultural counselling and yarning
 - Guest lecturing for faculty programs and Indigenous Knowledges courses
 - Performing ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremonies both internally and externally

- Kurna language workshops
- **Smoking ceremonies** for student events including orientation in both semesters, and health and wellbeing activities. These ceremonies utilised the ceremonial fire pit at the Kurna Learning Circle and were facilitated Wirltu Yarlū.
- **Orientation Programs** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students held in February and July. These programs included activities such as student service presentations, campus tours, faculty engagement, wellbeing sessions, academic skills sessions, financial sessions, library orientations, digital literacy skills, social events, and opportunities for commencing students to meet with continuing students.
- **Indigenous Nationals**, a multi-sport event held annually between Australia’s 43 universities and tertiary institutions. The University of Adelaide sent a team of eight (8) students to participate in the 27th Annual Indigenous Nationals in 2023, which was held at Monash University in Melbourne. This activity was primarily funded by the Division of Academic and Student Engagement (DASE), with uniforms provided by UniSports.
- **Accommodation Assistance**, which has been provided to five (5) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in 2023. Wirltu Yarlū links students with subsidised accommodation units and guides them through the application process. Student Services Officers act as a liaison between the Accommodation Team and students. During 2023, Student Services Officers were able to negotiate a very low rate with one accommodation service for students not returning home over the long end of year holiday. This facilitated continuity in accommodation for continuing students and offered stability in the increasingly tight rental market, particularly as cost of living expenses rises.
- **Financial Assistance**, which was provided to students experiencing financial hardship. Coles/Myer gift cards were provided to students to help with groceries, and students also received assistance with various study items and expenses including office chairs, laptops, and headphones. A student studying mechanical engineering also received a kit required for study. The unit spent a total of \$7700 assisting students in this way in 2023.
- **A Student space**, which is located on-campus to provide a culturally appropriate space for students to access computers to study. A kitchen and lounge are also available to prepare meals and have downtime between university activities. In 2023, upgrades to the student kitchen occurred and Student Services Officers changed provisions to include healthy snacks, fresh fruit, food “on the run” and microwavable hot dinners. This is to assist students with pressures related to the increasing costs of living, while providing sustenance for students throughout their studies. In 2023, a total of \$6522 was spent on food for students. New appliances were also added to the kitchen, and new soft furnishings were purchased to add to the space.

New strategies, activities and programs in 2023 included:

- Meetings between Student Services Officers and Faculty Student Success Advisors to build productive relationships between faculties and Wirltu Yarlū. These discussions encompass future student needs and forward-planning to support both commencing and continuing students.
- Case Review meetings fortnightly between Student Services Officers, the Aboriginal Counsellor and the Student Recruitment and Academic Programs Officer. These meetings allow for discussions regarding intervention strategies for students facing crises or at risk due to health, financial, personal, accommodation, or academic challenges. These meetings aim to provide tailored support to students with multifaceted and persistent needs, ensuring their retention and success.
- A Student Brunch hosted by Wirltu Yarlū during second semester. Student service providers, academic staff, ambassadors, and mentors from both within and outside the University were invited. The event aimed to foster connections between students and service providers, build confidence in accessing support services, and facilitate networking opportunities.
- A Student Wellness Event hosted by the Wirltu Yarlū Student Services Team in collaboration with the University of Adelaide's Student Health and Wellbeing Team. The purpose of the event was to promote Mental Health Awareness by providing students with Ngangkari sessions (Anangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation) and cultural activities to promote improved health and wellbeing. Activities included Dot Painting (Marra Dreaming), Weaving (Mararla Weaving) and a Smoking Ceremony. During these activities, students were able to enjoy lunch and yarn with other students and staff. An amount of \$6281 was invested in this event and was funded by ISSP.
- Specific tailored support for students identified as at risk of failing, which includes access to mentoring, counselling, letters of support and other services that may assist students staying engaged and enrolled at university.

Cultural Competency

The Office of the PVCIE undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the University's current Aboriginal Cultural Awareness module in the second half of 2022. The module was updated throughout 2023 and provides Adelaide-specific context. Funding for the review and redesign of the induction module was co-contributed by Wirltu Yarlū Aboriginal Education and the University's Human Resources department. Participation in the online module is currently the only cultural competency training provided universally to (commencing) staff. Some local areas have chosen to dedicate their staff development resources towards further Cultural Awareness training; however, unless self-reported, these sessions are not consistently captured within a Human Resources database. The Office has also applied for funding to develop a Cultural Capability Framework to be implemented university wide.

