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The 'university place': how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students

Final report 2017

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Dedication

The project team dedicate this final report and all project outputs to our dear colleague, the late Dr Michael Gardiner.

Michael was a member of the original project team and we would like to acknowledge his contribution to the project and wish for this project to be part of his legacy.

This report was prepared by the research team of:

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With advice from and evaluation by:

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We wish to thank all staff and students who participated in the project.

Importantly, we thank Associate Professor Gary Thomas for his generosity and invaluable guidance.

List of acronyms used

APT	administrative, professional and technical
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
RHD	Research Higher Degree
USC	University of the Sunshine Coast
USQ	University of Southern Queensland

Executive summary

Project aim and context

This seed project aimed to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander¹ university student engagement and retention. Specifically, this project attended to the notion of the ‘university place’ and provides information and two tools that universities can use to help optimise the persistence and educational outcomes of Indigenous Australians. This project has produced meaningful, useful and novel contributions that are relevant to the sector.

Contextually, this project is aligned with the Australian Governments’ priority area of improving access to and outcomes of higher education for Indigenous peoples as a part of the larger ‘closing the gap’ agenda. The recent Closing the Gap Prime Minister’s Report (Commonwealth of Australia 2017) indicated that efforts directed at understanding factors that optimise persistence at university is vital to improving Indigenous student completions and reaping the benefits that are central to increasing Indigenous Australians quality-of-life. Growing Indigenous university student enrolments in recent times, although still significantly below parity, have been stymied by high drop-out rates that are twice that of non-Indigenous students (Edwards & McMillan 2015). Yet, for those Indigenous Australians who complete university the benefits are considerable in that they typically find work faster and have a higher commencing salary than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Turnbull 2017). Creating ‘university places’ that optimise the persistence of Indigenous Australians attends to this national agenda and was the focus of this seed project.

Much research has focused upon access to university for Indigenous students (e.g. Wilks & Wilson 2014), however little is known of the factors that support persistence. Factors identified as enablers of persistence for Indigenous students include whole-of-university efforts to enhance the university environment (see Behrendt et al. 2012; Universities Australia 2017). What is missing from the current stock of knowledge is a nuanced understanding of these factors, the interplay between them, and the consequences of them for Indigenous Australians in today’s increasingly complex ‘university places’.

Central to this seed project is the notion of *place*. Place is broadly defined as ‘space + meaning’ (Harrison & Dourish 1996). People’s identity is intertwined with places and, as such, people and places are knitted together (Sack 1997). Even so, the relationship between people’s identity and place is often overlooked (Malpas 1999). Place is defined as the experiential setting that consists of a specific location and the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social activities that occur within (Relph 1976). People alter their identity to help them navigate places (Baumeiser & Muraven 1996). Thus, the ‘university place’

¹ Henceforth the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples will be used interchangeably. No disrespect is intended.

comprises cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social activities in a locale that transpires across students' university experience and with which their identity is intertwined.

People give some places special significance. Known as 'third places', these special places are beyond home and work, where people can *be* their authentic self, *become* who they want and feel a sense of *belonging* (Rosenbaum 2006, 2009). University campuses have third place potential and as being, becoming and belonging are pillars of peoples' quality-of-life (Quality of Life Research Unit n.d.), the influence of the 'university place' is far-reaching.

For many Indigenous students, cultural safety and cultural security are key 'university place' factors (Bin-Sallik 2003). Cultural awareness precedes cultural safety in an organisation and cultural safety then advances to cultural security when understandings are directly linked to activities (Coffin 2007). That is, cultural security is a shift from 'knowing' to 'doing' across an entire organisation (Lumby & Farrelly 2009). This requires a disruption to status quo thinking and praxis and a conscious dislodging of the bystander effect, whereby individuals assume others are responsible or have already taken action (Darket & Latane 1968).

Ultimately, imagine a culturally secure 'university place' where Indigenous students can *be*, *become* and *belong*, and where accumulated positive experiences engender engagement, optimising students' persistence and shaping their higher education outcomes and impact. It was this imagining that was the impetus for this project. Furthermore, the complexity of 'university places' and the inadequacies of past research presented the opportunity for this project to seed new thinking—one that includes students' identities (as a student, as Indigenous, as an emerging professional) and an ecological worldview featuring continuous co-creation.

Project approach

For this project, a case study approach comprised of two universities and employed mixed methods that were organised into three stages. Stage 1 included the collation of baseline data from the participating universities (e.g. Indigenous student enrolment numbers) and beginning-project presentations. Stage 2 comprised interviews and focus groups from which qualitative data was collected from: a) undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous university students; b) academic teaching staff; and c) relevant administrative, professional and technical (APT) staff. From this qualitative data, a framework was developed and was discussed at mid-project presentations and disseminated in the mid-project report. Finally, in Stage 3 quantitative data was collected via surveys of: a) undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous students; and b) academic teaching staff. Stage 3 served to evolve the framework and develop the two project tools. End-project presentations, workshops, publications and an e-booklet served to widely disseminate the findings.

Project deliverables and impact

All four project deliverables were achieved and exceeded in some instances. Deliverables were designed to be scalable and impactful. Specifically,

- Deliverable 1 comprised two reports containing how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Indigenous university students as they apply to the participating universities. The reports may be used as a catalyst for discussion and potentially frame changes to praxis. As per the IMPEL model,² this deliverable enabled narrow systemic adoption, immediate student and team member impacts.
- Deliverable 2 was an e-booklet that summarises the project and facilitates sharing of findings so that IMPEL's broad and narrow opportunistic adoption, spreading the word and team member impacts may result.
- Deliverable 3 involved workshops at three Australian universities and one university abroad. Workshops served to actively engage participants and encourage related interventions at non-participating universities that were large, urban, located in different Australian states and a different country to the participating universities. Deliverable 3 enabled broad and narrow opportunistic adoption, narrow systemic adoption and team member IMPEL model impacts to eventuate.
- Deliverable 4 comprised four publications and three presentations that disseminated findings widely across the course of the project, triggering discussion and uptake of the project findings during and beyond the project's life. Broad and narrow systemic adoption, broad opportunistic adoption, spreading the word, immediate student and team member IMPEL model impacts were associated with this deliverable.

