



Curtin
University of Technology

CURTIN'S RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2008-2013

A VISION AND A PROCESS





Curtin University of Technology is proud to be part of the Reconciliation Action Plan program which is committed to closing the unacceptable gap of 17 years in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Launched by Reconciliation Australia in 2006, the program was established to mark the 40th anniversary of the landmark 1967 referendum, when more than 90 per cent of eligible Australians voted yes to counting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the national census of the population, and to giving the Commonwealth Government power to make specific laws in respect of Indigenous People.

This event is often referred to as the first stage of the Reconciliation Movement in Australia.



Curtin affirms its commitment to the reconciliation process of turning good intentions into measurable actions through the development and implementation of its own Reconciliation Action Plan. Significantly, while this development process began in 2007 with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jeanette Hacket, signing Curtin's Statement of Commitment to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan, the consultation stages of the plan in 2008 marked another important event for the wider Curtin community, namely the 10th anniversary of Curtin's original Statement of Reconciliation and Commitment dated 18 March 1998.

THE VISION

Curtin's vision for reconciliation is to be a place of learning that respects Indigenous culture and diversity: a place where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together to learn their chosen discipline contextualised within Indigenous culture and history.

Reconciliation is both a vision and a process. It involves a vision of what reconciliation is, and what strategies or processes are necessary to achieve that vision.

Curtin's vision for reconciliation is that – individually and, therefore, collectively – the University:

- recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as the first Australians and as the Indigenous peoples of Australia
- supports the right of Indigenous Australians to express their cultures and participate on an equal footing in all aspects of Australian life
- accepts the Indigenous connection between country, community, culture and wellbeing
- develops a greater understanding of how our different pasts and cultures are part of our shared history and shared future
- acknowledges that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems have much to learn from one another
- commits to a respectful partnership whereby Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians tackle disadvantages together
- participates in the healing process of the traumas experienced by Indigenous Australians
- actively addresses racism within ourselves and our families, friends, workplaces and communities
- supports all initiatives in personal and professional lives that improve the lived experiences of Indigenous Australians
- takes pride in the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Relationships

Take pride in the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Provide local elders and other Indigenous representatives a wider role and appropriate recognition within the University	Vice-Chancellor	2008	We have Indigenous representation on Council, and Indigenous representation on Academic Board
		2013	At least four elders in the WA community will be appointed as adjunct professors to the four Faculty Advisory Boards. An Indigenous representative will also be appointed to the boards of the Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute and the Australian Sustainable Development Institute
		Ongoing	The Centre for Aboriginal Studies Aboriginal Advisory Committee to provide ongoing advice on the University's Reconciliation Action Plan
Foster long-term, good corporate citizenship with key Indigenous corporations and communities	Vice-Chancellor	2008	Assess the extent of all current relationships
		2013	Have at least two agreements for fostering good citizenship with relevant Indigenous corporations, including I-AEDI, (Indigenous Australian Early Development Index) which forms part of the Centre for Child Development

Respect

Develop a greater understanding of how our different pasts and cultures are part of our shared history and shared future

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Include Indigenous perspectives in all Curtin undergraduate courses and postgraduate coursework awards	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic	2010	C2010 project to report on the extent of current Indigenous matters in the curriculum
	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education	2010	All course reviews to assess the existence and relevance of Indigenous material in courses
	Pro Vice-Chancellors	2010	Development of material for use by the flagship degrees of Engineering, Health and Commerce
Increase the number of co-taught/co-owned Indigenous units in the curriculum between schools and the Centre for Aboriginal Studies	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education	2008	Assess the extent of existing shared units
	Pro Vice-Chancellors	2013	Develop a plan that indicates which units are co-owned and co-taught
		2013	Establish guidelines to manage co-teaching and co-ownership of units
Development of a statement of acknowledgement of country	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic	2008	Statement to be hardwired into unit outlines plus web link to more information
Develop a better understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems among Curtin staff	Deputy Vice-Chancellors Academic and Education	2010	Existing program for academic staff expanded
		2010	Ways of Working program included in the Organisational Development Unit
	Director Teaching and Learning	2009	30 per cent of new Curtin staff will undertake some aspect of Ways of Working program in their first year of employment
	Director Organisational Development Unit	2013	90 per cent of new Curtin staff will undertake some aspect of Ways of Working program in their first year of employment
For academic staff: expand the Foundations of Teaching and Learning at Curtin program to include an understanding of the differences between Western and Indigenous knowledges			
For professional staff: Ways of Working cultural awareness program to be part of the Organisational Development Unit delivery each year			

Opportunities

Commit to a respectful partnership whereby Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians tackle disadvantage together