Other strategies and programs which have been implemented to support student progression that do not rely on ISSP funding include:

- **Indigenous Counselling Support** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This service is provided by an Aboriginal Counsellor. Prior to the University employing an Aboriginal counsellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represented 0.5 percent of all students accessing counselling support. In 2023, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represented 3 percent of all students accessing counselling support. Table 7 below sets out the type of services provided and the number of students accessing each service in 2023.
- This service includes:
 - Specialised student drop-in and counselling support, including crisis response for distressed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
 - Culturally appropriate case-management support
 - Improved referral pathway to the Counselling Support Complex Case team
 - Discussions between Wirltu Yarlul's Student Services Team and Counselling Support regarding challenging student behaviours and students at risk
 - Links to broader mental health and wellbeing support

Table 7: Indigenous Counselling Support Data 2023

Indigenous Counselling Support	Face to face appointments (including virtual)	Phone appointment	Phone or email follow up (case management)	Third party email, phone or F2F (case management including UCL)
Jan – June	48	19	48	24
July – December	83	34	132	74

Figure 1 below illustrates the proportion of First Nations students in the University population (blue) compared to the number of First Nations students accessing Counselling Support (orange/red). Figure 2 below illustrates the number of counselling interactions per student using the same colour coding as in Figure 1. It is evident from the graphs that there is a notable overrepresentation of First Nations students accessing Counselling Support when compared to their representation in the broader university student population. This highlights the significance of providing this service to First Nations students.

Figure 1 – First Nations Students in Counselling Support – Domestic Population Comparisons

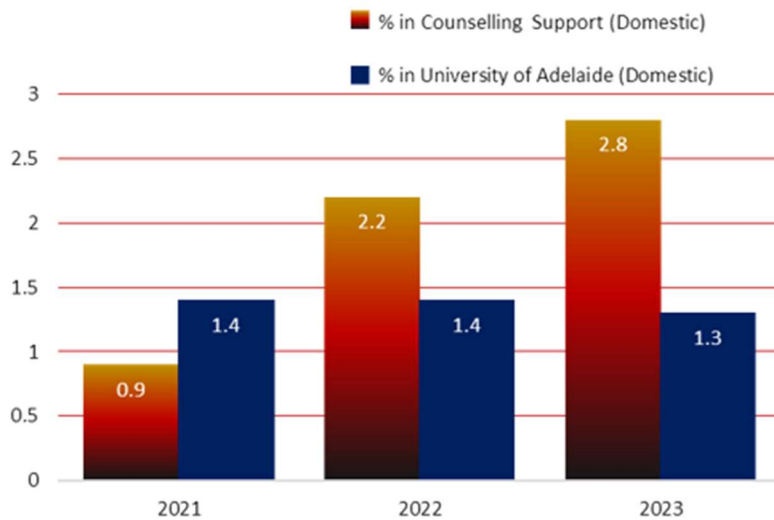
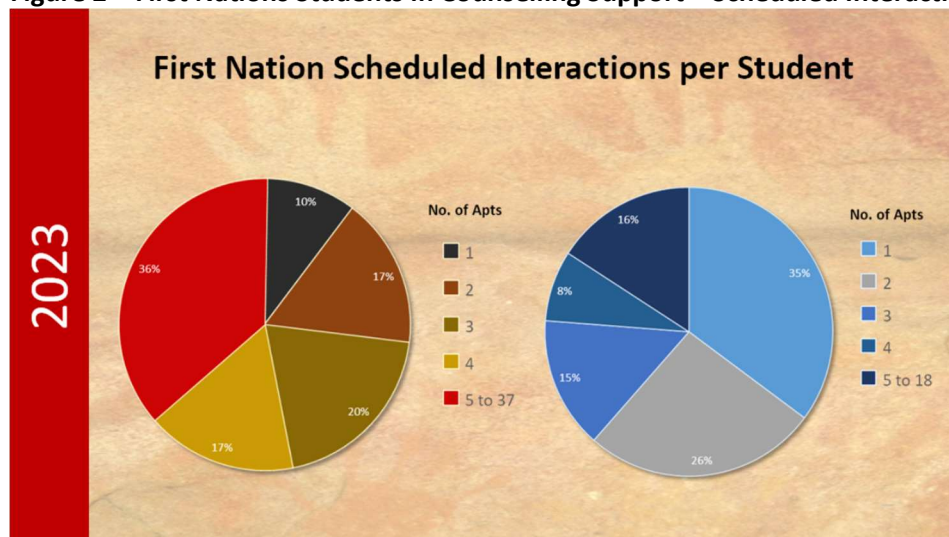


