



# First Nations Leadership Core Plan 2022 – 2026

## Acknowledgement

Charles Darwin University acknowledges and respects the many Australian First Nations traditional custodians of the lands upon which our campuses and centres are located. We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Larrakia who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Darwin Casuarina, Waterfront and Palmerston campuses are located; to the Arrernte who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Alice Springs campus is located; to the Jawoyn, Wardaman and Dagomon who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Katherine campuses are located; to the Gadigal who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Sydney campus is located; to the Turrbal and Yuggera who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Brisbane centre is located; to the Woiworung who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Melbourne centre is located; to the Kurna who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Adelaide centre is located; to the Whadjuk who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Perth centre is located; to the Kundjey'mi who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Jabiru centre is located; to the Warumungu who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Tennant Creek centre is located; and to the Kungarakana (Batchelor and Adelaide River), the Yolngu (northeast Arnhem Land) and the Tiwi (Tiwi Islands).

We acknowledge Australian First Nations peoples' long tradition of sustaining their communities and environments over thousands of years. They are the first educators and first innovators. They are the holders of knowledge that makes an important contribution to the improvement of our local, national, and global communities. We extend our respect to Elders - past, present, and emerging - and to all First Nations peoples.

## Context

The development of this First Nations Leadership Core Plan (FNLCP) is steeped in our commitment to create positive impacts for First Nations peoples and acknowledges the long line of leaders (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) who have made significant contributions to this cause. We have integrated and reviewed previous and current priority initiatives to align with CDU's new Strategic Plan and drawn on University expertise to ensure a whole-of-university approach is embraced and implemented. Our institution has graduated more than 1000 First Nations HE students and more than 12,000 in VET, and we continue our impact by delivering courses across more than 150 locations throughout the NT. We achieve national parity targets for First Nations employment and First Nations student participation rates, albeit, we have more work to do to achieve parity with the NT population.

'First Nations Peoples' refers collectively to Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as reflected in this Core Plan. The words 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' are also used respectfully in CDU documents. We respect diverse views regarding terms.

## Our Commitment to First Nations Education

As the only University based in the Northern Territory (NT), we have a genuine commitment to our current and prospective First Nations students. We are proud to boast that a large percentage study online enabling them to remain on-Country, in their homes and with family and community. As a dual sector University, we deliver both Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education degrees to First Nations Australians. We purposefully engage with First Nations peoples, businesses, representative bodies, NGOs and more, and we strategically engage First Nations researchers, academics and thought leaders nationally and globally in our commitment to First Nations education.

## Implementation of the FNL Core Plan

The CDU First Nations Leadership Core Plan describes a program of work (2021-2026) that will:

- Support a **diverse range** of First Nations students to succeed, particularly those who face structural and systemic educational disadvantage;
- Maintain **culturally safe spaces** on campus where First Nations students, researchers and community members can convene for academic, social, peer and cultural support, and work with other Faculties and Divisions to activate similar spaces across CDU campuses and online;
- Work with the People and Culture team to **increase First Nations employment** numbers, pathways and professional development opportunities, and to deliver **enhanced intercultural** understanding and practice for all CDU Staff, contractors and Adjuncts;
- Support the CDU approach to **reconciliation** with First Nations peoples, including the establishment and implementation of best practice First Nations **governance** and reporting mechanisms;
- Scope and develop what **First Nations Leadership** means at CDU, and build networks (e.g. alumni, philanthropic) to deliver innovative ideas that develop First Nations Leadership capacities; and
- Strengthen the University’s capacity to engage with First Nations peoples meaningfully and purposefully, including the use and development of **First Nations marketing and media strategies**.

## Implementation Plan

Strategic Plan Goal 1	Enhance delivery and expand opportunities in regional, rural and remote training and education
Initiatives	Actions 2023
<p><b>1.2 Grow Australian First Nations student enrolments and completions</b></p> <p>-Widen participation for regional, rural and remote school students through our schools’ engagement activities and VET in schools’ program.</p> <p>-Provide effective bridging, pathways and skills foundations courses to scaffold and support non-traditional students.</p> <p>-Design new and effective learner support initiatives to improve completion rates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver and expand the <b>Bidjipidji</b> School Camp for NT First Nations high school students.</li> <li>- Deliver and review <b>PTS* and TEP</b> programs for First Nations students</li> <li>- Review and expand First Nations <b>student scaffolding programs</b> (eg. IASW) and incentivise completion.</li> <li>- Undertake <b>nuanced research</b> on CDU First Nations learner support needs</li> </ul> <p>*in partnership with BIITE</p>