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurable Target
Increase the number of Indigenous staff in teaching faculties and elsewhere in the University	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic	2008	There are 53 Indigenous staff employed
	All Executive	Ongoing	Strive to increase numbers by 10 per cent annually
		2013	Have at least one Indigenous professor employed in the University
Increase the number of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies Indigenous staff studying towards a Master or doctoral degree	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic	2008	Two centre Indigenous staff hold a master degree, and none hold a doctoral degree
	Director Centre for Aboriginal Studies	2013	Aim to have two centre Indigenous staff with a doctoral degree, and 50 per cent of centre Indigenous staff qualified or studying for postgraduate qualifications
Increase in recruitment, retention and mentoring of Indigenous students in the Centre for Aboriginal Studies and in mainstream courses across the University	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic	2008	Curtin has 480 Indigenous students, which is a state proportional representation of 2.08 per cent (DEEWR data)
	Director Centre for Aboriginal Studies	2013	To reach, and preferably exceed, the 3.15 per cent proportion of Indigenous representation
The University aspires to representation levels equivalent to state proportion of Indigenous population (3.15 per cent)			
Increase the pathways for Indigenous student enrolments	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education	2008	Review the current position in relation to enrolments and articulation programs with Canning College, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies and Clontarf Aboriginal College
		2013	Have at least two articulation programs into the University specifically related to Indigenous students
Increase the number of Indigenous doctoral students enrolling and graduating	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	2008-09	Each faculty to develop strategy for one Indigenous doctoral scholarship
	Dean Graduate Studies Pro Vice-Chancellors	2013	Have at least eight Indigenous doctoral students graduated
Include questions relevant to Indigenous students on the Ask Curtin University-wide FAQ database website	Director Student Services Director Centre for Aboriginal Studies	2008	Include at least 10 relevant questions for prospective Indigenous students and staff
Increase in Indigenous-related research projects/grants across University	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	2008	The University has 29 Indigenous-related research projects worth \$10.5 million
		2013	Increase the diversity of research projects
		2009	Indigenous research scholarships to be available annually, beginning with at least two
In setting key performance indicators for executive managers, the Vice-Chancellor considers appropriate targets related to Indigenous matters in each portfolio, and reports on the progress as part of annual reports	Vice-Chancellor Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	Annual	Indigenous targets included in performance agreements of senior staff as per the IHEAC Agreement to Universities Australia Board
Facilitate the employment of Indigenous graduates in the community	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education Director Support Services		Development of appropriate material for preparing Indigenous students for the workplace



A COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Curtin is Western Australia's largest university, with more than 40,000 students from around the world. Embracing its cultural diversity, the University encourages and fosters acceptance and understanding across its community.

Curtin acknowledges the significance of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and recognises the importance of the learning and consultation process necessary to move towards a future of true equality and understanding.

The University has a long-standing commitment to Indigenous education and culture, and has already taken a number of significant steps towards reconciliation. These include:

- the establishment of The Centre for Aboriginal Studies, an Indigenous-led and managed academic school
- the Nyungar Welcome to Country given at Curtin staff inductions
- the acknowledgment of the traditional owners of the land at all official occasions and conferences
- displaying the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags, and flying them during significant events
- the formation of the Curtin Indigenous Policy Committee

- the appointment of an Indigenous employment consultant to Staff Services
- the appointment of an Indigenous psychologist
- the appointment of an Indigenous customer service officer in Student Central
- cultural awareness training available to staff through the Ways of Working program run by The Centre for Aboriginal Studies
- the highly successful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in units in the areas of nursing, education and social work
- the establishment of an Indigenous Department at the Student Guild
- the Curtin Volunteers! Laverton project and work with the Wongatha people.

The University is dedicated to advancing reconciliation by further promoting an understanding of Indigenous culture and history; implementing strategies to effect the increased participation of Indigenous students and staff; and continuing a commitment to fostering partnerships in Indigenous research and development.

THE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Curtin's Reconciliation Action Plan has been developed over a number of months, starting in mid-2007 with a small group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff dedicated to furthering reconciliation at the University. With the support of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Professor Jane den Hollander, two project officers were appointed to help facilitate the development of Curtin's plan in association with Reconciliation Australia. A working party was formed and, in the space of a few weeks, grew to more than 40 members from across the University community, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and staff from Curtin's executive, management, administrative and academic areas.

In the first stages of the process, the working party consulted on several drafts of a Statement of Commitment to develop a plan. This statement was posted on Reconciliation Australia's website on 12 February 2008.

In the development of the plan, the working party and the Curtin University executive engaged individual networks and areas to consult and comment on the proposed actions to be included. The plan was also presented to the Centre for Aboriginal Studies Aboriginal Advisory Committee for their comments and feedback. During this consultation phase, actions and targets were discussed, and suggestions for future updates of the plan were made. As part of this process, many individuals and areas elaborated on what reconciliation means to them, and these ideas formed the basis for Curtin's vision for reconciliation.

In seeking to build on its commitment to reconciliation, Curtin's plan has been developed with measurable objectives, actions and targets. The University will hold itself accountable for the achievement of the targets it sets.



TRACKING AND REPORTING PROGRESS

Curtin's Reconciliation Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed by the University as part of normal annual reporting.

The plan is available on the University's website at planning.curtin.edu.au/strategic/reconciliation.cfm with ongoing updates lodged as part of its regular review.

Curtin will report on the Reconciliation Action Plan progress in its Annual Report, and will provide this information to Reconciliation Australia for posting on its website.



CONTACT

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