Figure 2 – First Nations Students in Counselling Support – Scheduled Interactions



- **A six-figure marketing campaign** to increase the presence of Aboriginal culture on-campus. This included new branding and artwork created by local Aboriginal artist, Gabriel Stengel. Current students are being positively impacted through witnessing the University visibly embrace and embed Indigenous perspectives and cultures into ways of being.
- **Academic Skills**, which are included as part of Wirrtu Yarlu Orientation program, including presentations from the Writing Centre, Maths Learning Centre, and Academic Integrity. These are also provided during Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS).
- **Yaitya Ngutupira** library space was completed in 2023, which embodies elements of First Nations culture within a contemporary learning environment. Serving as a hub for collaboration, relaxation, and the dissemination of Indigenous Knowledges, it fosters a unique

ambience with themes of nature throughout. The space includes First Nations artwork, and comfortable and movable furniture and furnishings. It provides a bookable alternative to the University’s outdoor Kurna Learning Circle during adverse weather events. It aims to provide an immersive sensory experience that invites people to engage with First Nations cultures and teachings, while fostering a sense of community and belonging. The PVCIE and Library were co-signatories on this project.

- Building partnerships with the Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program (IYMP) to explore opportunities for collaboration in supporting both current and new students, with the aim of providing practical assistance and resources for Indigenous youth.
- A workshop for medical students focused on revision techniques in partnership with Adelaide University Medical School. This was for medicine students in years one (1) to three (3) Additionally, a Yarning Workshop for Master of Clinical Nursing students was facilitated, designed to help foster an inclusive environment and eliminate negative stereotypes.

Wirtlu Yarlū evaluates the impact of these strategies on student progression and success through various methods including surveys and academic progress reports. When students are identified as at-risk, Student Services Officers liaise with counsellors to devise intervention strategies, which may involve case reviews. Additionally, students identified as at risk of failing through the WYAMP program are contacted and provided with follow-up and referrals as needed. Wirtlu Yarlū also cultivates relationships with faculties, who may in turn reach out for support when necessary. Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT) survey results also assist in understanding the student experience. Figures 3 and 4 below demonstrate that apart from 2021 and 2022 when COVID-19 drastically altered the student experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are more satisfied overall, as well as in relation to teacher effectiveness.

Figure 3

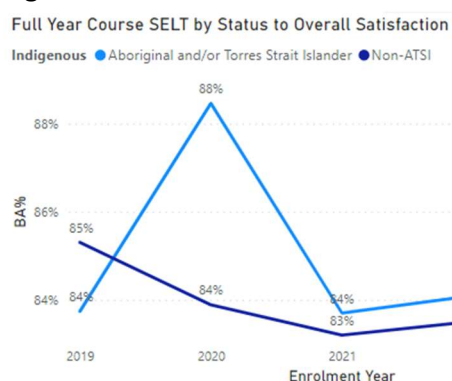
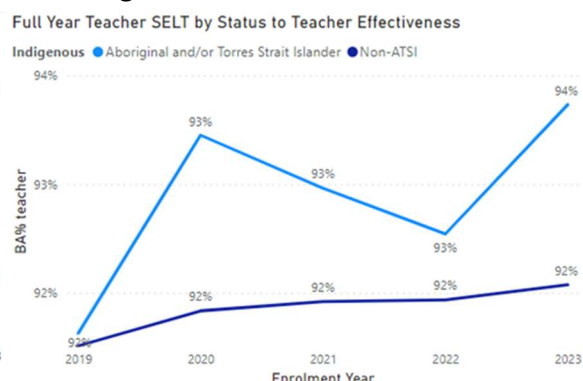


Figure 4



Student Testimonial

“University was an interesting journey. I didn’t really have much family in Adelaide. So, it was a big adjustment, especially when I first moved. In my first year at Uni, I was a student ambassador at Wirtlu Yarlū, and I always studied in the spaces provided for Aboriginal people. I also used the tutoring services, which made me feel very supported and connected with other indigenous people. It was awesome” – Rebecca Haynes, Kokatha and Mirning woman, Bachelor of Health and Medical Science (major in Neuroscience) graduate

4. Completions (Outcomes)

In the past 10 years, the University of Adelaide has witnessed 449 instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing award courses. In 2023, there were 55 course completions at the University of Adelaide, marking a 37.5 percent increase from 2022.

