



Indigenous Student Success Program

2025 Performance Report



Australian Government

Indigenous Student Success Program

The Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) provides supplementary funding to universities to help students take on the demands of university and succeed. Universities can offer scholarships, tutorial assistance, mentoring, safe cultural spaces and other personal support services to First Nations students using ISSP funding. The flexibility of the ISSP assists universities to tailor their services to match student needs.

ISSP funding is prioritised towards supporting First Nations students who are financially disadvantaged and/or from remote and regional areas.

Universities receive ISSP funding based on enrolments, unit success rates and course completions of First Nations students. A special loading also recognises the additional costs associated with assisting Indigenous students from regional and remote areas.

Indigenous Student Success Program

2025 Performance Report

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Acknowledgment of Country and recognition of Australian First Nations traditional owners and cultures

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 Education and Community Precinct, Casuarina, Waterfront, and Palmerston campuses and centres are located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Arrernte who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Alice Springs campus is located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Jawoyn, Wardaman and Dagomon who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Katherine campuses are located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Gadigal who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Sydney campus is located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Turrbal and Yuggera who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Brisbane centre is located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Warumungu who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Tennant Creek centre is located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Yolngu who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Nhulunbuy centre is located.

We also acknowledge and pay our respect to the Mirrarr (Jabiru), the Kungarakan and Warrai (Batchelor and Adelaide River), the Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt) and the Tiwi (Tiwi Islands) people.

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 people.

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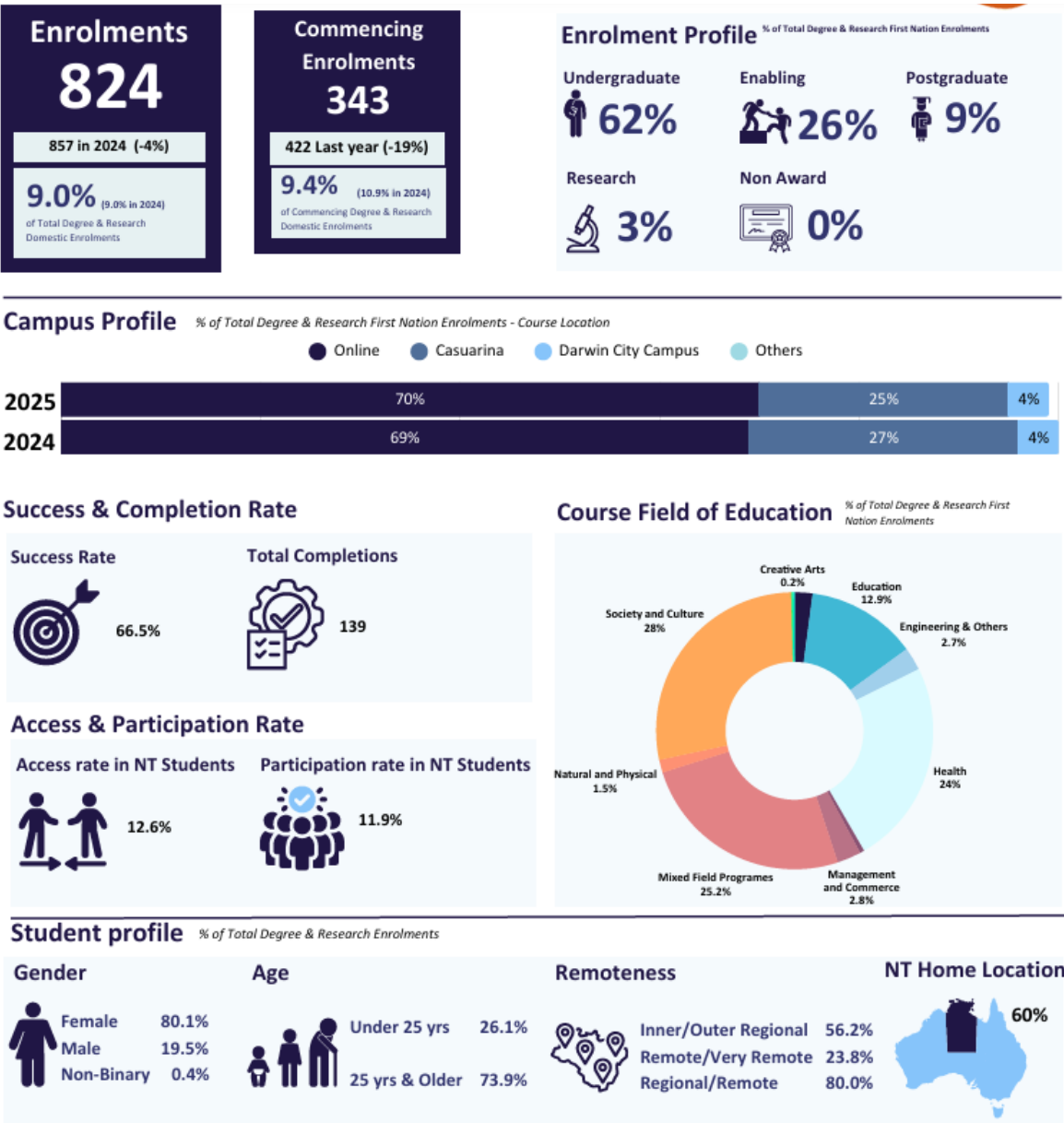
Declaration

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.

Context (2025)

In 2025, CDU enrolled 824 First Nations students in HE, representing a modest 4% decrease from 2024 with 9.0% of total degree and research domestic enrolments. A significant majority of students are aged 25 years and over (73.9%). First Nations student success rate of 60% in 2025. 80% of First Nations students residing in regional, remote, or very remote areas. Access and participation outcomes in 2025 have strengthen this is indicated by the HE Access Rate increasing to 12.6% and the Participation Rate to 11.9%. Strong representation is in Society and Culture (28%), Mixed Field Programs (25.2%), Health (24%), and Education (12.9%).

Figure 1: CDU's First Nations Higher Education Student Profile, 2025



Enrolments (Access)

The 2025 First Nations enrolment profile demonstrates a shift towards strengthened student progression, retention, and study intensity compared to 2024. While commencing student numbers moderated following the 2024 peak (headcount decreasing from 252 to 196 and EFTSL from 129.4 to 109.7), this reflects a recalibration of new student intake alongside a greater emphasis on supporting success and transition for existing cohorts. This strategic focus is evidenced in the strong gains in continuing student outcomes. Non-commencing enrolments increased across all measures, with headcount rising from 383 in 2024 to 404 in 2025 and EFTSL increasing significantly from 190.4 to 219.0. This represents a notable uplift in student load and engagement, indicating that continuing students are persisting and undertaking higher levels of study. At a whole-of-cohort level, although total headcount reduced from 626 to 587, overall EFTSL increased from 319.8 to 328.7. This demonstrates a positive shift toward increased study intensity and sustained participation, with more students progressing through their courses and maintaining meaningful enrolment loads. Collectively, the 2025 data reflects strengthened progression outcomes and improved retention, highlighting the impact of targeted support strategies and a student success-focused approach. This positions the University well in delivering sustainable growth through successful student pathways rather than reliance on commencing volume alone.