<b>Strategic Plan Goal 2</b>	<b>Be the most recognised university for Australian First Nations training, education, and research</b>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Actions 2023</b>
<p><b>2.1 Improve Australian First Nations student access, participation and success in training and education programs</b></p> <p>-Expand and improve access and delivery of literacy and numeracy programs (LL&amp;N).</p> <p>-Enhance our First Nations student support model, with a focus on student success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore options for dedicated response to <b>LL&amp; N</b> in NT First Nations communities including funding and/or partnerships.</li> <li>- Expand the diversity of <b>services of First Nations Student Support</b> &amp; develop clear processes for engagement with SES and other CDU divisions</li> </ul>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Actions 2023-26</b>
<p><b>2.2 Creating a culturally enriched and culturally safe environment for Australian First Nations Students</b></p> <p>-Expand cultural competency programs to ensure all staff are equipped to engage appropriately with First Nations peoples.</p> <p>-Be a leader in delivering cultural competency programs, in collaboration with First Nations partners, for the benefit of business and industries in the Northern Territory and across Australia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot <b>expanded Intercultural Program</b> for staff, refine and deliver new program.</li> <li>- Build on staff <b>Intercultural Program</b> for extended stakeholder delivery (eg. students, fee-for-service)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.3 Learn from Australian First Nations peoples</b></p> <p>-Develop more partnerships with First Nations communities to deliver education and training on Country.</p> <p>-Embed First Nations knowledge into our curriculum.</p> <p>-Include appropriate First Nations languages in the University throughout our campuses, curriculum and community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build on existing First Nations relationships to progress <b>agreements</b> for mutually beneficial Education &amp; Training delivery</li> <li>- Work with First Nations language speakers, <b>Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee</b>, academics and researchers to explore appropriate use of languages.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.4 Increasing CDU's Australian First Nations staffing profile</b></p> <p>-Provide First Nations staff with more job opportunities beyond specific government funding requirements.</p> <p>-Increase the attraction and retention of First Nations staff.</p> <p>-Make CDU an employer of choice for First Nations peoples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead the implementation of the CDU <b>FNL Workforce</b> Committee</li> <li>- Review best practice in increasing <b>First Nations workforce</b> in the Higher Education sector and develop a detailed FNL Workforce Strategy including recruitment, professional development and retention.</li> <li>- Implement new <b>FNL Workforce Strategy</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>2.5 Realising our aspirations for First Nations Leadership</b></p> <p>-Establish a First Nations Leadership steering committee.</p> <p>-Establish a globally connected First Nations Leadership Network to include staff, students, and alumni.</p> <p>-Implement First Nations engagement plans for each College/Division within CDU.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead the implementation of the <b>Vice Chancellor's First Nations Engagement Committee</b> and the <b>CDU First Nations Leadership Steering Committee</b></li> <li>- Build <b>Faculty capacity</b> for engaging with First Nations opportunities.</li> <li>- Where appropriate, formalise <b>FNL networks</b> and partnerships</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.6 Strengthening our First Nations research focus</b></p> <p>-Establish scholarships for First Nations students enrolled in Honours, Masters by Research and PhD programs.</p> <p>-Improve communications and information sharing of CDU's recognised strengths in First Nations research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver First Nations <b>HDR</b> candidate workshop</li> <li>- Work with partners and philanthropists to seek flexible and supplementary <b>scholarships</b> for First Nations students</li> <li>- Develop opportunities to <b>promote</b> CDU's First Nations <b>researchers</b> &amp; partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Goal 6</b></p>	<p><b>Create a student experience where every student can connect and succeed.</b></p>
<p><b>Initiatives</b></p>	<p><b>Actions 2023-2026</b></p>
<p><b>6.1 Implement a Transformative Teaching and Learning Plan</b></p> <p>-Ensure our learning and teaching practices are inclusive and appropriate for First Nations students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Embed <b>First Nations knowledges</b> and perspectives into CDU curriculum (e.g. Common unit / Learnline in Yolgnu / micro-credentialling etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.4 Partnering with Students to co-design a Campus and Community Activation Plan</b></p> <p>-Enhance student experience across all campuses - physical and digital.</p> <p>-Open our campuses to become part of the fabric of our local communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage First Nations students and communities in the enhancement of student experiences all <b>campuses</b>.</li> <li>- Deliver, enhance and promote <b>community events</b> for First Nations peoples and others.</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Plan Goal 7</b>	<b>Be an employer of choice where people feel supported and happy</b>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Actions 2023-2026</b>
<p><b>7.5 Celebrate staff success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reinvigorate and improve the Vice-Chancellor’s Staff Awards.</li> <li>-Hold an annual Staff Recognition Ceremony.</li> <li>-Encourage staff recognition and success at all levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nominate and promote First Nations <b>staff successes</b> through the Vice-Chancellor’s Staff Awards and at the NT Training Awards.</li> <li>- <b>Recognise</b> First Nations staff interprofessional collaboration in research, education and training &amp; promote through Media.</li> </ul>

### CDU: Key Performance Indicators

Student and staff metrics commit to increase the whole-of-university accountability for First Nations outcomes, and importantly, we will develop comprehensive and appropriate evaluation tools and frameworks that take a strengths-based approach, respect principles of data sovereignty, and acknowledge the complexity and interconnectedness of our work.

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