Key activities and strategies implemented across the University in 2023 to improve completions and graduate outcomes for Indigenous Australians included:

- **Wirltu Yarlū Graduate Reward Scholarship:** A scholarship awarded as an additional reward to those graduating from the University of Adelaide. The reward scholarship is awarded once per student and is valued at \$250. In 2023, 27 graduates were awarded the scholarship.
- **Graduation Ceremonies:** Wirltu Yarlū celebrated two rounds of Graduations in 2023 in addition to mainstream ceremonies. Student achievements were celebrated with a special morning tea which included students being awarded gifts, University of Adelaide merchandise and stoles in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander colours to be worn to their official ceremony. In May there were a total of 24 graduates, and in September there were 16 graduates, including a student successfully completing their PhD in Medicine Physiology.
- **Work Integrated Learning (WIL) support:** In 2023, students participating in internships or cadetships outside of Wirltu Yarlū Cadetship program (which constitutes WIL) received supplementary support. They were assisted by the Indigenous Employment Officer and Wirltu Yarlū Student Services Officers, receiving both "on the job" experience to enhance job readiness and income during semester breaks.
- **WillowSoft software:** Several Wirltu Yarlū staff attended the James Cook University (JCU) National Student Support Conference in 2023, the purpose of which was to identify student support platforms and systems to assist with monitoring and reporting. WillowSoft was identified as a desired platform, and will likely be rolled out in 2024. WillowSoft is an innovative, research-backed platform designed to enhance the academic success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Its proactive approach helps identify individual student challenges, enabling personalised support plans. Key features include efficient task management, automated alerts, and mentor management. It also facilitates early identification of challenges to significant improvements in student success and completions.
- **Various other initiatives** already discussed previously in this report including student spaces, meals and snacks, study spaces, computer rooms, cultural expertise and support and financial support.

The impact of the initiatives above was profound. With a notable 37.5 percent increase in course completions by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students compared to the previous year, these efforts reflect a significant advancement in completion rates. The Wirltu Yarlū Graduate Reward Scholarship provided further recognition and celebration of the achievement of attaining a tertiary

qualification, and the graduation ceremonies hosted by Wirltu Yarlu not only celebrated student accomplishments, but also fostered a sense of belonging and cultural pride within the University community. Parents, extended family, and community members were invited to attend the celebrations, modelling community ways of being and doing, and honouring the principles of kinship. Table 8 below sets out Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student completion, broken down by Faculty of study.

Table 8: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Completions by Faculty*

Faculty	Number of students
Arts, Business, Law & Economics	39
Health & Medical Sciences	21
Sciences, Engineering & Technology	19
Total	79

* Variations in the timing of data requests account for differences in completion numbers across tables in this report.

Student Testimonial

“Follow your passion and work hard. Use those two things to your advantage and find your career based on what you care about and what aligns with your identity as a person. The University can help you do that. A PhD is a big undertaking, requiring lots of dedication. I’m really pleased that I’ve graduated, and now I move straight into my new role where I can use my degree to try to help my community with something important to me, to my identity as a cancer researcher and as an Aboriginal Person” – Dr Justine Clark, Adnyamathanha woman, PhD graduate – Post-Doctoral Researcher in Indigenous Genomics

5. Regional and remote students

The University of Adelaide remains committed to overcoming the challenges of engaging regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Given that campuses are predominantly situated in the Adelaide metropolitan area, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments originate from Adelaide and its surrounding regions. Transitioning to university in a large metropolitan setting can pose significant challenges and anxieties for regional and remote students, who often leave behind their families and communities. Despite these hurdles, Wirltu Yarlu remains steadfast in its commitment to improving access and participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote communities.

In 2023, the University implemented various initiatives and strategies aimed at enhancing university access and support for Indigenous Australians from regional and remote areas which included:

- The Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program, which supported students to attend camps and functions at the University, covering transport, accommodation, and meal costs.