Enrolments 2025

		2022	2023	2024	2025
Commence	Headcount	246	223	252	196
	Course Enrolments	251	230	258	197
	EFTSL	107.3	109.6	129.4	109.7
Non Commencing	Headcount	486	407	383	404
	Course Enrolments	498	415	390	409
	EFTSL	253.4	207.0	190.4	219.0
Grand Total	Headcount	727	622	626	587
	Course Enrolments	749	645	648	606
	EFTSL	360.6	316.6	319.8	328.7

Outreach and Engagement

The Bidjipidji School Program is a three-day outreach initiative designed to introduce First Nations secondary students across the Northern Territory to university pathways through culturally safe, on-country and campus-based experiences. In 2025, the program engaged 29 students from nine schools, contributing to a total of 148 participants since 2021. The program successfully increased students’ understanding and confidence in accessing higher education, with evaluation data showing a 40-percentage-point improvement in university readiness and high satisfaction (4.25/5). Students reported strengthened cultural connection, personal growth, and a greater awareness of study options. The program met its intended outcomes, demonstrating strong impact in aspiration-building and early pathway engagement. Key lessons highlight the need for earlier planning, stronger partnerships with schools and stakeholders, improved governance and tracking processes, and more age-appropriate, activity-based design. From 2026, the program will transition under a new funding model, with a revised structure including an academy component and a dedicated middle school experience to further strengthen impact and reach.

Unit Entry & Readiness - First Nations Pathways Program

The First Nations Pathways Program provides a coordinated suite of tertiary preparation programs designed to support First Nations students to transition into university study. In 2025, the program expanded significantly, engaging 81 students across disciplines including teacher education, health, law and engineering, compared to 27 in 2024. The program combines academic preparation with strong wrap-around support, including First Nations tutors, mentoring, and culturally safe learning environments, to build confidence, belonging and readiness for higher education. The program achieved its intended outcomes, with increased enrolments, strong retention, and clear progression pathways into further study, particularly in law, health and enabling programs. Growth in applications, including a notable increase from remote communities, demonstrates improved reach and impact. Lessons learned highlight the importance of strengthened administrative processes, increased tutoring support, and earlier, more targeted outreach to remote communities. Continued refinement and investment will further strengthen student transitions and long-term success.

2025 was a year of consolidation and strengthened delivery rather than the introduction of new initiatives. The University maintained continuity in pathway program design and delivery, with no major structural changes implemented during this period. Instead, there was a sustained institutional focus on enhancing support and engagement for First Nations students across the University. This included ongoing improvements in coordination, student support services and culturally informed engagement practices. First Nations focused data reporting was undertaken in 2025, with available indicators showing that student outcomes remained consistent with established positive trends observed in previous years. The 2025 data findings throughout this report suggest that existing programs and support mechanisms continue to be effective in supporting access, participation, and success. Overall, 2025 can be characterised as a year of embedding and strengthening existing approaches, ensuring stability while reinforcing the quality and reach of support for First Nations students.

Commonwealth Scholarships

Scholarships provide successful student applicants with assistance for cost-of-living expenses and allows them to invest in education resources to support their study. These financial payments continue to make a positive contribution to First Nations student success at CDU. In 2025, scholarship support was delivered consistently across enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts with a total of \$408,500 provided to 117 students. Education cost scholarships represented the largest proportion of payments (131 awards). In the absence of significant changes to scholarship settings or program delivery in 2025, this distribution reflects the continuation of CDU’s established approach to financial support.

Table 1 ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2025 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ¹	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ¹	\$45,000	18	\$4,000	1	\$-	0	\$49,000	13
Undergraduate ¹	\$262,500	105	\$12,000	3	\$55,500	37	\$330,000	98
Post-graduate ¹	\$20,000	8	\$-	0	\$9,500	6	\$29,500	6
Other								
Total	\$327,500	131	\$16,000	4	\$65,000	43	\$408,500	117

First Nations Leadership in 2025 has experienced increased program and support activity reflecting continued growth in First Nations student enrolments across CDU. This growth has been supported by the ongoing success of the First Nations Education and Health Hubs, which provide culturally informed learning environments and targeted academic support for students studying in key disciplines. The hubs strengthen student engagement, retention and progression, while building a stronger sense of community among CDU First Nations students.

Progression (outcomes)

First Nations Student Support and Engagement Team

The First Nations Student Support and Engagement (FNSSE) team assisted First Nations students during the 2025 reporting year to feel welcome and connected to networks of support across the university. The range of support services/programs included student advocacy, pastoral care, academic support, HE course information and pathways, and referrals to other specialised support services. They also worked in partnership with lecturing staff in all faculties to provide targeted support to students who had shown early signs of learning disengagement. In 2025, the first nations student satisfaction survey was not completed. Two well established First Nations student Centres at CDU provided a culturally safe and culturally enriched environment for students visiting CDU campuses. The Gurinbey Centre located on the Casuarina campus in Darwin, and the Akaltye Centre located on our Alice Springs Campus, have a range of support programs and Services designed to support first Nations students increasing their rates of success in the higher education endeavours.

In 2025, the University focused on consolidating and optimising existing student support programs. This approach led to increased utilisation and demonstrated impact, particularly within tutorial support services. The First Nations Leadership portfolio experienced a period of significant change, including leadership transitions, staff movements, and vacancies. Despite these challenges, the portfolio maintained the effectiveness of established mechanisms, processes, and outcomes, ensuring minimal disruption to First Nations students.

Tutorial assistance and mentoring

One of the most significant academic support programs provided by the FNSS team is the Tutorial Support (TS) program. This program is funded directly by the ISSP and provided at no cost to eligible First Nations students. In 2025, a total of 190 students accessed the TS program, up from 156 in 2024 (+21.8%). The majority of students were enrolled in undergraduate study (102), followed by enabling (47), postgraduate (22), and other study modes (19). Students participated in a total of 3,699 tutorial sessions (+7.1%) and received 7,698.75 hours of academic support (+6.8%). Total program expenditure was \$470,882.50, a 6.4% increase from 2024. The Tutorial Support program remains a critical component of student success at CDU, providing personalised academic assistance that supports student confidence, progression, and retention. The increase in utilisation across all measures in 2025 highlights both the growing demand for tailored academic support and the importance of culturally responsive tutoring in improving student outcomes.

Table 2 Tutorial assistance provided in 2025

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ¹	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ²	Total hours of assistance ³	Expenditure ⁴ (\$)
Enabling	47	744	1,985.00	\$123,665.00
Undergraduate	102	2035	4,040.00	\$244,977.50
Postgraduate	22	446	925.50	\$55,530.00
Other	19	474	748.25	\$46,710.00
Total	190	3699	7,698.75	\$470,882.50

CDU First Nations Governance Structure

First Nations governance committees at CDU continued to play a key role in the university. Consisting of the Vice-Chancellors First Nations Engagement Committee (VCFNEC), the First Nations Workforce Committee (FNWC) and the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee (FNLSC), these formal governance committees provide opportunities for First Nations issues to be embedded in the core business of the university. These committees consist of many of the Senior Executive Team (SET) members including the Vice Chancellor, DVC First Nations Leadership, DVC Research and Innovation and Provost, ensuring First Nations issues, particularly First Nations success in Higher Education, is part of the core business of the university. A governance analysis was performed in the later half of 2025, to improve First Nations Governance at CDU and implementation progress updates will be provided in the 2026 report.

First Nations Academic in Residence

This position remained current and filled by Dr. Aunty Bilawara Lee. During 2025 she provided ongoing cultural leadership across the University, supporting senior executives, staff, and students through culturally informed advice and guidance.

Non ISSP Funded First Nations Cultural Safety and Engagement

Garma Festival 2025 (NON ISSP FUNDED)

Charles Darwin University supported the participation of nine staff members and two First Nations student delegates, Leela Kruger and Jordon Briston, at the Garma Festival in North East Arnhem Land from 1–4 August 2025, alongside Elder-in-Residence Aunty B. CDU staff contributed to the national dialogue through presentations exploring the complexity of regional health issues impacting Yolŋu communities and highlighting the importance of community-led, culturally grounded approaches to health and wellbeing. Student participation was a key feature of CDU's presence, with both delegates bringing strong community-connected experience and perspectives shaped by work in education, language advocacy, and remote community engagement. Their involvement reflected CDU's commitment to inclusive regional representation and the development of First Nations student leadership. Participation at Garma provided opportunities for culturally grounded mentoring, strengthened identity and networks, and engagement in national conversations on First Nations education and development. This experience contributed to building student confidence and leadership capability while reinforcing CDU's role as an active partner in shaping First Nations futures across Northern Australia.