Key findings, project tools and central recommendation

The findings of this seed project resulted in two tools—The iPlace New Thinking Prompts and The iPlace Ecology.³ Both tools are scalable, portable and non-prescriptive. The two tools are designed to seed re-thinking and new thinking about 'university place' praxis and they may be adapted either in part or holistically to assist with strategic imperatives or 'closing the gap' agendas of universities across the sector. The central recommendation is that universities intentionally disrupt their status quo thinking and praxis regarding Indigenous students and the factors that enhance their persistence. 'University places' are a projection of the maturity of the Indigenous agenda of an institution, and are an intersection of Indigenous peoples' social identities (as a student, as Indigenous, as an emerging professional) and the experiences within its bounds define Indigenous studenthood and shape its impacts.

² As per Guidelines for Final Reporting, project deliverables were mapped to the IMPEL model developed by Tilly Hinton and available at: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/impact_resources.pdf

³ The term 'iPlace' was coined for this project and features in the title of the two project tools to convey that the 'university place' strengthens, shapes and creates the intersecting and multi-faceted social identities of Indigenous students.

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Chapter 1: Project overview

1.1 Project aim

This seed project aimed to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander¹ university student engagement and retention, aligning with the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) Seed Grants 2015 priority area of: *improving access to and outcomes in higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*. Specifically, this project identified how attending to the notion of *place* provides information and tools that universities can use to help optimise the persistence of Indigenous Australians in higher education. This project attends to Recommendations 10 and 11 of Behrendt et al.'s (2012) Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People; and in doing so has produced meaningful, useful and novel contributions that are relevant across the sector.

1.2 Project context

While access to university for Indigenous Australians has been the focus of much research (e.g. Wilks & Wilson 2014), there remains a dearth of in-depth investigations into the factors that support persistence of Indigenous students across the duration of their university experience. Several recurrent factors have been identified as enablers of educational success for Indigenous university students, such as whole-of-university efforts to enhance the university environment (Behrendt et al. 2012); however, what is missing from the literature is a nuanced understanding of these factors.

This project addressed one of these recurrent factors—namely the role of the university environment or ‘university place’—and investigated this at two universities with demonstrable, long-held commitments to elevating Indigenous peoples, being the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). USC’s sustained commitment to advancing the educational success of Indigenous peoples was initially apparent with their 2009-2011 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) being the first whole-of-university RAP to be endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. The ensuing comprehensive range of related whole-of-university initiatives provides an optimal institutional context that this USC-led project corroborates, complements and can leverage opportunities from. After decades of commitment and activity to improve university opportunities and success for Indigenous peoples, USQ’s multi-faceted RAP ‘Walking Together’ extensively embeds reconciliation in all university business and activities. USQ’s whole-of-university RAP is built on policies and practices developed and implemented over

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an extended period. USQ's strong track record in advancing the educational success of Indigenous peoples provides institutional advantages that directly benefit this project. Both USC and USQ actively strive to be open, welcoming, respectful and safe 'university places' that embrace and advance Indigenous peoples. This dual-university approach enabled the generation of meaningful outcomes that are scalable to the broader university sector and in doing so addresses the national priority to 'close the gap' by enhancing the educational outcomes of Indigenous peoples.

Sector readiness for this project is and continues to be apparent. Enhancing the access, participation, retention and success of Indigenous peoples is critical to enabling them to exercise their rights to participate fully in Australian society (Price 2012). The impact of colonisation and the entrenched struggles of Indigenous peoples cannot be separated from understandings of their experiences of education (Fredricks et al. 2014). There are many individual benefits associated with completing a university education, such as the acquiring of skills and knowledge, which in turn raises productivity, employability and earnings potential (Blöndal et al. 2002). Often unseen by the individuals completing university studies is the development of human capital, which is vitally important to the wellbeing and economic prosperity of societies; with higher education seen as a critical mechanism to its achievement (Chatterji 1997).

Indeed, increasing Indigenous peoples' higher education participation and success has been a stated priority for past and present Australian Governments (see Behrendt et al. 2012; Bradley et al. 2008) predicated the funding of OLT projects such as that led by Butler (2015, 'Sociology teaching and Indigenous issues') and Henderson-Yates (2014, 'Can't be what you can't see: the transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students into higher education'). Furthermore, OLT fellowships that focus upon Indigenous Australians in universities awarded to Asmar (2011, 'Indigenous teaching and learning at Australian universities'), Barney (2014, 'Pathways to postgraduate study for Indigenous Australian students: enhancing the transition to Research Higher Degrees'), Bond (2014, 'Subject of inquiry and mode of instruction: Indigenous bodies, Indigenous studies and cultural safety in Australian universities'); Martin (2014, 'Aboriginal studies in higher education in the 21st Century: a framework for learning; teaching; leadership and change') and McDermott (2014, 'Having the hard conversations: strengthening pedagogical effectiveness by working with student and institutional resistance to Indigenous health curriculum') indicate sector readiness.

In isolation, the outcomes of this seed project are valuable for the sector. When viewed in concert with previously funded OLT projects and fellowships, a more substantial impact arises. The opportunity exists to leverage this project's outcomes in a manner that not only makes visible its contribution to the current collective national agenda but to also continue the existing momentum of activity centred on elevating Indigenous peoples' higher education outcomes which, in turn, will bring about broader systemic change.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Background

Many benefits result from success in higher education. Currently, Indigenous Australians who complete university find work faster and typically have a higher commencing salary than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Turnbull 2017). Increases in Indigenous student enrolments in recent times, although still significantly below parity, have been stymied by high drop-out rates that are twice that of non-Indigenous students (Edwards & McMillan 2015). This suggests that efforts directed at understanding the factors that optimise persistence at university is vital to increasing Indigenous student completions and reaping the apparent employment and income benefits that improve peoples' quality-of-life.

Among the little research there is on optimising the persistence of Indigenous students in Australian higher education, recurrent themes centred on whole-of-university efforts and reference to the university environment in a broad sense (e.g. Behrendt et al. 2012). Other recurrent themes in the literature included the concepts of cultural safety and cultural security (e.g. Bin-Sallik 1990). Both concepts are known to influence Indigenous Australians' decisions to attend and stay at university (Bourke et al. 1996; Wilks & Wilson 2014). Supporting the whole-of-university perspective, Coffin's (2007) three tier model detailed how cultural awareness precedes cultural safety in an organisation and cultural safety then advances to cultural security where 'knowing' is translated into 'doing' across a whole organisation (Lumby & Farrelly 2009). While these themes occurred in the literature, what was missing was a comprehensive model of the influential factors, the interplay between them, and the consequences of them that comprise the 'university place'. First, a review of the notion of place and the relationships people have with place was required.