- Providing outreach activities in regional areas mentioned previously in this report to promote opportunities available such as the Karnkanthi Indigenous Education Program, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway, and Student support services.
- Providing invitations to students participating in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Pathway interviews to the upcoming Orientation Program. These interviews also served as an avenue to identify any concerns or additional support needs. Following acceptance of their program placements, students were approached and provided with support as needed.
- The development of a communications plan with a focus on marketing strategies tailored to regional and remote students. The plan aimed to enhance outreach and engagement initiatives specifically designed to cater to the needs of this student demographic.
- Informed targeted outreach programs based on historical student data, focused on developing a broader, nationwide footprint, and concentration on areas with significant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

These activities meant that prior to commencing their studies, students were afforded the valuable opportunity to interact with both their fellow cohort members and the Wirltu Yarlur community. These initiatives not only facilitated the formation of strong bonds within the student body but also fostered a sense of belonging and inclusivity. By engaging with their peers and the Wirltu Yarlur community prior to embarking on their academic journey, students gained confidence in approaching both staff members for academic assistance, and fellow students for social and emotional support. This early interaction served as a foundation for a supportive network, enabling students to navigate their university experience with greater ease and assurance. Through these connections, students were able to establish meaningful relationships, access vital resources, and cultivate a supportive environment conducive to their overall wellbeing and academic success.

6. Eligibility criteria

6.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

[The Tarrkarri Tirkka \(Future Learning\) Strategy](#) puts forward a view to “...create an end-to-end experience for Aboriginal students that sees them graduate at the same rate as all students, through a focus on ‘joining up’ policies, systems, and support services, developing culturally respectful dialogues and strengthening cross-University relationships”. Although this strategy remains effective until the conclusion of 2024, a new First Nations Strategy for 2024-2025 emerged as a significant outcome of the IPR. Its primary aim is to enhance the University's performance concerning the access, participation and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. Moreover, the new First Nations Strategy will facilitate the organisational pivot from aspiration to implementation as advocated by Universities Australia's Indigenous Strategy. The First Nations strategy 2024-2025 is currently in draft and is the final stages of formal endorsement.

It is important to acknowledge that discussions regarding the merger between the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia have commenced. Preliminary planning conversations have started between both universities regarding the Indigenous portfolio at the new University, with operations scheduled to begin in 2026.

In working towards the targets outlined in the Tarrkarri Turrka (Future Learning) Strategy, the University has achieved increases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention, success rate, and completions. As depicted in Table 9 below, 2023 saw a notable improvement in retention, with a 4% increase, alongside a commendable rise in success rate, showing a 6% improvement. As previously mentioned in Section 4, completions rose by 37.5% in 2023. A review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort was undertaken as part of the IPR, and discernible disparities between headcount and Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) emerged, suggesting a student profile that will need to be considered in the development of the University of Adelaide’s proposed Indigenous Student Support Framework.

Table 9: Indigenous Education Strategy - Tarrkarri Turrka Targets and Actual numbers: Students 2020 – 2023

Students	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Participation (Headcount) (#)	271	300	86	293	300	305	315	276
Access (Commencing) (#)	117	128	117	103	117	102	117	94
Undergraduate (#)	234	259	246	244	258	217	271	201
Total Postgraduate (PGCW & HDR) (#)	37	32	40	34	42	33	44	35
Karnkanthi Participation	45	30	45	70	45	41	45	33
Retention (%)	82	76	83	78	84	61	85	65
Success (%)	76	70	78	72	81	72	83	78
Completions* (#)	43	35	49	47	54	40	60	55

* Variations in the timing of data requests account for differences in completion numbers across tables in this report.

The promotion of Indigenous Knowledges curricula has been a key focus for the unit, and 2023 saw a 15 percent increase in students enrolled across the four (4) Indigenous Knowledges courses delivered by Wirltu Yurlu, as set out in Table 10 below. These courses have been digitally enhanced to include more interactive content, and the new Immersive Storytelling course will be launched and available

for enrolment in Q3 2024. Changes to the Indigenous Knowledges courses occurred in consultation with the Yaitya Ngutu Kurna Advisory Committee.

In 2023, Wirltu Yarlurru commissioned an external consultant to assess the potential of ABORIG 1002 - *Indigenous Scholarship & Interplay of Knowledges* as a prospective core unit. Following a thorough evaluation, the consultant recommended ABORIG 1001 - *Indigenous People, Country & Protocols* as a course which could transition into being offered as a core unit. This is being further explored in 2024.