Indigenous National Games Team Dungubila (NON ISSP FUNDED)

In 2025, Charles Darwin University supported the participation of 13 First Nations students and two staff members at the UniSport Indigenous Nationals, held from 23–27 June at the University of Western Australia in Perth. The annual event brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students from across Australia to engage in sport, cultural exchange, leadership development, and peer connection within a supportive and culturally strong environment. CDU students represented the University across basketball, netball, volleyball, and touch football, while also participating in the broader leadership and engagement program. Participation contributed to strengthened peer networks, increased connection to the national First Nations student community, and enhanced confidence, teamwork, and leadership capability. The experience also supported a stronger sense of belonging and identity within the university, while reinforcing CDU's commitment to initiatives that promote engagement, wellbeing, and student success beyond the classroom.



Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture – Campfire Yarning with Charlie King (NON ISSP FUNDED)

The Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture, hosted annually by Charles Darwin University (CDU), is a powerful tribute to the legacy of Vincent Lingiari and the historic Wave Hill Walk-Off of 1966- a pivotal moment in the Aboriginal land rights movement. This year the lecture was held on Wednesday 6th August 2025 with Gurindji man Mr Charlie King OAM AM, gathering the audience around the campfire for an evening of truth-telling, storytelling and song. Charlie shared the emotional journey of walking in his mother's footsteps and the challenge of living in two worlds. He reflected on a life dedicated to building safer, stronger futures for First Nations peoples. The lecture also featured a special performance by ARIA Award-winning artist Sara Storer and a moving song by Charlies 17-year-old niece, Sky Nelson.



Gurindji Art Exhibition Gallery – ArtHouse Café – CDU Casuarina Campus (NON ISSP FUNDED)

Coinciding with the annual Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture, First Nations Leadership on behalf of CDU collaborated with Karungkarni Art Centre to present a new Gurindji art exhibition known as Wanyjika-warla: Finding Yourself on Gurindji Country, hosted at the Arthouse Café at the CDU Casuarina Campus - August 7 – November 7, 2025. The exhibition showcases a series of paintings created for a forthcoming collaborative children's book, inspired by the intricate navigational language of the Gurindji people and their profound relationship with the land.

Culturally Safe First Nations Student Accommodation (NON ISSP FUNDED)

A 12-month lease for Building 14 at CLV was secured to provide dedicated on-campus accommodation for First Nations students, creating a culturally safe living and study environment for those undertaking compulsory placements and training at CDU. Preparatory works included upgrades to furnishings and student amenities to enhance comfort, wellbeing, and support positive learning outcomes.

NAIDOC Week Engagements (NON ISSP FUNDED)



In 2025, the First Nations Leadership (FNL) portfolio continued to prioritise culturally safe and community-led engagement through its support of key NAIDOC Week activities and partnerships. FNL delivered a NAIDOC Week lunchtime celebration at Casuarina Campus, bringing together staff, students, and local community through a culturally inclusive event featuring food, local stalls, and opportunities for connection

and recognition of First Nations contributions to CDU. In addition, FNL strengthened its strategic relationship with the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation through sponsorship of the Larrakia NAIDOC Ball, including the presentation of the CDU Scholar of the Year Award to Matthew Djirrimarra Atu. These activities reflect FNL's intentional approach to engaging with community in ways that are culturally respectful, place-based, and relationship-driven, ensuring that recognition, celebration, and student achievement are embedded within broader community contexts. This model of engagement supports student belonging, strengthens community partnerships, and reinforces CDU's role as a culturally responsive institution within the Northern Territory.

Improved impact of the Away from Base Program (NON ISSP FUNDED)

The Away-from-Base (AFB) program continued to provide critical financial support for student travel related to compulsory training and placements for both Higher Education and TAFE students. In 2025, the program doubled its impact, supporting 568 students, up from 269 in 2023, reflecting its growing reach and effectiveness.

First Nations Teacher Training Education Hub (NON ISSP FUNDED)

Since its establishment in 2024, the Hub expanded beyond the initial Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) program to deliver a more integrated, pipeline approach supporting Aboriginal educators from enabling pathways through to higher education qualifications and into professional practice. The Hub functions not only as a delivery platform but also as a coordination and innovation centre, integrating academic, cultural, and community expertise. Through targeted support structures, tutorial support, flexible delivery modes, and culturally grounded curriculum design, the Hub continued to build the capability and confidence of Aboriginal educators across diverse locations. In doing so, it contributed to the development of a sustainable, locally led teaching workforce and supported improved educational outcomes for First Nations students and educators across the Northern Territory.

First Nations Knowledges and Educator Community of Practice (NON ISSP FUNDED)

Throughout 2025, the strengthening culturally responsive leadership, teaching practice, and workforce development initiatives that support First Nations student access, participation, progression, retention, and completion across the Northern Territory. This included the design and delivery of intercultural and culturally responsive training for educators, leaders, university staff, and external organisations, with a strong emphasis on cultural safety, relational practice, and embedding Aboriginal Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing within education contexts. A key initiative was the establishment of the Indigenous Educator Community of Practice, which created a culturally safe networking, mentoring, and peer support space for First Nations educators and education workers across remote, regional, and urban settings. The Community of Practice focused on professional connection, leadership development, workforce pathways, and strengthening engagement with higher education and the teaching profession.

Additional work included the co-design and development of culturally grounded leadership and adult learning initiatives delivered through on-Country and community-led approaches, alongside workshops exploring Bininj pedagogy and culturally responsive training practices for First Nations learners. Also developed and facilitated was the “Yarn Up: Teaching Our Way” podcast initiative, which amplified the stories and experiences of Aboriginal educators and leaders to promote positive representation, professional visibility, and aspirational pathways into education and leadership. Collectively, these initiatives complement broader university student support services by strengthening culturally responsive systems, building leadership and workforce capability, increasing community engagement, and supporting culturally safe learning environments that contribute to improved educational outcomes for First Nations students.



Completions (outcomes)

Course Completions (by Basis of Admission) 2025

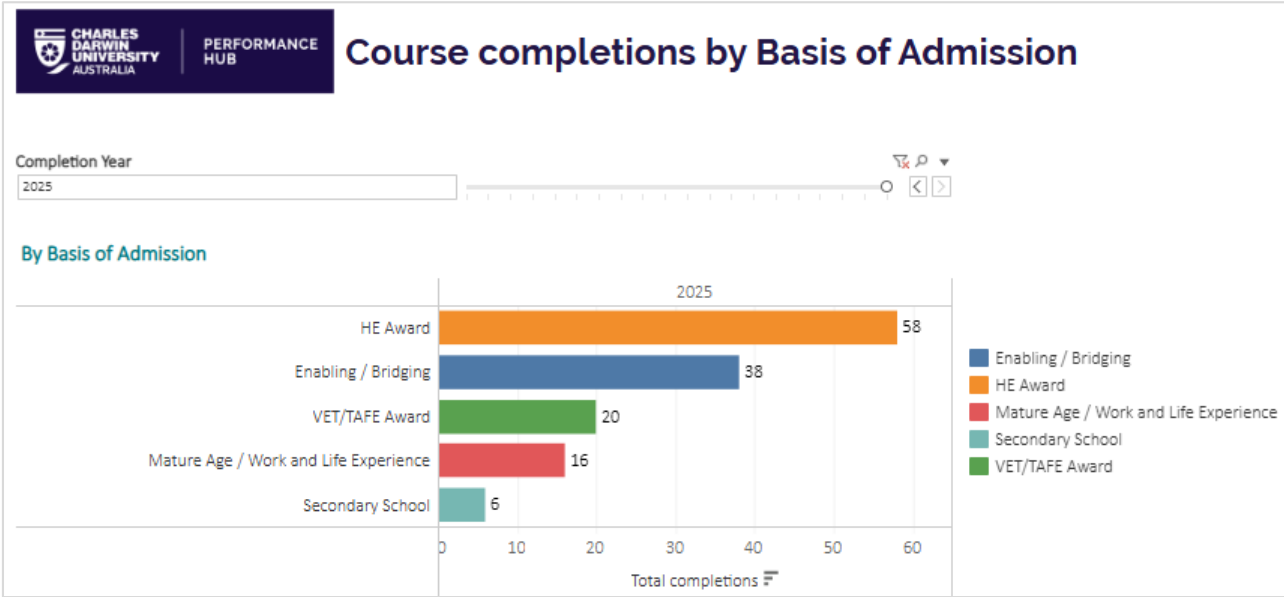
Course completions in 2025 demonstrate the diversity of entry pathways supporting student success at CDU. The largest proportion of completions is from students admitted on the basis of a Higher Education (HE) award (58 completions), indicating strong progression and completion outcomes for students articulating within the higher education sector.

