Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2011-2013

Introduction
Federation University Australia acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagalk, Jadawadjali, Jaadwa, Wathaurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples as the traditional owners of the land where its campuses and centres are located.

The University shares the vision of Reconciliation Australia that recognises the special place and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians.

The University also recognises that reconciliation will only be achieved if the past is acknowledged, the present understood and the future based on equality, respect and genuine opportunity.

The University will contribute to the process of reconciliation with measures to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in education, health, employment and opportunity.

Purpose of the employment strategy
The purpose of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy is to establish the University’s priorities and plans for recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at all levels of the University.

Guiding principles for the employment strategy
The following principles guide the establishment of the University’s employment priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- Fostering respectful relationships and supporting a work environment that is tolerant and open to diversity and creates a sense of community;
- Having respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture, land and history; and
- Promoting opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Guiding key objective for the employment strategy
The University’s key objective that is relevant to and guides the employment strategy is creating a work environment where staff are valued and where there are opportunities for renewal, career development and leadership.

Employment strategy objectives
The objectives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy are to:
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• Employ a minimum of 15 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people spanning classification types and levels, and University campuses, including the utilisation of cadetships, traineeships, and graduate academic and teaching programs;

• Ensure the overwhelming majority of employees in the Aboriginal Education Centre are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people;

• Ensure the Manager of the Aboriginal Education Centre, and the Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment, are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons;

• Ensure the implementation of recruitment and merit selection procedures are culturally sensitive and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation spanning classification types and levels, and University campuses;

• Provide ongoing professional development and mentoring to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to support them in achieving their career aspirations; and

• Increase the retention rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the provision of a supportive and culturally sensitive work environment.

Implementation of the employment strategy objectives

In order to achieve the objectives of the employment strategy, the University will develop, implement and monitor an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Policy and Procedure to provide a co-ordinated and structured approach to:

• Recruitment and merit selection
  – Employment opportunities will be identified and targeted spanning classification types and levels, and University campuses.
  – Identified and targeted employment opportunities will actively be promoted through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups within the regions that the University operates and appropriate media.
  – Employment decisions will be based upon merit, including an applicant’s demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and demonstrated ability to communicate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

• Professional development
  – Professional Development Plans, incorporating career planning, will be developed and implemented for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  – All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be provided with information on and access to relevant training and professional development opportunities.
Retention

- All new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be provided with information and support to assist them in their transition into the University community.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will receive support to participate in activities of cultural or ceremonial nature.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be provided with ongoing support within the University community and their employment generally.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be offered the opportunity of mentoring.
- The University will provide cultural awareness training to promote employees’ understanding of the differences between themselves and employees from other cultures or other backgrounds.
- Exit interviews will be conducted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the data will be analysed in order to develop and implement strategies to address any problems experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and to increase retention rates.

The successful implementation of the employment strategy is dependent upon a centrally co-ordinated approach. The University will recruit and appoint a Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment with responsibility for promoting, implementing and monitoring the achievement of the employment strategy.

Promotion of the strategy

The University will promote the strategy both internally and across all campuses to Schools/Sections/Directorates, as well as externally within the communities where it operates.

Accountability and responsibility for the employment strategy

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate Services) is accountable for monitoring the achievement of the employment strategy objectives.

The Director, Human Resources is responsible for the implementation of the employment strategy.

The Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment will be responsible for providing assistance to Schools/Sections/Directorates on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment issues, including marketing University positions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
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The Employment Co-ordinator will also provide learning opportunities for University staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to better understand cultural and organisational sensitivities and expectations. The Employment Co-ordinator will also be responsible for liaising with internal and external stakeholders, and for developing an extensive network of contacts throughout the University, government agencies and the regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in order to contribute to the achievement of the employment strategy objectives.

Review and evaluation of the employment strategy

The University’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Implementation Working Party will review the employment strategy and provide advice on matters impacting on its implementation.

The RAP Implementation Working Party is also responsible for evaluating the achievement of the employment strategy objectives.

Through its RAP Implementation Committee, consultations will occur with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the local indigenous community and the unions on the review and evaluation of this employment strategy, and on adopting appropriate strategies to meet or exceed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets detailed in the University of Ballarat Union Collective Agreement 2010-2012.