2.2 Place: attachment and identity

Place is a powerful and thus ubiquitous notion that features in the literature of many disciplines including geography (e.g. Dodson & Gleeson 2009), marketing (e.g. Rosenbaum 2006) and public health (Dannenberg et al. 2011). Place is broadly defined as 'space + meaning' (Harrison & Dourish 1996) and is the experiential setting comprised of a specific location and therein the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social activities that occur within its boundaries (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). The relationships between people and place are subjective and complex; and despite being seemingly conspicuous, its influence is often overlooked (Malpas 1999; Patterson & Williams 2005).

People give places meaning (Low & Altman 1992). Place is intertwined with peoples' identity and self-perceptions because place is regarded as an agent-of-the-self, in that people and places are knitted together (Sack 1997). Identity emerges through social interaction (Mead

1934) and is situated or context-dependent in that people have as many selves as there are groups and places with whom they engage (Cooley 1922; Scanlon et al. 2007). Ergo, peoples' identities are constantly unfolding—people choose and alter their identities in ways that help them navigate contexts (Baumeiser & Muraven 1996).

Peoples' sense of place results from the accumulation of experiences over time in a locale (Manzo 2005) with positive accumulated experiences leading to strong bonds and 'place attachment' (Hidalgo & Hernandez 2001). Attachments that people form within places, such as to social relationships or biophysical aspects of the locale, can shape their identity (Knez 2005; Stedman 2003). That is, place identity is co-constructed (Knez 2005) in that 'who you are' is a function of 'where you are' (Jorgenson & Stedman 2001).

The marketing literature shows that place attachment and place identity leads to higher consumer engagement, satisfaction and retention as people want to be close to places that have positive meanings to them (Brocato et al. 2014). Experiences in a place are not the same for all individuals, with Rosenbaum and Montoya (2007, p. 213) finding that ethnic consumers often experienced discomfort and person-place incongruence in service settings. The higher education literature also reflects the importance of place attachment (see Scopelliti & Tiberio 2010) and place identity (see Scanlon et al. 2007) when students first transition into university. Such research supplements Tinto's (1997) seminal work on the influence of 'classroom places' on students' learning outcomes and persistence.

2.3 Engagement in 'third places'

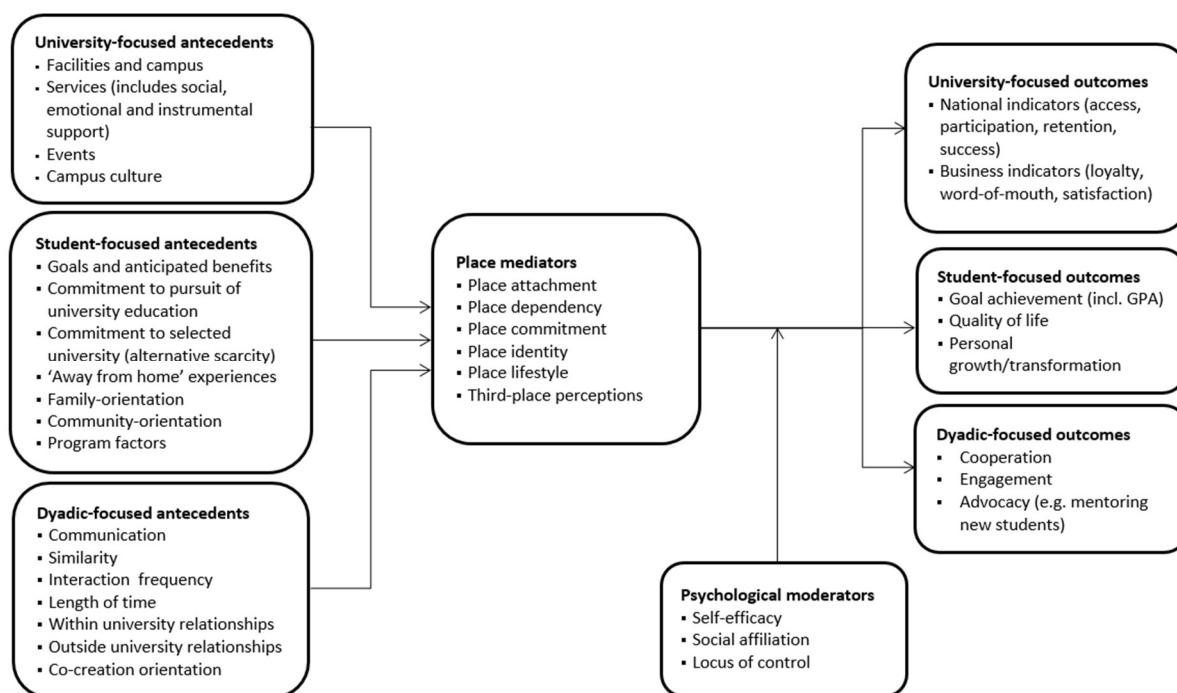
Within places, engagement occurs. Engagement, a multi-dimensional construct, is prevalent in marketing (Jaakkola 2014) and higher education (Kahu 2013) literature. In marketing, engagement in service places is sourced to Kotler's (1973) seminal atmospherics work which underpins Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework. Some service places possess special significance to a consumer (Rosenbaum 2009). Known as 'third places', these special service places are beyond home and work, where people feel a sense of belonging, where they can 'be' their authentic self (Oldenburg 1999) and where, with others, they can co-create their own place engagement experiences (Brodie et al. 2013).

In higher education literature, student engagement is known to influence students' learning and achievement (Kuh 2009). Kahu's (2013) assessment of the dominant perspectives on engagement culminated in a conceptual framework that depicts the influence of some central 'university place' elements (e.g. student-teacher relationships) and, importantly, the influence of student inputs that also shape engagement experiences. University campuses have been framed as 'third places' in the higher education literature (e.g. Banning 2002) with related studies noting that a sense of place contributes to higher retention rates among enrolled students (Reeve & Kassabaum 1997).

2.4 Theoretical model

Drawing from relevant higher education, place, marketing and geography literature, and modelled on Palmatier et al.'s (2006) meta-analytic framework and Arora's (1982) Stimulus-Organism-Response model (both seminal marketing frameworks), the following theoretical model (Figure 1) was developed as a starting point for this project.

FIGURE 1: Theoretical model



The theoretical model is holistic in that it comprises university, student and dyad (university-student interface) components as both antecedents and outcomes. Place is represented as a mediator, in that it can explain the relationship between the antecedents and outcomes. For example, Indigenous students in a program may develop place attachment due to positive in-class interactions with their peers. In turn, this place attachment may enhance their satisfaction with the program. Psychological moderators may affect the strength of the relationship. To illustrate, an Indigenous student who likes to be around others (social affiliation) may be more likely to take on an advocacy role such as mentoring new Indigenous students.