Pathway programs continue to play a significant role, with 38 completions from Enabling/Bridging programs, reinforcing the importance of these programs in supporting access, transition, and successful progression into higher education.

Completions from VET/TAFE pathways (20) and Mature Age/Work and Life Experience entry (16) further highlight the contribution of non-traditional pathways in enabling student success and supporting diverse learner cohorts.

A smaller proportion of completions is attributed to Secondary School entry (6), reflecting the comparatively lower direct transition from school into completion within this cohort.

Overall, the data highlights CDU’s strength in supporting multiple entry pathways, particularly enabling and alternative entry routes, which continue to underpin completion outcomes and broaden participation in higher education.



Student Care & Connect Program - Connecting Students, Strengthening Journeys

In December 2025, First Nations Student Services launched the Student Care & Connect initiative, strengthening opportunities for peer connection, culturally grounded engagement, and a sense of belonging through structured activities that support students across their transition into university life and beyond. The program aims to provide a more coordinated approach to culturally appropriate inclusion, wellbeing support, and leadership development for First Nations students at CDU.

Through this initiative, anticipated outcomes include:

- Improved student engagement and sense of belonging within the CDU First Nations student community
- Increased participation in campus life and FNSS-led activities
- Stronger connections between students, peers, and First Nations support staff
- Enhanced access to culturally grounded wellbeing and support initiatives
- Increased participation in student leadership and peer engagement opportunities
- Development of transferable leadership and employability capabilities
- Improved progression into second year through strengthened early connection and support pathways

Together these activities support a more connected student experience and contribute to CDU’s broader priorities around transition, retention, wellbeing, and culturally responsive student success.

Launch of the Danala Campus First Nations Student Space

First Nations Student Services was proud to celebrate the opening of our new First Nations student space at the Danala campus, located on Larrakia Country in the heart of Darwin City.

The launch marks an important milestone in strengthening culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at the city campus. The Danala space has been thoughtfully established to support students to connect, study, yarn, and feel a strong sense of belonging while on campus. This new space reflects CDU’s ongoing commitment to supporting First Nations student success from enrolment through to graduation. It provides a welcoming environment where students can engage with First Nations Student Services staff, access academic and pastoral support, and connect with peers in a culturally grounded setting. The Danala campus, First Nations student space strengthens the visibility and presence of First Nations students and support services within the city campus community, creating another place where culture, connection and learning come together.

CDU Graduations

The 2025 Graduation ceremonies at CDU were important milestone events for First Nations students. As one of the most significant points in a student’s academic journey, the First Nations Leadership portfolio provided each student with a satin stole and pin to wear during their graduation ceremony and supported students through the graduation registration process. First Nations student graduates are acknowledged in a rolling presentation during the broader CDU Graduations to recognise their academic success.

Good News Story – Student Success

Rosanna, a proud Tiwi woman, has progressed her education at CDU by completing qualifications in Maritime Operations (Coxswain), Training and Assessment, Government Investigations, and a Diploma of Business, and is now undertaking a Law degree.



Regional and remote students

Eighty percent of CDU’s First Nations students have a home location that is classified as regional, remote or very remote. These students can be challenged by the distance to the nearest educational hub and the sufficiency of their digital connectivity. CDU continues to advocate for the required resources to deliver degree education needed in regional and remote areas through its network of regional Associate Vice-Chancellors. To assist with many of the additional financial costs of Higher Education to regional and remote students, ISSP scholarships were directed to these students.

Table 4 ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students⁵

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2024 Payments	\$247,500	99	\$20,000	5	\$72,000	36	\$339,500	140
B. 2025 Offers ⁶	\$251,500	101	\$16,000	4	\$65,000	43	\$332,500	100
C. Percentage ⁷ (C=B/A*100)							97.94%	
2025 Payments	\$247,500	99	\$16,000	4	\$65,000	43	\$328,500	146

Strengthening Management of the Away From Base Program (NON ISSP Remote Student Support)

First Nations Leadership undertook a review of the management and financial acquittal processes for the Commonwealth-funded Away From Base (AFB) program, which supports remote First Nations students to participate in block study and intensive learning activities. The review identified opportunities to strengthen coordination, delivery tracking, documentation and financial reporting across the program. Improvements have been implemented to enhance planning, activity verification and acquittal practices, ensuring a more consistent and transparent approach to program administration. These changes have resulted in significant improvements in the accuracy and timeliness of AFB acquittals, strengthening CDU’s compliance with Commonwealth funding requirements while ensuring program activity and student participation are fully captured.

The strengthened management framework supports the sustainable delivery of remote teaching and learning activities and contributes positively to CDU’s financial performance through improved recognition of AFB-related income.

Good News Story – Student Success

Taylor, a proud Wiradjuri woman, successfully completed her Bachelor of Nursing at CDU with support from the Away From Base program, overcoming financial and logistical barriers. She has progressed to a Master of Indigenous and Remote Health and is committed to delivering culturally safe care in remote Northern Territory communities.



Eligibility criteria

Indigenous Education Strategy

First Nations Leadership Core Plan

CDU aspires to be Australia’s most connected university, realised through purposeful action and meaningful impact locally across the Northern Territory, nationally, and internationally. Within this context, the University’s Indigenous Education Strategy is not a standalone initiative but is integrated across all strategic priorities. Its implementation reflects a whole-of-institution approach that prioritises First Nations student success, upholds cultural integrity, and strengthens genuine partnerships with communities. This encompasses the Charles Darwin University’s Strategic Plan (2021–2026).

CDU’s First Nations Leadership Core Plan continues to drive measurable improvements in First Nations student outcomes through targeted institutional accountability. The University maintains two dedicated Strategic Key Performance Indicators (SKPIs):

- 1. Improvement in First Nations higher education unit success rates;
- 2. Improvement in First Nations VET unit success rates.

These SKPIs are monitored and reported to governance bodies, including University Council and Academic Board, ensuring executive-level oversight and responsiveness. Progress against these indicators demonstrates continued gains in student success and progression, supported by wraparound student support services, place-based delivery models, and culturally safe learning environments. Key challenges remain, including geographic remoteness, digital access disparities, and the need for ongoing culturally appropriate support structures. CDU continues to address these through flexible delivery, regional hubs, and strengthened community partnerships.

Cultural Competency for Students and Staff

The strategy actively promotes cultural capability across the University through:

- > Embedding cultural responsiveness within graduate attributes
- > Professional development and training aligned with CDU’s Anti-Racism and Inclusion frameworks
- > Engagement with First Nations communities to inform teaching practice and research
- > First Nations Governance at CDU
- > First Nations Workforce Plan implementation of key initiatives
- > Celebration and or acknowledgement of First Nations dates of significance.

