

## **ACU National Indigenous Employment Strategy 2006-08**

### **1. Introduction**

Australian Catholic University is a public university, open to all, and offers specialist tertiary education in health, education, business and informatics, arts, social sciences and theology. It has six campuses in Ballarat, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, North Sydney and Strathfield. The University has approximately 11,000 students, 400 academic staff and 500 general staff.

In its Mission Statement, ACU National identifies a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and for the dignity of all human beings.

With particular reference to Indigenous people, the University's Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation acknowledges that Indigenous peoples of Australia are the original inhabitants of this country and that they continue to experience the "ongoing and significant" impact of past injustices.

In line with these principles and the University's responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation and policy, the University acknowledges the importance of implementing affirmative action strategies to help redress the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians.

Accordingly, ACU National has developed an Indigenous Employment Strategy to increase the employment of Indigenous staff at all levels of work activity and across all classification levels.

The University has set an initial goal of employing Indigenous staff in its workforce commensurate with the numbers of Indigenous people in the total Australian population. Therefore the University has set a conservative target of maintaining the current level of Indigenous employment and increasing it by six new Indigenous appointments over the next three years.

Note: In this context, the University uses the term "Indigenous" to refer to all people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or both, and as such are accepted by the community with which they are associated.

### **2. Guiding principles and aims**

The following principles underpin the University's Indigenous Employment Strategy:

- Recognition of the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians in relation to participation in education and employment, and recognition of the University's responsibilities to address that disadvantage in accordance with its Mission.

- Respect for and consideration of the diverse cultural, social and spiritual systems practised by Indigenous Australians.
- Recognition of the significant contribution of Indigenous Australian knowledge to all other bodies of knowledge.
- Acknowledgement of the scholarship and other contributions that Indigenous Australian employees bring to the University and to Australian society.
- Active promotion and positive inclusion of Indigenous Australian cultural practices and identities within the life of the University community.

The aims of the Indigenous Employment Strategy are to:

- Increase, encourage and foster Indigenous employment and participation at all levels of work activity and across all classification levels.
- Achieve improved employment and retention of Indigenous employees through the provision of a supportive and rewarding work environment which encourages Indigenous people to establish careers at ACU National and pursue training and career development activities.
- Ensure that in the development, implementation and evaluation of initiatives to redress Indigenous disadvantage, the University is guided by consultation and collaboration with Indigenous people, their communities and community organisations.
- Enhance University culture, knowledge and scholarship with the formal and informal contributions of Indigenous staff and community members.

### **3. Objectives and strategies**

#### **3.1 Recruitment**

##### ***Objective***

**To increase employment of Indigenous staff to 2% of University staff by 2008.**

##### ***Strategies***

- Find suitable positions that may particularly interest Indigenous people/ find continuing positions for the recruitment of Indigenous applicants, some of which may be “identified” specifically for Indigenous people.
- Assist Faculties and Units to identify opportunities for Indigenous employment in all levels of work activity at the University, both academic and non-academic, preferably ongoing.
- Identify suitable wording for inclusion in all relevant duty statements and job advertisements.

- Identify suitable media in each State and Territory to advertise positions.
- Prepare Guidelines for Selection Panels on issues associated with recruiting Indigenous staff; provide training on the Guidelines to Selection Panel members.
- Ensure appropriate representation of Indigenous staff on Selection Panels for identified Indigenous positions.
- Identify and, where appropriate, pursue external Indigenous Employment program funding (eg traineeships, National Indigenous Cadetships, Structured Training and Employment Programs, Wage Assistance).
- Encourage and support Indigenous students in the pursuit of academic careers at ACU National.
- Define and highlight the opportunities ACU National can offer together with the benefits of being part of the ACU National workforce, and
  - communicate this to Indigenous networks, communities and individuals through existing Indigenous staff and students;
  - incorporate this information into a brochure for general dissemination to Indigenous people who have the potential to become staff at ACU National.

## 3.2 Retention

### *Objective*

**To maximise retention rates through the provision of a culturally sensitive, supportive and rewarding work environment for Indigenous employees.**

### *Strategies*

- Provide Indigenous Cultural Awareness training for existing staff, targeting supervisors and work colleagues of current and new Indigenous employees.
- Develop suitable Indigenous cultural material to be included in the ACU National Induction Program for all new staff.
- Continue to promote culturally friendly Indigenous space on campus through exhibitions, artwork, campus activities during significant weeks, and Indigenous participation in University events such as “Welcome to Country” and acknowledgement of traditional land ownership.
- Develop support systems for Indigenous staff through the University’s Indigenous Support Units.
- Maintain Enterprise Agreement and University policy provisions which accommodate cultural, community and family responsibilities.
- Encourage new and existing Indigenous staff members to become aware of, and avail themselves of, the above provisions.

- Develop the recommended ACU National Network of Indigenous Staff and establish the mechanisms to enable this Network to operate effectively within the University.
- Investigate and possibly establish other support mechanisms such as a mentoring program and/or a peer support program.
- Encourage resigning Indigenous staff members to participate in exit interviews and report on issues through de-identified feedback.

### **3.3 Training and career development**

#### ***Objective***

**To provide support and encouragement for Indigenous staff members to establish careers at ACU National and to pursue training and career development.**

#### ***Strategies***

- Facilitate the direct involvement of Indigenous staff in identifying their own career development goals and training needs, and identify how best these can be met within the current ACU National Learning and Development Program.
- Provide support and encouragement for Indigenous staff to acquire tertiary and certificate qualifications.
- Facilitate the use of study leave among Indigenous employees who wish to develop their careers.
- Identify and encourage participation in secondment and other career development opportunities within and external to ACU National.

### **3.4 Partnerships and consultation**

#### ***Objective***

**To establish strategic partnerships across University, government, Indigenous communities and community organisations in support of ongoing consultation and liaison and enhanced employment opportunities**

#### ***Strategies***

- Build on the University's links with Indigenous communities and community organisations to facilitate dialogue, consultation and involvement in University events.
- Consult and involve the ACU National Indigenous Units on the implementation of this Strategy.
- Invite Indigenous participation in University events.

### **3.5 Implementation, Reporting and Evaluation**

#### ***Objectives***

**To promote the Indigenous Employment Strategy within and external to the University;**

**To implement, evaluate and report on the initiatives contained within this Strategy**

#### ***Strategies***

- Promote the ACU National Indigenous Employment Strategy among the University community, stakeholder organisations, and Indigenous community organisations and networks.
- Seek funding and other support for the employment of an Indigenous Employment Coordinator.
- Seek funding in support of initiatives.
- Establish a Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of this Indigenous Employment Strategy (prepare Terms of Reference; invite participation; establish timeframes for completion of tasks and reporting). See Attachment 1 for the proposed membership of the Steering Committee.
- Establish implementation and reporting tasks and deadlines for the initiatives contained within the University's Indigenous Employment Strategy.
- Monitor the effectiveness of all strategies in achieving the University's goal of increasing representation of Indigenous staff.