In summary, the vision of a culturally safe and secure 'university place' where Indigenous students can be, become and belong and where accumulated positive experiences enhance engagement and optimise learning was the impetus for this project. This project provided the opportunity to disrupt status quo thinking and seed new thinking by questioning and unpacking how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Indigenous students in Australian universities.

Chapter 3: Approach

3.1 Project team

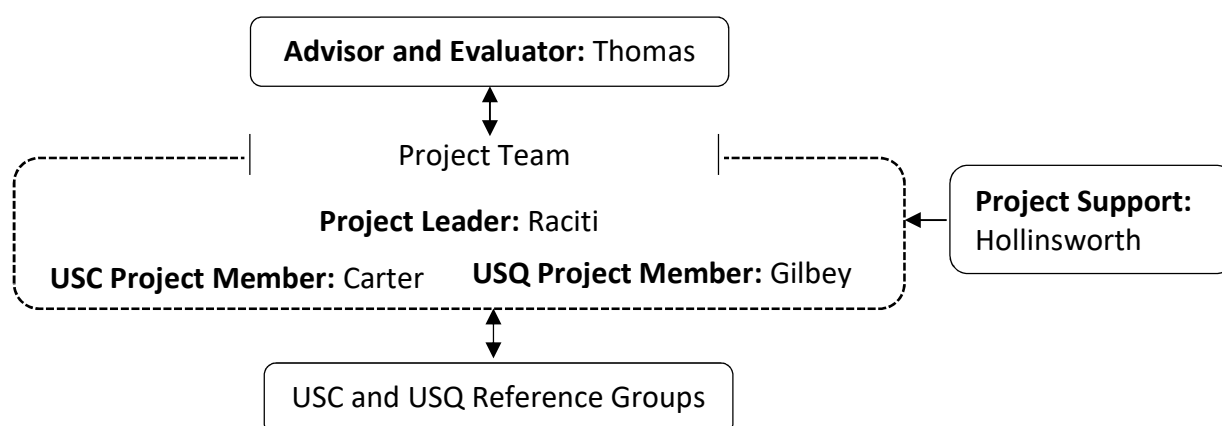
The multidisciplinary project team and senior research assistant brought various perspectives and expertise to bear on the project. In brief:

- Associate Professor Maria Raciti, the project leader, is an Aboriginal woman who is an experienced marketing researcher, co-leader of the USC Indigenous Studies Research theme and has a track record of research associated with higher education.
- Associate Professor Jennifer Carter, the USC project team member, has a significant research profile in Indigenous geography, is an elected Member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and is co-leader of the USC Indigenous Studies Research theme.
- Dr Kathryn Gilbey, the USQ project member, is an Aboriginal woman, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education's inaugural PhD graduate, an Early Career Researcher and 2016 Australian-American Fulbright Postdoctoral Scholar with an emerging research profile in privileging First Nations knowledge in education.
- Adjunct Professor David Hollinsworth, the project's senior research assistant, is an elected member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, has taught and published extensively in Indigenous studies and studies of racism, and has worked as a consultant to community organisations and state and federal governments on matters pertaining to Indigenous peoples.

3.2 Project governance

Project governance included regular communication with the two reference groups and continuous engagement with the project advisor (Figure 2). Project advisor, Associate Professor Gary Thomas, provided formative feedback that was systematically enfolded into the project design. Dr Thomas' summative project evaluation is in Appendix A.

FIGURE 2: Project governance structure



3.3 Project timeframe

The project comprised three stages with dissemination and impact activities scheduled across the life of the project (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Project timeframe

		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Stage 1	Activity															
	Ethics application															
	Advisor consultations															
	Reference group consultations															
	Research assistant appointment															
	Update an existing literature review															
	USC and USQ baseline data collection															
	Beginning-project presentations ⁴															
Stage 2	Conference papers 1 and 2 preparation ⁴															
	Qualitative data: Indigenous students															
	Qualitative data: academic staff															
	Qualitative data: APT staff															
	Conference paper 1 presentation ⁴															
	Advisor consultations															
	Reference group newsletter															
	Mid-project presentations ⁴															
Stage 3	Preliminary framework															
	Mid-project report ¹															
	Survey development and administration															
	Mid-project evaluation by advisor															
	Quant data: Indigenous students															
	Quant data: academic staff															
	Data analysis															
	Final project tools															
Stage 3	Conference paper 2 presentation ⁴															
	Advisor consultations															
	Reference group newsletter															
	End-project presentation ⁴															
	Workshops ³															
	E-booklet draft ²															
	Journal articles 1 and 2 ⁴															
	DET End-project report draft ¹															
Stage 3	End-project evaluation by Advisor															
	USC and USQ end-project reports ¹															
	E-booklet finalisation ²															
	DET end-project report finalise ¹															

1 = Deliverable 1; 2 = Deliverable 2; 3 = Deliverable 3; 4 = Deliverable 4

3.4 Mixed-method case study approach

For this project, Yin's (1994) case study methodology was employed. Data were collected from two participating universities using mixed methods. Data from each stage (Table 2) informed the two tools—The iPlace New Thinking Prompts and The iPlace Ecology.

TABLE 2: Project stages and tool development

Project stage	Tool development
Project proposal: Drawing from the literature, and modelled on Palmatier et al.'s (2006) meta-analytic framework and Arora's (1982) Stimulus-Organism-Response model (both seminal marketing frameworks), a theoretical model was proposed.	Theoretical Model: holistic model drawn from the literature
Stage 1: Baseline data from participating universities Baseline data was collected to better understand contextual differences and to identify institutional commonalities and nuances that might be reflected in scalable tools. Baseline data also served to enhance familiarity with each institution prior to Stage 2 and 3 data collection and analysis. A key insight gained was how the maturity of the Indigenous agenda at each institution needs to be integrated into tool development.	Preliminary Model: holistic model now informed by baseline data
Stage 2: Qualitative study Via interviews and focus groups, qualitative data was collected from: a) undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous university students; b) academic teaching staff; and c) relevant APT staff at the participating universities. Stage 2 findings informed model evolution. The research-informed iPlace Framework resulted and was the basis of Stage 3.	iPlace Framework: adapted theoretical model informed by the qualitative study findings
Stage 3: Quantitative study Via surveys, quantitative data was collected from: a) undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous university students; and b) academic teaching staff at the participating universities. Analysed and integrated with data from the previous stage, new insights were isolated and evolved into the two tools.	The iPlace New Thinking Prompts and The iPlace Ecology: holistic, non-prescriptive, portable and scalable tools.