These initiatives strengthen staff capability and ensure all students graduate with the skills to work respectfully and effectively with First Nations peoples and across diverse cultural contexts.

Strategic Planning Progress

The First Nations Leadership Core Plan remains current and active under the CDU 2021–2026 Strategic Plan, with ongoing refinement occurring through the First Nations Leadership Plan and associated governance structures. CDU is undertaking iterative evaluation and continuous improvement processes, including:

- > Monitoring SKPI performance;
- > Faculty-level implementation reviews;
- > Feedback from First Nations students, staff and communities;
- > Alignment with national policy and ISSP requirements.

In 2026, the redevelopment of the strategy is aligned and in progress with the next institutional strategic planning cycle with the updates to be provided in 2026 reporting period.

[Charles Darwin University Strategic Plan](#)

[First Nations Leadership Plan](#)

Indigenous Workforce Strategy

First Nations Workforce Plan Progress Update

CDU has implemented the First Nations Workforce Plan through a structured governance and delivery model led by the First Nations Workforce Advisory Committee (FNWAC).

FNWAC oversees development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy, including attraction, recruitment, retention, and career development initiatives. The Committee provides advice to senior leadership and ensures alignment with Enterprise Agreement commitments and ISSP requirements. In 2025, FNWAC specifically **guided implementation across**

- > Recruitment and attraction
- > Retention and career development
- > Leadership and management

This reflects a compliant Indigenous governance mechanism under ISSP, linking oversight, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Workforce Representation Targets

- > 2025 result: 54.9 First Nations FTE (4.3%)
- > Target for 2025: 90 FTE (7.4%)
- > Gap: 35.3 FTE below target

Representation remains above the Australian university benchmark of 3%. Steady progress has been made across recruitment, retention, and leadership to strengthen First Nations workforce outcomes at CDU. In recruitment and attraction, a mandatory First Nations Priority Recruitment step has been embedded into all hiring processes, alongside the establishment of traineeships and structured career pathway programs, with two trainees already onboarded. Partnerships with First Nations organisations, have also been formed to strengthen recruitment pipelines. In relation to retention and career development, initiatives have included the launch of a Coaching Pairs program pilot to support onboarding, the development of an academic career progression program through a dedicated working group and the implementation of both an Intercultural Program and an Anti-Racism Policy Action Plan. Recognition of First Nations staff has also been strengthened through the introduction of First Nations staff awards. At a senior executive leadership level, accountability mechanisms have been embedded through the inclusion of First Nations workforce KPIs in performance agreements, alongside the establishment of governance and cultural initiatives such as a First Nations events of significance committee. Collectively, these milestones demonstrate meaningful system-level change, embedding accountability and cultural capability across the institution.

Progress Toward Increasing First Nations Employment (3% Target)

- > Maintained 4.3% First Nations workforce representation, consistently above 3%
- > Implemented structural recruitment reforms (mandatory priority recruitment)
- > Established entry pathways (traineeships, partnerships) to build pipeline

Increasing First Nations Academics and Career Development

Progress includes:

- > Early development of a targeted academic recruitment program
- > Formation of a working group for academic career advancement pathways
- > Additional support provided during 2025 promotions round

Indigenous Senior Academic Leadership

The university has identifiable senior First Nations leadership roles, including:

- > Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership (Co-Chair of FNWAC)
- > Director First Nations Leadership

These roles demonstrate:

- > Representation at senior executive level
- > Direct oversight of workforce strategy implementation

First Nations Workforce Plan 2023-2026 Revision

The plan is operational with planned redevelopment underway

The new planning cycle has commenced early in 2026 for post 2026. The FNWAC will lead the next phase and governance refresh. A dedicated centralised webpage for the First Nations Workforce Strategy is still under development, with this identified as a 2026 priority. Recommendation includes creating a “centralised website to promote opportunities and provide a clear entry point.

Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The University has implemented a formal Indigenous Governance Mechanism in alignment with Section 11 of the ISSP Guidelines to ensure that First Nations voices are central to decision-making, oversight and accountability in relation to Indigenous student success and the use of ISSP funding.

Structure and Operation

The mechanism is embedded within the University’s governance framework through a dedicated committee comprising senior First Nations leaders alongside key University representatives. The mechanism ensures that Indigenous perspectives inform strategic priorities and resource allocation.

The governance body includes at least two First Nations members in senior leadership roles within the University, ensuring cultural authority and lived experience are represented at the highest level of decision-making. The committee met regularly (typically quarterly, with additional meetings as required) to review progress, consider emerging issues and provide strategic advice. In 2025, key areas of focus included:

- > Monitoring progress against Indigenous student success and employment targets
- > Advising on the allocation and impact of ISSP funding
- > Strengthening culturally safe student support services
- > Enhancing pathways, recruitment, and retention initiatives for First Nations students
- > Supporting workforce development and Indigenous staff representation

Through this work, the committee has played a critical role in ensuring that University programs and investments align with both ISSP objectives and the aspirations of First Nations students, staff and communities.

Authority and Oversight of ISSP Funding

The Indigenous Governance Mechanism has formal responsibility to advise, recommend, and monitor the use of ISSP grant funding. This includes:

- > Reviewing proposed ISSP-funded initiatives and ensuring alignment with student needs and strategic priorities
- > Monitoring expenditure and outcomes to ensure accountability and impact
- > Providing recommendations to the University Executive on funding allocations and priorities
- > Evaluating the effectiveness of programs in improving access, participation, retention, and completion outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

This oversight function ensures that ISSP funding is used transparently, effectively and in ways that deliver meaningful outcomes.

Governance Charter

The operation of the Indigenous Governance Mechanism is guided by a formal Charter, consistent with Section 11(d) of the ISSP Guidelines. The Charter outlines:

- > The purpose, scope, and authority of the committee
- > Membership composition and expectations
- > Meeting frequency and decision-making processes
- > Roles in relation to ISSP oversight and student success outcomes

The Charter ensures clarity, accountability, and alignment with both legislative and institutional requirements.

Broader Indigenous Participation in University Decision-Making

Beyond the formal governance mechanism, the University actively embeds First Nations participation across a range of decision-making forums and activities. These include:

- > Representation on key University committees and advisory groups
- > Engagement with Elders, community leaders, and external stakeholders to inform strategic direction
- > Inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in curriculum design, research priorities, and student support services
- > Co-design approaches to programs impacting First Nations students and communities
- > Leadership roles held by First Nations staff across academic and professional portfolios

Collectively, these approaches ensure that First Nations voices are not only heard but are integral to shaping the University’s policies, priorities, and outcomes.

Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

Consistent with subsection 17(2)(b) of the Indigenous Student Success Programme (ISSP) Guidelines, I have reviewed the 2025 Performance Report and Acquittal Report and acknowledge the outcomes achieved during a period of considerable organisational change.

The University’s strategic focus on consolidation and optimisation of existing student support initiatives has resulted in strengthened delivery and increased utilisation, particularly within tutorial support services. This demonstrates a mature and evidence-driven approach to program delivery, ensuring resources are targeted effectively to support First Nations student success, retention, and progression. 2025, was characterised by significant transition within the First Nations Leadership portfolio, including leadership change, staff movements and vacancies.

I commend the team for maintaining continuity of core services, preserving established governance mechanisms and ensuring that the impact on First Nations students was minimised. The ability to sustain outcomes during this period reflects both the strength of existing frameworks and the commitment of staff across the portfolio.

Having joined the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership following departure of Professor Reuben Bolt in July 2025, I have had the opportunity to closely observe and support the portfolio through a complex period of transition. I wish to acknowledge the dedication, resilience, and professionalism demonstrated by the First Nations Leadership team throughout this time. I am sincerely impressed by the collective effort to maintain service quality, uphold accountability requirements and continue delivering meaningful outcomes for First Nations students and communities.