Table 10: Indigenous Knowledges Courses Offered by Wirltu Yarlurru, Enrolments 2021 – 2023

Courses offered	2021	2022	2023
ABORIG 1001	138	117	133
ABORIG 3001	23	26	33
ABORIG 1002	29	29	31
ABORIG 3000	1	1	3

The inclusion of activities that promote cultural competency in Indigenous cultures are outlined in Section 2 of this report

6.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

Specific Indigenous staff targets within the [University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement](#) are outlined in clause 7.5.4 (p.67), and highlight a commitment to a target of 3 percent population parity employment by 2030. Between 2022 and 2023, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers increased from 40 to 45, an increase of 6.48 percent. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the University also saw an increase, rising from 0.9 percent in 2022 to 1.13 percent in 2023.

Tables 11, 12 and 13 below set out Indigenous staff targets v actuals and staff numbers and FTE by contract type of level.

Table 11: University of Adelaide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Targets and Actuals – 2023

	Employment Strategy Target	Enterprise Agreement Target	Actual staff (Headcount)	Sum of FTE
Professional	40	N/A	15	10.60
Academic	33	N/A	30	27.8
Total	73	75	45	38.40

Table 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Headcount and FTE by Contract Type – 2023

Contract Type	Headcount	Sum of FTE
Continuing	21	20.80
Fixed Term Contract	24	17.60
Total	45	38.40

Table 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Headcount and FTE by Level – 2023

Classification Level	Headcount	Sum of FTE
Casual	28	NA
HEO 4	3	2.8
HEO 5	4	3.2
HEO 6	14	13.4
HEO 7	3	3
HEO 8	4	3.4
HEO 9	1	1
HEO 10	1	1
Senior Management	0	0
Level A	4	0.8
Level B	7	6.6
Level C	3	2.2
Senior Appointment	1	1
Total	73	38.40

In late 2022, an appointment was finalised for the Indigenous Employment Officer role, tasked with overseeing the revitalisation of the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. Their responsibilities include addressing barriers to employment and devising strategies to enhance recruitment and retention rates. Please refer to the draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Workforce Action Plan included as Attachment 3B for further details.

The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy is scheduled to be launched by the end of Q2, 2024. A pivotal aspect of this strategy is the re-establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Advisory and Monitoring Committee, featuring representatives from across the University to implement the strategy and attain its objectives. Co-chaired by the PVICE and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA), the committee includes members from Human Resources, senior management, and professional staff. Elections were conducted in 2023 to select Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff representatives.

In 2023, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff received various forms of support to facilitate their professional development and career progression. Notably, ISSP funds were utilised to cover expenses such as transcribing interviews for academic research. Additionally, financial assistance was provided for academic staff to attend the 7th International Digital Association for Visual Pedagogies 2023 conference in New Zealand, focusing on decolonising visibility and “visibilising” pedagogies. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to nurturing growth and success within the Indigenous academic community, contributing to the enrichment of the broader educational landscape through diverse perspectives and knowledge.

The University employs 15 Indigenous academics at Level C and above, including the PVCIE as the University’s most senior Indigenous academic appointment. A breakdown of positions by level can be found in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Senior Academic Roles

Level A		Level B		Level C	
NHMRC Grant-Funded Researchers	2	Lecturer x3	3	Senior Lecturer	3
Associate Lecturer	2	Lecturer in Music	2		
		Grant-Funded Researcher	1		
		Aboriginal Health Researcher	1		

There is a high level of synergy between the newly developed (draft) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2024-2026, and the University’s Workforce Action Plan. The recent redevelopment of the Employment Strategy saw the incorporation of more refined and realistic targets, and a more wholistic approach to achieving 3 percent Indigenous employment. Both the new Strategy and the Workforce Action Plan have clear measures, as well as appropriate priority areas, timelines and initiatives which will be fundamental in the University’s attempt to achieve the targets outlined. Figure 5 below shows a new publication produced by the University of Adelaide, a folding postcard size graphic representation of the University’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Figure 5 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce at a Glance