3.4.1 Stage 1: Baseline data

Baseline data from the participating universities aligned with the theoretical model, namely:

- A general overview including number of campuses, on-campus versus online delivery, age of university, facilities and all student support services.
- Ways in which the institutions embedded their long-held commitments to elevating Indigenous peoples into decision making protocols e.g. strategic plan, operational plans.
- New Indigenous-related initiatives in progress or planned.

- Number of Indigenous students and their enrolment characteristics.
- Number of Indigenous staff, distinguishing between type and status.
- Indigenous-related courses/programs and where they are situated in the university.

3.4.2 Stage 2: Qualitative study

The qualitative study was exploratory in nature, employing focus groups and interviews to garner insights from Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students and interviews with staff (academic and APT) at the participating universities. Ethics approval was secured prior to commencing data collection. Details are provided in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Stage 2 qualitative study sample

Who	How	Participants
Indigenous undergraduate students	All who self-identified as Indigenous in enrolment records were invited via email to participate in focus groups	USC = 7
		USQ = 10
Indigenous postgraduate students	All who self-identified as Indigenous in enrolment records were invited via email to participate in focus groups	USC = 1
		USQ = 1
Academic staff	Purposive recruitment of academic staff (full-time, part-time or sessional) who regularly interacted face-to-face with large numbers of under/postgraduate university students were invited via email to participate in interviews	USC = 5
		USQ = 3
APT staff	Purposive recruitment of APT staff (full-time, part-time or casual) who regularly interacted face-to-face with large numbers of under/postgraduate university students were invited via email to participate in interviews	USC = 2
		USQ = 2

The focus groups and interviews were conducted by the research team and the senior research assistant and were guided by an agenda of topics that reflected the theoretical model generated from the literature. The main purpose of the qualitative study was to refine the theoretical model, to identify new themes and questions for the Stage 3 surveys, and to determine the most appropriate sample for the Stage 3 surveys.

3.4.2.1 Focus groups with Indigenous students

Invitations were sent to students who self-identified as Indigenous in their enrolment records (USC = 278; USQ = 568). Focus groups were scheduled at times most likely to be convenient for students and were conducted on-campus at USC Sippy Downs and USQ Toowoomba. The USC Sippy Downs focus groups were conducted in a classroom not associated with the Indigenous Centre, while the USQ Toowoomba focus groups took place within the Indigenous College.

A total of five focus groups were conducted at both universities and lasted between 36 minutes and 78 minutes depending upon the number of participants. Participants were both new and continuing students, over 18 years of age, and enrolled in a full-time capacity across a range of programs offered by the two universities. Specifically,

- At USC there were a total of seven participants comprising: a) one male and six females; b) all full-time enrolments; c) all continuing students; and d) who were enrolled in programs including social work, engineering, law, environmental science and Indigenous studies.
- At USQ there were a total of 10 participants comprising: a) five males and five females; b) all full-time enrolments; c) eight new and two continuing students; and d) who were enrolled in programs in education, surveying, business, health science and political science.

Focus group data was digitally audio-recorded. Verbatim transcription was provided by a private service provider with the resulting transcripts then independently subject to manual, thematic analysis by the senior research assistant and one team member. Triangulation of the key themes by the research team ensued.

3.4.2.2 Interviews with university staff

A total of 12 interviews with university staff were conducted by the research team and senior research assistant, with four interviewees self-identifying as Indigenous and eight as non-Indigenous. The semi-structured interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 75 minutes. Eight of the interviewees were academic teaching staff from a range of discipline areas and four were APT from a variety of divisions at the participating universities.

Data were digitally audio-recorded, with the verbatim transcription conducted by a private service provider. The resulting transcripts were returned to the interviewees by the interviewer for confirmation and correction where needed. Following interviewee confirmation, the de-identified transcripts were subject to manual, thematic analysis independently by the senior research assistant and one team member with the findings triangulated among the research team.

3.4.3 Stage 3: Quantitative study

Two quantitative surveys—Indigenous student survey and academic teaching staff survey—were administered simultaneously at both universities in on-line and paper-based formats. The surveys took 10-15 minutes to complete. Ethics clearance for the final surveys was secured prior to administration. The associated research project information sheet advised that responses were confidential, anonymous and voluntary. Participants were to be over 18 years of age and consent was implied by clicking the hyperlink to proceed with the on-line survey, or upon return of the paper-based survey in the reply-paid envelope provided. The data collection period spanned two weeks; sample details are provided in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Stage 3 quantitative study sample

Who	How	Respondents
Indigenous students	All self-identified Indigenous students (undergraduate and postgraduate) enrolled at all campuses of the participating universities were invited to participate in the survey. A list of the email addresses of all self-identified Indigenous students (undergraduate and postgraduate) was procured from each university.	USC: Email invitations = 278 Paper-based surveys = 30 Useable responses = 23
	Invitations for students to participate in the survey, with a hyperlink to the on-line survey, was sent via email to these lists by the research team members at their respective universities. One follow-up reminder email occurred around seven days after the initial email invitation. The project team distributed paper-based surveys to facilities for student groups (e.g. Guilds), student support services or at identified events that occurred during this time when Indigenous students were thought to be present. A postage-paid envelope addressed to the research team was also provided. Students were requested to complete the on-line survey or paper-based survey (not both).	USQ: Email invitations = 568 Paper-based surveys = 30 Useable responses = 28
Academic teaching staff	All academic teaching staff (full-time, part-time and sessional/casual) at all campuses of both participating universities were invited to participate in the survey. On-line and paper-based versions of the survey were distributed simultaneously.	USC: Invitations sent = 359 Paper-based surveys = 70 Useable responses = 52
	Invitations for staff to participate in the on-line survey, with a hyperlink to the survey, were distributed by Heads of Schools with one follow-up reminder email occurring around seven days after the initial email invitation. The project team distributed paper-based surveys to staff pigeonholes, tea rooms or at staff meetings that were held during that time. A postage-paid envelope addressed to the research team was provided. Staff were requested to complete the on-line survey or paper-based survey (not both).	USQ: Invitations sent = 470 Paper-based surveys = 50 Useable responses = 12