Looking forward into 2026, we will focus is on strengthening strategic planning, driving organisational change and embedding a student success framework that is culturally responsive and outcomes focused. This includes a strong commitment to deepening community engagement and partnerships, ensuring that our work is informed by and accountable to First Nations communities. These priorities will underpin the next phase of ISSP implementation and continuous improvement.

Overall, I am very satisfied that the University has met its obligations under the ISSP for the 2025 reporting period and has demonstrated a clear commitment to sustaining and enhancing outcomes for First Nations students.

Additional information for completing the template

- ¹ Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).
- ² 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).
- ³ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).
- ⁴ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.
- ⁵ Only record amounts which required payment during the 2025 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.
- ⁶ Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2025 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2025 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2024 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).
- ⁷ This data confirms the university’s compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.

First Nations Workforce Plan

Progress Report for 2025

Executive Summary

In 2025, CDU made incremental progress in increasing First Nations representation across its workforce.

This report provides a full-year overview of First Nations employment outcomes at Charles Darwin University (CDU) for 2025. Across the 2025 calendar year, First Nations full-time equivalent (FTE) representation remained relatively stable, ranging from 4.4% in Q1, Q2, and Q3 before closing at 4.2% in Q4. Despite steady proportional representation, CDU did not meet the 2025 target of 90 First Nations FTE (7.4%), finishing the year at 54.7 FTE. This highlights a significant gap of 35.3 FTE and reinforces the need for accelerated recruitment and strengthened retention strategies in alignment with the First Nations Workforce Plan 2023–2026.

It is also of particular importance to highlight that this report focuses on specific initiatives outlined in the original First Nations Workforce Plan and it does not outline other significant initiatives CDU is progressing that aligns with the themes of this particular plan such as the First Nations Teacher Education & Training Hub, which is a partnership with NT Department of Education, whilst streamlining support for First Nations educators this hub created academic support jobs for First Nations staff.

Throughout 2025, the Faculty of Health achieved steady workforce growth, increasing from 196 FTE in Q1 to 211 FTE in Q4, demonstrating CDU’s expanding role in preparing the NT’s health workforce and responding to rising demand across nursing, midwifery, allied health, and public health programs. Within this growth, the proportion of First Nations staff shifted from 5.6% in Q1 to 3.8% in Q4, a modest decline that highlights an opportunity rather than a deficit. Particularly given the faculty’s strong foundations in community partnerships, cultural capability and First Nations student pathways.

With these strengths and the direction provided by the CDU First Nations Workforce Plan, CDU is well positioned to amplify First Nations leadership and representation as it continues to grow, ensuring its workforce reflects the communities it serves and strengthens culturally grounded health education across the Territory.

First Nations Employment Targets

Across 2025, Charles Darwin University (CDU) recorded 54.9 First Nations FTE, representing 4.3% of the workforce. This result is above the 2022 baseline of 51.8 FTE (4.3%), but falls short of both the 2025 target of 7.4% and the expected FTE growth to 90. Compared with 2023 and 2024, First Nations employment declined in both percentage and FTE terms, indicating that earlier gains were not sustained during 2025. Despite this decline, performance remains stable relative to the pre-2023 baseline, and the data highlights clear opportunities to strengthen recruitment, retention and progression strategies to accelerate progress toward the 2026 targets of 8.2% representation and 100 First Nations FTE.

Charles Darwin University		2023		2024		2025		2026
Measure	Baseline Dec 2022	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target 2025	Actual 2025	Target
% First Nations staff CDU	4.3%	5.8%	4.8%	6.6%	5%	7.4%	4.3%	8.2%
First Nations staff FTE annual increase	51.8	70	59.1	80	62.1	90	54.9	100

CDU First Nations Workforce Data Breakdown

The Faculty of Arts & Society and Research & Innovation achieved meaningful increases, reflecting the impact of targeted efforts and strengthened pathways. The year also highlighted clear opportunities for growth. As total staffing increased across the institution, First Nations employment did not rise at the same rate, underscoring the need to expand recruitment pathways, increase uptake of affirmative measures and or identified positions more broadly across the University and activate the actions within the First Nations Workforce Plan that have yet to be fully implemented. These gaps guide where investment and attention will yield the greatest impact moving forward. 2025 reaffirmed CDU’s commitment to creating a culturally safe, supportive, and empowering environment for First Nations staff. The foundations laid through initiatives in leadership capability, anti-racism, recognition and professional development provide a strong platform for transformation into 2026. With targeted action, CDU is positioned to build on this momentum and move confidently toward the 2026 target of 8.2%.

Area	Total FTE Q1 2025	Total FN FTE Q1 2025	Q1 2025 (%)	Total FTE Q2 2025	Total FN FTE Q2 2025	Q2 2025 (%)	Total FTE Q3 2025	Total FN FTE Q3 2025	Q3 2025 (%)	Total FTE Q4 2025	Total FN FTE Q4 2025	Q4 2025 (%)	Target 2025	Target 2025 (%)
CDU TAFE	256	9	3.5%	257	9	3.5%	263.1	7	2.7%	262.8	4	1.5%	12	4.8%
Corporate	192	3	1.6%	187	3	1.6%	212.8	3	1.4%	212.8	4	1.9%	6	3.1%
Faculty of Arts & Society	181	12	6.3%	148	11	7.4%	186.1	17	9.1%	182.0	17.6	9.7%	17	9.9%
Faculty of Health	196	11	5.6%	195	10	5.1%	208.8	8.0	3.9%	211.0	8	3.8%	18	9.9%
Faculty of Science & Technology	116	1	0.9%	110.5	1	0.9%	116.2	1	0.9%	109.7	1	0.9%	3	2.6%
First Nations Leadership & Engagement	24	15	61.6%	28	15	53.6%	22.1	16.1	72.9%	21.1	15.1	71.6%	22	91.7%
Student Success and Educational Excellence	157	2	1.3%	164	2	1.2%	168.9	2	1.2%	176.0	2	1.1%	5	3.1%
Governance & Legal	10	0	0.0%	9	0	0.0%	9.3	0	0.0%	9.6	0	0.0%		
Research & Innovation	34	1	2.9%	36.5	1	2.7%	34.4	2	5.8%	33.3	2	6.0%		
Global and External Relations	57	0	0.0%	53.5	0	0.0%	61.1	0	0.0%	56.1	0	0.0%	7	5.9%
Vice Chancellor and President	4	0	0.0%	5.1	0	0.0%	5.1	0	0.0%	5.1	0	0.0%		
Community Connections	20	2	10.0%	15	1	6.7%	20.5	1	4.9%	20.5	1	4.9%		
Grand Total	1247	55	4.4%	1208.6	53	4.4%	1308	57.14	4.4%	1300.0	54.7	4.2%	90	7.4%

Key Focus Area Progress Updates

The First Nations Workforce Plan emphasises CDU becoming an employer of choice for First Nations people. In 2025, CDU strengthened its foundations for attracting First Nations talent, making steady progress across all recruitment actions. Work began on developing dedicated marketing collateral, with early collaboration between People & Culture and Marketing ensuring future materials will be culturally informed and engaging.

Focus Area 1: Recruitment and Attraction

A key achievement for 2025 was the strengthening of First Nations Priority Recruitment, now a required step in every recruitment process. This shift embeds accountability and encourages hiring managers to actively consider First Nations applicants, supporting a more inclusive workforce. With two trainees now onboarded, CDU’s First Nations career pathway program is already showing promise as a sustainable pipeline for future First Nations staff.

Partnerships with First Nations organisations, including Mura Training and Business Solutions, continued throughout 2025, strengthening community connections and expanding access to prospective candidates. Early groundwork also progressed on creating a targeted recruitment program for First Nations academic employees, laying the initial building blocks for improved representation in academic and scholarly roles. Together, these actions reflect a year of consistent, capability building progress and position CDU to expand and accelerate First Nations recruitment efforts in 2026.