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at a glance

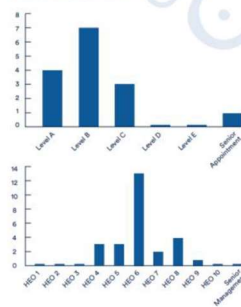
Staff Numbers



Division/ Faculty Breakdown



Classification Breakdown



37%
Academic



63%
Professional



66%
Female



34%
Male



0%
Gender X



39
Average employee age



4.3
Average years of service

As at 31 June 2023	2023	2022	2021	2020
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Total staff	41	39	43	35
By type				
Academic	15	16	13	9
Professional	26	23	30	26
Staff By Division and Faculty				
Division of Academic and Student Engagement	15	12	12	7
Division of External Engagement	1	2	1	0
Division of Research & Innovation	2	1	1	0
Division of University Operations	2	2	1	3
Faculty of Arts, Business, Law, and Economics	5	5	6	5
Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences	11	12	16	14
Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology	5	5	6	5
Vice-Chancellor and President	0	0	0	1
By Function				
Teaching and Research Function	6	5	5	4
Teaching only Function	4	2	1	1
Research only Function	4	8	7	4
Other Function	27	24	30	26

6.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

In 2023, Wirltu Yarlū underwent a comprehensive restructuring process which included the recruitment of 11 new positions and the creation of new roles. Existing roles and position descriptions were refreshed to align with functional areas and the redesigned unit structure. The Aboriginal Education Unit underwent a thorough redesign, with all aspects reviewed, operational plans finalised, and a DASE Plan on a Page developed during a two-day planning workshop. A Quality Management Framework (QMF) and Wirltu Yarlū values were developed and endorsed by staff, and a Risk Management Framework and Governance and Accountability Framework were also implemented. Additionally, various resources were created including Wirltu Yarlū Management and Operational Flowcharts. Wirltu Yarlū Management meetings were convened and minuted weekly, while all-staff meetings occurred monthly with program area reports submitted beforehand. These meetings focused on identifying actions, recommendations, and continuous improvement opportunities.

A comprehensive review of Indigenous committees at the University of Adelaide was conducted in 2023 as part of the IPR. One key recommendation was the establishment of a Vice-Chancellor’s (VC) First Nations Advisory Committee. This committee, comprised of three senior First Nations academic leaders from selected universities, would serve as the University’s principal advisory body on matters relating to Indigenous education, community engagement, and sectoral collaboration, reporting directly to the VC.

Additionally, the Indigenous Scholarships Committee was established in 2023 following a review of scholarships as part of the IPR. This committee manages oversight and communication of Indigenous scholarships across the University, ensuring consistency and management of reporting. Chaired by the Manager of Wirltu Yarlū, the committee comprises members from various University units and faculties, meeting 2-3 times annually in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

Furthermore, the IPR emphasised the importance of robust governance structures to support the forthcoming (draft) First Nations Strategy 2024–2025. Proposed mechanisms include the development of a First Nations Policy within the University’s policy framework, facilitating the implementation of the strategic plan.

6.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the guidelines, the Indigenous Governance Mechanism should make a statement with reference to the performance report and the acquittal report in this section.

As Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Engagement at the University of Adelaide, I can confirm that this performance report is a true and accurate record of the activities conducted by the University, and particularly Wirltu Yarlū.

The University of Adelaide has an ongoing commitment to achieving equitable participation and increasing success rates in tertiary education, improving engagement in research, and empowerment and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students.

The University is grateful to have access to the funding provided through the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) for the provision of activities as specified in the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017. In addition to ISSP, the University provides an additional (operating) budget to support these activities while also accessing Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funding.

Professor Steve Larkin
Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Engagement
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ISSP Performance Report Tables

ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2023 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ²	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ³								
Undergraduate ⁴	70,000	19	82,500	12	4,500	18	157,000	49
Post-graduate ⁵	2,000	1			2,500	9	4,500	10
Other								
Total	72,000	20	82,500	12	7,000	27	\$161,500	59

Tutorial assistance provided in 2023

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ⁶	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ⁷	Total hours of assistance ⁸	Expenditure ⁹ (\$)
Enabling	0	0	0	
Undergraduate	33	340	548	
Post-graduate	6	135	411	
Other	4	43	65	
Total	43	518	1025	\$70,808

ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students¹⁰

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.

A. 2022 Payments	40,000	11	52,500	8	750	3	93,250	22
B. 2023 Offers¹¹	20,000	5	82,500	11	2,250	9	104,750	25
C. Percentage¹² (C=B/A*100)							112.33	
2023 Payments	20,000	5	82,500	11	1,500	6	\$104,000	22

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2023. 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 2023 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 2023 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 2023 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2023 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2022 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).

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