Chapter 4: Key findings

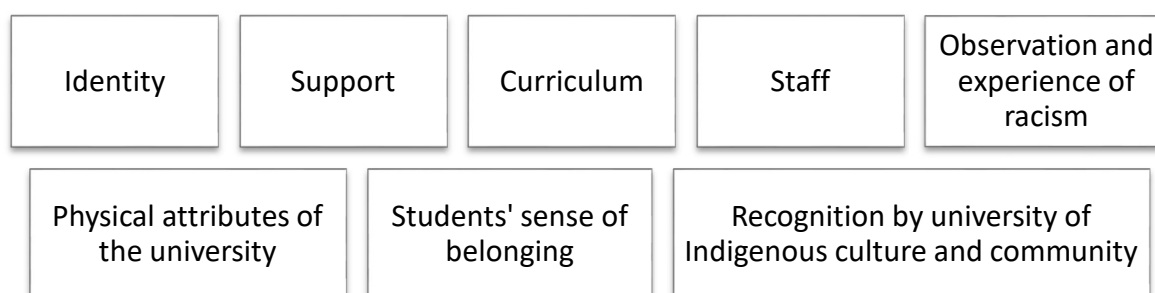
4.1 Stage 1 Baseline data

Baseline data was collected from the participating institutions. A higher-level perspective of the baseline data revealed the influence that the maturity of the Indigenous agenda has on university praxis.

4.2 Stage 2: Qualitative study

Eight key themes were identified (Figure 3). While sub-themes were apparent, the purpose of the Stage 2 qualitative study was to refine the theoretical model. The theoretical model combined student and staff perspectives; hence, themes that bridged both groups offered the most benefit to the project. The project team engaged in a process of triangulation with regards to the eight key themes. This process included not only convergence about the interpretation and clustering of topics into themes but also the translation of these themes into items for the Stage 3 quantitative study surveys. A summary is in Appendix B.

FIGURE 3: Qualitative study findings



4.3 Stage 3: Quantitative study

The Stage 3 quantitative study comprised two surveys—a survey of Indigenous students and a survey of academic teaching staff at the participating universities. A summary of the findings from each survey are provided in Appendix C.

The univariate and multivariate analysis of the surveys reaffirmed known relationships and revealed new insights. These new insights can seed new directions for the sector. The iPlace New Thinking Prompts tool resulted. Table 5 and Table 6 present these new insights and associated questions that may be used as prompts by universities to disrupt status quo thinking and stimulate new thinking and praxis.

TABLE 5: iPlace New Thinking Prompts Tool—New insights and question prompts from the Indigenous student survey findings

iPlace New Thinking Prompts Regarding Indigenous Students	
New insights	New thinking prompts
Choices are made by Indigenous students to self-identify (or not) to lecturers/tutors and other students in their classes. Furthermore, there was a tendency for lecturers/tutors to not identify Indigenous students from enrolment records. These practices indicate that it is preferred by both Indigenous students and lecturers/tutors that it is the choice of the student to self-disclose their cultural identity.	- Do universities vary in their management of diversity and equity descriptors (e.g. enrolment records available to academic teaching staff do not indicate if a person has a disability, yet Indigenous status is available) and what are the rationales involved? - Do these findings reflect that academic teaching staff assume there are no Indigenous students in their classes or don't know how to identify Indigenous students?
Many Indigenous students neither spent time at the Indigenous Centre/College nor attended Indigenous events on campus, yet many strongly believed that these are very important and valuable.	- What proportion of Indigenous students do universities assume need the Centre/College? - Is the symbolic value of the Centre/College and Indigenous events for Indigenous students considered by universities?
There is a desire for Indigenous-Indigenous and student-student connections while at university. Not all Indigenous students felt a sense of connection with other Indigenous students in the same classes or at the same university. Many did not know other Indigenous people who had attended the same university upon enrolling and did not have a clear idea of how many Indigenous lecturers/tutors were at their university. The need for Indigenous-Indigenous connections to assuage culturally unsafe classroom practices is apparent.	Indigenous students are diverse in many ways including the want and need for Indigenous-Indigenous connections. Indigenous-Indigenous and student-student connections may not be needed throughout the entirety of studenthood, but how do students who desire them create such connections at a time when they need them?

iPlace New Thinking Prompts Regarding Indigenous Students

New insights	New thinking prompts
It was found that: a) male Indigenous students are less likely to perceive lecturers/tutors as well-meaning but inaccurate in the class discussions of Indigenous topics; and b) Torres Strait Islander students feel their lecturers/tutors are rarely genuinely interested in discussing Indigenous topics in class.	▪ What issues are most likely to be at play here? ▪ How might universities encourage staff to engage more effectively in incorporating Indigenous content in their teaching? ▪ How might universities address the need for content on Torres Strait Islander curricula?
Student-student classroom experiences were influential. Ignorant peers negatively impact Indigenous students' quality-of-life [#] while studying and this lack of cultural safety drives a need for more Indigenous-Indigenous interaction. Conversely, positive student-student classroom experiences where peers are competent positively impacts Indigenous students' quality-of-life.	▪ How might universities attend to this? ▪ How does embedding Indigenous content in curricula affect this experience (positively and negatively)?
Indigenous students' quality-of-life while studying influences how Indigenous students choose to identify in the first instance while at university (as Indigenous and/or as an emerging professional).	▪ What are the assumptions and implications for academic teaching staff, for programs and program leaders/coordinators?
It was found that Indigenous students': a) social affiliation and sense of connection with a university-based Indigenous community; and b) desire for Indigenous-Indigenous connection, ameliorates culturally unsafe experiences.	▪ Are there barriers that might circumvent this? ▪ How might more culturally safe spaces be provided?
Competent, knowledgeable teaching of Indigenous content in courses leads to positive learning outcomes, yet there was no statistically significant relationship between incompetent teaching and negative learning outcomes.	▪ Why is this so? ▪ What are the implications for universities around professional development in cultural competence?

[#] quality-of-life in this context is where Indigenous students while at university can 'be' themselves, are 'becoming' who they want to be and have a sense of 'belonging'.