Actions	2025 Full Year Update
1.1 Develop marketing collateral to promote CDU to First Nations prospective employees.	Commenced Research and Engaged with the Marketing team.
1.2 Implement Affirmative Measures Recruitment process to attract First Nations people to CDU.	The Affirmative Measures, now known at First Nations Priority Recruitment, step is mandatory, which requires hiring managers to select yes or no concisely and opt in or out. Hiring managers will be required to provide a justification if they choose to opt out.
1.3 Develop and implement career pathway initiatives such as Graduate and Undergraduate Internships, Cadetships and Traineeship Programs.	The program has been established, and two trainees are currently participating.
1.4 Establish and maintain connections with key First Nations organisations and employment service providers.	Partnerships with First Nations organisations, particularly with Mura Training and Business Solutions, are underway.
1.5 Develop and implement a recruitment program targeting First Nations academic employees.	The First Nations Workforce Committee discussed parameters and options for culturally safe and innovative ways to recruit First Nations academic employees.

Focus Area 2: Retention and Career Development

In 2025, CDU strengthened its capability to retain and support First Nations staff through steady progress across key initiatives. The Coaching Pairs program was launched. CDU also advanced academic development by establishing a working group to guide a dedicated career advancement program, with additional support provided during the 2025 promotions round. Retention insights improved through the Q1 rollout of the Stay Survey, helping shape future workforce initiatives. Cultural capability continued to grow with the Intercultural Program commencing and CDU reinforced its commitment to safety and inclusion through full implementation of the Anti Racism Policy. Recognition efforts also began with First Nations staff award presented in 2025. While the annual First Nations staff forum is yet to commence, the progress achieved across all other actions has strengthened CDU’s foundation for creating a culturally strong, supportive, and sustainable environment where First Nations staff can thrive.

Actions	2025 Full Year Update
2.1 Implement ‘Coaching Pairs’ program for First Nations staff and their supervisors in their first 12 months – linked to ‘shared on-boarding’.	The Coaching Pairs program has been launched and is currently underway.
2.2 Develop and implement a professional development and career advancement program for First Nations academic employees.	A Working Group has been established, and additional support provided for the 2025 round of academic promotions.
2.3 Host annual forum for First Nations CDU employees.	Not started yet.
2.4 Develop a survey focused on retaining First Nations employees.	The FNWAC explored a new direction, proposing a shift from a formal survey process to a more organic, conversation-based approach using Stay Circles (Yarning Circles).
2.5 Deliver intercultural program.	Program is implemented as part of business as usual and will be monitored and reviewed for effectiveness.
2.6 Implement the Anti-Racism policy.	The policy is implemented and is available on CDU’s Website.
2.7 Increase staff recognition and celebrate their achievements.	The first award was presented in 2025.

Key Focus Area 3: Leadership and Management

In 2025, CDU strengthened leadership accountability and cultural capability across the University. First Nations employment KPIs are now embedded into executive performance agreements, ensuring shared responsibility for progressing First Nations workforce outcomes. CDU also advanced cultural recognition through the establishment of the First Nations Events of Significance Committee, which successfully coordinated major events including the National Apology Anniversary, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, Barunga Festival, and the AIATSIS Conference and the committee is now embedded as business as usual. Work to strengthen cultural capability continues, with the Executive Cultural Capability Framework, Nurturing First Nations Talent workshop, and Learning Circles planned as part of CDU’s long-term strategy. Efforts to increase First Nations representation on governance committees are also underway, reinforcing more inclusive and culturally informed decision-making. Together, these initiatives reflect growing leadership commitment and a strong foundation for expanding cultural capability across CDU.

Actions	2025 Full Year Update
3.1 Develop and implement an Executive Cultural Capability Framework.	Not started yet – resource dependent and requires leadership and oversight from Director FNL.
3.2 Embed a culture of understanding at CDU by commemorating events of significance to First Nations peoples/employees.	The First Nations Events of significance committee has been established and 2025 saw the collaboration of several areas of the University coming together to discuss and progress First Nations dates of significance. This is now embedded into the structures of the University and will continue as BAU.
3.3 Develop and embed a “Nurturing First Nations Talent” workshop for line managers.	Not started yet.
3.4 Establish learning circles for all CDU staff and students.	The approach for Learning Circles to be developed and in place to share knowledge and lived experiences of First Nations staff across the University on topics of focus has been agreed upon, and the workforce committee will further discuss the parameters for this commencing 2026.
3.5 Embed KPIs for employment outcomes and targets of First Nations employees into formal University business.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been established for this program.
3.6 Encourage First Nations representation as members on Major CDU Governance Committees and working groups.	The First Nations Governance structure was reviewed in 2025, and recommendations have been provided to senior executives to guide 2026 implementation.

Governance

Throughout 2025, the First Nations Workforce Advisory Committee (FNWAC) led the implementation of CDU’s commitments under the First Nations Workforce Plan 2023–2026 supporting the University’s focus on recruitment and attraction, retention and career development, and leadership and management. In line with the Plan’s emphasis on targeted pathways and Affirmative Measures, FNWAC provided guidance on initiatives such as traineeships, early academic workforce planning, and professional development mechanisms designed to value and empower First Nations employees. This work has been grounded in the Plan’s core principles of respect, inclusion, and a commitment to improving outcomes through genuine partnership with First Nations people. FNWAC also played an important role in upholding CDU’s compliance with the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP), which requires universities to maintain both an Indigenous Governance Mechanism and an endorsed workforce plan as conditions of funding.

As CDU moves toward the 2026 governance refresh, FNWAC will continue to guide the next phase of work by commencing the new cycle of the First Nations Workforce Plan and aligning its role with strengthened governance structures to support continuity, transparency, and impact.

Conclusion

CDU strengthened the foundations of its First Nations Workforce Plan in 2025, progressing key initiatives across recruitment, retention, and leadership. Although the 2025 workforce targets were not met in full, the work completed this year provides a strong platform for accelerated progress in 2026.

Recommendations for 2026

As the First Nations Workforce Advisory Committee commences the next round of the First Nations Workforce Plan, these recommended actions will ensure sustained progress and stronger representation across the university:

- > Prioritise targeted recruitment in areas with low or no First Nations representation.
- > Scale traineeships, cadetships, graduate programs, and academic recruitment pathways to strengthen long-term workforce pipelines.
- > Strengthen retention through consistent professional development, meaningful recognition, and culturally safe workplace practices.
- > Fast-track leadership capability programs, including cultural capability development and structured talent pathways.
- > Establish regular reporting cycles and transparent progress dashboards across all faculties and divisions to ensure accountability.
- > Improve systems and visibility by:
 - > Developing a dedicated, centralised website to promote opportunities and provide a clear entry point for First Nations applicants.
- > Implementing early-warning (e.g., traffic light) indicators to identify emerging workforce risks before attrition occurs.
- > Strengthening data accuracy and integrity to support informed decision-making.
- > Elevating and embedding leadership and supervisor development programs, particularly in response to findings from the racism survey.

The FNWAC will continue to guide the next phase of work by commencing the new cycle of the First Nations Workforce Plan and aligning its role with strengthened governance structures to support continuity, transparency, and impact.

ISSP 2025 Financial Acquittal

Organisation	Charles Darwin University
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1. Financials – Income and expenditure

Table 1a ISSP income available to support Indigenous students in 2025 (excluding GST) ¹

Item	(\$)
A. ISSP Grant 2025 ²	\$2,551,770.00
B. Other ISSP Related Income	
Interest earned/royalties from ISSP funding ³	\$15,044.93
<i>If no interest has been earned briefly state why</i>	
Sale of ISSP assets	\$0.00
2025 ISSP Grant Income (excluding rollovers)	\$2,566,814.93

Table 1b Other funding used to support Indigenous students in 2025 (excluding GST)⁴

Item	(\$)
A. Other non-ISSP funds ⁵	
Other funding provided under HESA ⁶	\$0.00
Other Commonwealth Government funding	\$0.00
Funds derived from external sources ⁷	\$20,775,001.67
Total of other non-ISSP funds for 2025	\$20,775,001.67

Table 1c ISSP 2025 Grant Expenditure on support for Indigenous students during 2025 (excluding GST) ⁸

Item ⁹	Actual ISSP (\$) ¹⁰
Scholarships from flexible ISSP funding	\$416,000.00
Salaries for staff working on ISSP activities ¹¹	\$2,233,733.59
Tutorial Assistance, Pastoral Care, Outreach activities, cultural competency strategies etc (non-salary components)	\$39,173.87
Travel – domestic (airfares, accommodation & meals)	\$56,418.87
Travel – international (airfares)	
Travel – international (accommodation and meals)	
Conference fees and related costs ¹²	
ISSP Asset purchases made during 2025 ¹³	
A. Total Expenditure of ISSP 2025 Grant (excluding all rollovers into 2025)	\$2,745,326.33
B. Unexpended 2025 ISSP funds <i>approved</i> for rollover into 2026 grant year ¹⁴	\$0.00
C. Unexpended 2025 ISSP funding to be <i>returned</i> to the ATEC	\$0.00
Total 2025 ISSP funding committed (A + B + C) ¹⁵	\$2,745,326.33

2. Rollovers

Table 2 Rollovers¹⁶

			Outline excess rollover funds here . The sum of these columns should equal the project funds rollover total	
	Project Funds Rolled Over (\$)	Project Funds Expended and/or Committed ¹⁷ (\$)	Excess Option 1: Unspent funds to be rolled into 2026 ¹⁸ (\$)	Excess Option 2: Unspent funds to be returned to the ATEC ¹⁹ (\$)
2021 funds rolled over into 2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2022 funds rolled over into 2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2023 funds rolled over into 2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2024 funds rolled over into 2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unexpended 2025 Funds (From Table 1c, Rows B is Option 1 and C is Option 2)			\$0.00	\$0.00
Total funds approved for rollover into 2025 or to be returned ²⁰			\$0.00	\$0.00

3. Goods and Services Tax

Table 3 Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January – 31 December 2025²¹

1. GST received by you in 2025 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Program funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> ²²		\$0.00
2. GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below)		\$0.00
Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / /	Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / /	Amount remitted: \$ Date remitted: / /

4. ISSP Assets

Table 4a ISSP Assets inventory²³

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable Value ²⁴	ISSP contribution ²⁵

Table 4b ISSP Assets - purchases during 2025²⁶

Asset Description/ category	Purchase Value	ISSP contribution

Table 4c ISSP Assets - disposals during 2025

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable value	Disposals/ Sale Price ²⁷	ISSP component ²⁸	Disposals Age ²⁹

5. Endorsement of the Financial Acquittal³⁰

As an Authorised Officer, I understand that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

2025 Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by Authorised Officer:

Name:

Director Finance

Title:

Bryce Dorrian

Phone:

0432 262 554

Email:

Bryce.dorrian@cdu.edu.au

Signed:

Date:

26/05/2026

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM 2025 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2025 Performance Report and 2025 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Program.

I certify that:

(i)

the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and

(ii)

the 2025 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution’s use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and

(iii)

the 2025 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2025 under the Indigenous Student Success Program; and

(iv)

Indigenous Student Success Program funds, and any interest earned or royalties/income derived from these funds, was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

I understand that:

(i)

the Minister or the Minister’s delegate may seek further information to support this certification; and

(ii)

the information contain in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and

(iii)

in the event that I have not remitted GST paid under the Agreement to the Australian Taxation Office, that it is my obligation to remit those amounts, as required under the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*; and

(iv)

it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Certification recommended by the university’s Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name:

Professor Ruth Wallace

Title:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement

Signed:

Date:

Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate³¹:

Name:

Professor Fiona Coulson

Title:

Acting Vice-Chancellor and President

Signed:

Date:

Additional information for completing the template

¹ The financial tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2025, as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. The information in tables 1a, 1b and 1c helps NIAA recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. Please feel free to add additional “item” lines as required.

² Do not include rollovers in ISSP 2025 Grant amount. Prior year's rollover figures to be included in Table 2.

³ Interest earned on ISSP is considered to be ISSP funding and must be used in accordance with the ISSP Guidelines.

⁴ Please estimate the funds available if exact amounts are not known.

⁵ Please insert additional lines if the listings below do not suit your university’s arrangements.

⁶ Please include funding provided under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program.

⁷ Examples of other funding are philanthropic donations, other student payments, business income etc.

⁸ Where applicable, figures provided in this table must be consistent with the figures provided in the institution’s 2025 Performance Report.

⁹ Please insert additional lines if the listings below do not suit your university’s arrangements.

¹⁰ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1a, not including the funding rolled over from previous years (this is detailed in Table 2).

¹¹ If the staff member works on non-ISSP specific activities, only record the pro-rata amount that reflects the amount of time the staff member worked on ISSP-specific activities. Include expenditure on salaries for staff that provide tutorial assistance. May include pro-rata expenditure on salaries for staff time spent monitoring and recording tutoring and student withdrawals.

¹² Costs may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, presentation fees, equipment costs etc.

¹³ Assets are defined in the *Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017* and are items that have an individual value of \$5,000 or more.

¹⁴ This should match the figure in Table 2.

¹⁵ This figure should equal the Grand total in Table 1a

¹⁶ All rollovers must be agreed with the NIAA and listed in a relevant determination, check with NIAA if you are unsure of your rollover information.

¹⁷ For 2021, 2022 and 2023 funds rolled into 2025, the amount included here should be the amount expended in 2025.

¹⁸ This is the amount of the rollover not expended that has been approved to be rolled over into 2025.

¹⁹ This is the amount of the rollover not expended and not rolled over into 2025. NIAA will issue an invoice for any amounts listed in this column.

²⁰ Total funds in this row should equal the unspent ISSP balance in the Providers bank account at 31 Dec 2025.

²¹ If GST is not paid to you, do not complete Table 3. If GST is paid to you, the amount of GST funding included in each payment is set out in a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) issued to you at the time of the payment. State whether these amounts have been remitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or committed for payment to the ATO.

²² This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).

²³ Record all active assets acquired using ISSP funding. Active assets are those that have not been sold or disposed of.

²⁴ Adjustable value means the cost of an asset less its decline in value determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office Guide to Depreciating Assets 2025.

²⁵ The ISSP contribution should be recorded in the same ratio to the ISSP funds used to purchase the item (this includes any sale of an older asset trade in of old assets purchased with ISSP funding).

²⁶ Include any assets purchased during 2025 using ISSP funding that are valued over \$5,000. Any assets in this category should have been agreed with the NIAA prior to the item being purchased.

²⁷ Where an item has been stolen or destroyed, the words ‘stolen’ or ‘destroyed’ should be listed in the sale price column.

²⁸ The ISSP component should be the proportion of the sale price in the same ratio as the proportion of ISSP funding that contributed to the purchase of the asset.

²⁹ Where groups of assets are disposed of, an average age can be provided.

³⁰ Appropriate endorsement/authorisation is required to ensure compliance with the ISSP Guidelines and the 2025 Outcome Letter. If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this endorsement must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation’s internal audit function (e.g. an internal auditor). If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation’s auditor should sign this authorisation.

³¹ For the purposes of this certification, an equivalent delegate is either the Acting Vice Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Provost, or a relevant senior executive who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