TABLE 6: The iPlace New Thinking Prompts tool—New insights and question prompts from the academic teaching staff survey findings

iPlace New Thinking Prompts Regarding Academic Teaching Staff	
New insights	New thinking prompts
It was found that regardless of university-provided Indigenous cultural awareness training, few staff have undertaken this training.	- What are the challenges involved in Indigenous cultural awareness training? - Are other forms of training, such as cultural safety or cultural humility, more effective? - Is the primary need for non-Indigenous staff to be supported in critically reflecting on their own racial and cultural positioning rather than being given essentialised stereotypes of Indigeneity?
Lecturers/tutors know less about Torres Strait Islander people and their culture than Aboriginal peoples and their culture.	Is this common across the sector? Given the significant differences in distribution of Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, in what situations/contextes/locales should this be addressed?
Most academic teaching staff did not know the number of Indigenous students at their university and did not look up student enrolment records to identify Indigenous students in their classes. This complemented the Indigenous student survey results that indicate that Indigenous students prefer the choice to self-disclose (or not) their cultural heritage in various contexts.	- Given that students have an inherent right to privacy, specifically in relation to whether they choose to disclose their Indigenous identity in specific contexts, staff professional development needs to emphasise that all academic teaching staff need to operate on the assumption there may be an Indigenous student in their class, and other staff on the assumption that the person they are servicing may in fact be Indigenous. What training and conversations need to be initiated to reinforce this? - What implications does this have for the sector's policy statements about Indigenous students (many of which assume that Indigenous identity is transparent and fixed)?

iPlace New Thinking Prompts Regarding Academic Teaching Staff

New insights	New thinking prompts
Lecturers/tutors were concerned about teaching discipline-relevant Indigenous topics in their classes. Specifically, they mentioned fear of being perceived by students as patronising, misappropriating knowledge and experience without permission, potential for student resistance and negative class discussions.	▪ How can such fears be assuaged? ▪ What kind of specific staff development can encourage academic teaching staff to more comfortably take risks and engage in genuine dialogue with Indigenous people and content?
The responses to open-ended questions indicated that some academic teaching staff had limited personal experience and/or professional involvement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.	▪ Are there significant challenges and dangers in encouraging large numbers of staff to seek out such experiences? ▪ Do Indigenous communities and organisations have the capacity (and desire) to provide such experiences?
Many positive outcomes result when lecturers/tutors are confident about the teaching of Indigenous topics relevant to their discipline in classes.	▪ How might universities respond to the lack of confidence among lecturers/tutors? What is the relationship between lecturer/tutor confidence and expertise? What are the practices of confident lecturers/tutors that ensure they maintain currency and accuracy about the Indigenous-related topics they teach?
Training, resourcing and adequate workload allocation themes were commonly mentioned by academic teaching staff. The results suggest that where academic teaching staff have access to relevant training, and they are adequately resourced and provided with a workload allocation, positive outcomes will manifest.	▪ What training, resourcing and/or workload allocations are provided by universities? If not provided, why not? ▪ How were these determined and have they been formally evaluated? What is best practice? ▪ Is teaching work related to embedding Indigenous content in curricula regarded as ‘core business’? If not, is this view at odds with the priorities of the Australian Government which identify that progress requires changes to the status quo (i.e. ‘core business’), and such changes require investment (i.e. resourcing) to be successful? What are the implications for staff and managers?

Chapter 5: The iPlace Ecology tool

Following triangulation of the project's literature review, exploratory qualitative findings and descriptive quantitative findings, it became apparent that a mechanistic worldview anchored in the technocentric ontology which view phenomena as divisible and discrete (Gladwin et al. 1995) was inadequate. New thinking was needed. For this project, an ecological worldview rather than a mechanistic worldview was deemed a better fit. The ecological worldview is a 'web-of-life' perspective that embraces co-creation and co-evolution processes (Capra 1996; Hes & Du Pleissis 2014).

By way of explanation, the reoccurring tension between the opposing worldviews of mechanism (the parts) and holism (the whole) is perennial, with debates documented since early Greek philosophy (Capra & Luisi 2014). Both mechanism and holism (also referred to as ecological) perspectives are present in most disciplines that use scientific research methods. However, in modern times there has been a swing towards an holistic/ecological worldview—albeit at different rates and in different forms depending upon the field—that recognises interconnectivity represents a shift from viewing the world as a machine to understanding it as a network (Capra 2002; Capra & Luisi 2014).

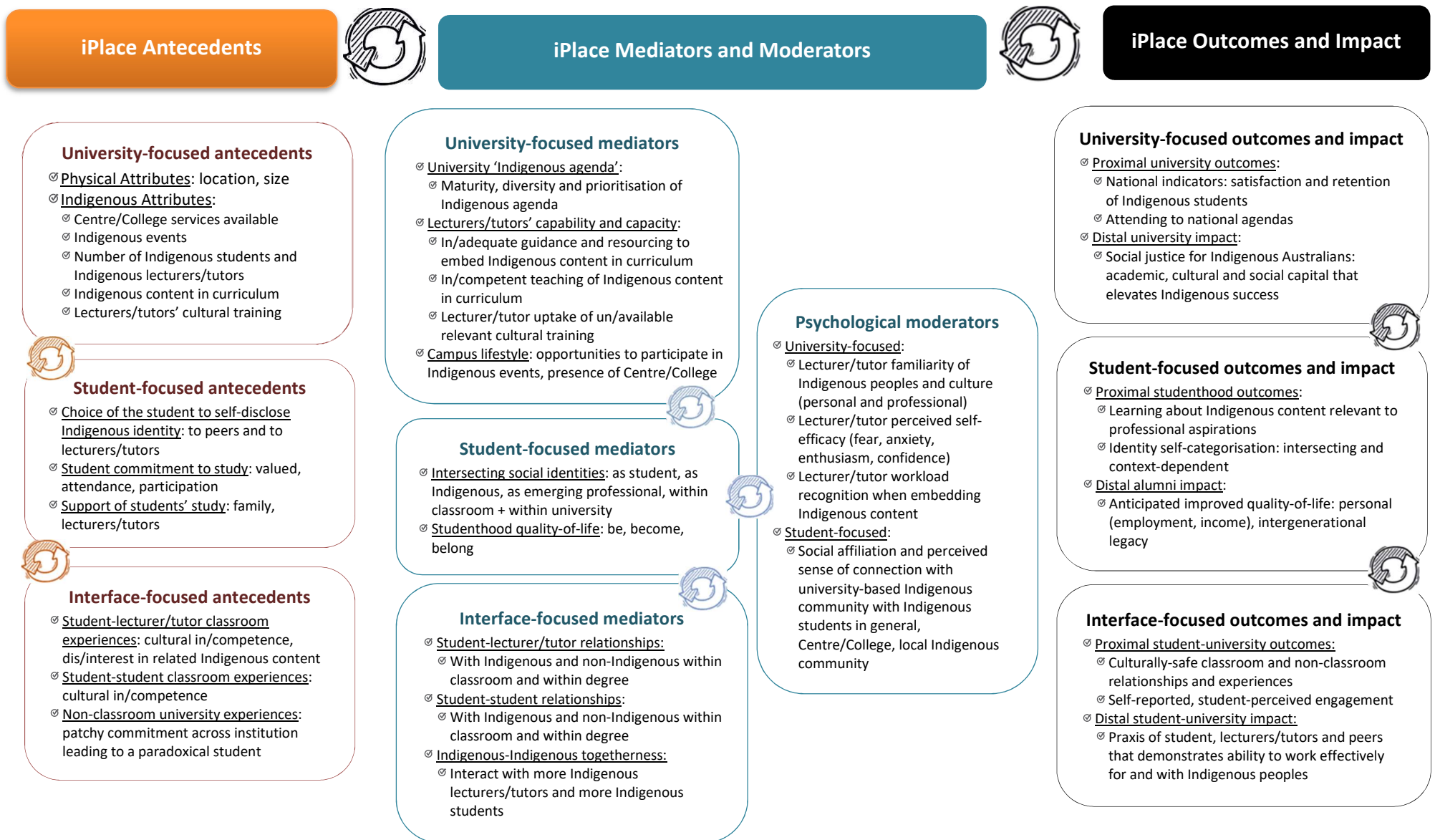
As detailed by Hutchins (2012) ecological thinking principles centre on the continuous interplay among:

- Networks—elements are interconnected and share resources across their boundaries.
- Cycles—continuous flow of activity, resources and ideas.
- Partnerships—co-operation, understanding, interdependency and networking.
- Diversity—leveraging complexity and difference to achieve robustness and resilience.
- Dynamic balance—flexibility and responsiveness with multiple dynamic sense-and-response feedback loops to keep the system in a state of dynamic balance. No single element is maximised and all elements fluctuate.

The iPlace Ecology (Figure 4) subscribes to ecological thinking principles and represents the second tool of this project for use by universities across the sector. In brief, The iPlace Ecology tool:

- Views all elements as interconnected, comprising 'living' building blocks interacting in a 'cooperative dance' within self-regulating and self-organising university environments.
- Is not prescriptive, hierarchical, inflexible or static and does not privilege elements or roles above others.
- Elements, either individually or in combination, provide innovative launching pad/s for university endeavours that can be matched to the maturity of the Indigenous agenda of individual, diverse institutions.
- Is malleable, able to be de- and re-constructed in ways that enable individual institutions to map, traverse and evolve their 'university place'.

FIGURE 4: The iPlace Ecology tool



The 'university place': how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students

Chapter 6: Project deliverables and impact

6.1 Application of IMPEL impact ladder model

Engendering impact throughout all stages of the project was a priority. Hilton et al.'s (2011) IMPEL model as applied to this project and its four deliverables are presented in Table 7, with the full project impact plan provided in Appendix D.

TABLE 7: IMPEL framed deliverables

IMPEL level	Application to this project (achieved and anticipated)	Associated deliverables
Team members	The project enhanced the research capabilities of the team members, which comprised two Indigenous team members (one being an early career researcher). There were also gains for the emergent USC Indigenous Studies Research theme.	1, 2, 3 and 4
Immediate students	Current student environments may be enhanced by reports provided to the participating universities.	1 and 4
Spreading the word	The e-booklet, publications and presentations served as mechanisms to extend the reach of the project's findings.	2 and 4
Narrow opportunistic adoption	Workshops held at non-participating universities actively engaged staff and students. These conversations have the potential to lead to or inform institutional change.	3
Narrow systemic adoption	This project provides empirical evidence and recommendations to help enhance the 'university place' for Indigenous students at the participating universities. The reports may be used to prompt discussion and frame changes at the participating universities.	1, 3 and 4
Broad opportunistic adoption	Dissemination of the findings and the evidence-based tools beyond the participating universities. Presents new knowledge and encourages new thinking.	2, 3 and 4
Broad systemic adoption	Project outcomes can be leveraged and make visible its contribution to the current body of work that attends to the 'closing the gap' national agenda.	2 and 4

Project deliverables enabled accessibility and immediacy of the uptake of the findings, which were achieved over the life of the project. A summary of each of the four deliverables follows.

6.2 Deliverable 1: Reports

Two reports for the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellors at the participating universities:

- Raciti, M, Carter, J & Gilbey, K 2016, 'Mid-project Report for OLT Seed Grant: The 'university place': how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students', August.
- Raciti, M, Carter, J & Gilbey, K 2017, 'OLT Seed Grant End-project report for USC and USQ on The 'university place': how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students', March.

6.3 Deliverable 2: E-booklet

The e-booklet contains an overview of the project and the two tools. The e-booklet is intended to be a catalyst for activities that optimise the persistence of Indigenous university students. Widespread dissemination via traditional, digital and social media channels is planned for the e-booklet, which can be found at: <http://research.usc.edu.au/>

6.4 Deliverable 3: Workshops

Workshops raised awareness, provoked conversation and encouraged related interventions. Scalability was intended from the outset with workshops held at non-participating universities that were markedly different from the participating universities (e.g. older, larger, urban, in different States). The interactive workshops facilitated meaningful engagement with the learnings and seeded re-thinking about participants' 'university place'.

Notably, project team member Dr Gilbey was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Fellowship with an overseas study tour, an opportunity that was leveraged to disseminate findings internationally. Specifically, the following workshops occurred:

- California State University, Northridge, 18th November 2016.
- University of Technology Sydney, 23rd November 2016.
- University of Sunshine Coast, 28th November 2016.
- University of Melbourne, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 1st December 2016.

6.5 Deliverable 4: Publications and presentations

Publications and presentations served to disseminate the findings and garner feedback across the life of the project.

Presentations included:

- Beginning-project—USC Research Seminar, Sippy Downs, 9th March 2016.
- Mid-project—USC Research Seminar, Sippy Downs, 8th August 2016.
- End-project—California State University Seminar, Northridge, 8th November 2016.

Conference papers included (two more are in development):

- Raciti, M, Carter, J & Gilbey, K 2016, 'The "university place" and its influence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students', Students Transitions Achievement Retention and Success Conference, Perth, 29 June–2 July.
- Raciti, M, Carter, J, Gilbey, K & Hollinsworth, D 2016, 'Country and the campus: conceptualising Aboriginal students' university experience', International Social Marketing Conference, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 25–26 September.

Submitted journal articles (three more are in development):

- Hollinsworth, D, Carter, J, Gilbey, K & Raciti, M, 'Indigenous cultural competence in Australian universities: challenges and barriers', *Studies in Higher Education*.
Abstract: Australian universities are prioritising Indigenous Cultural Competence, although the concept itself is broad and contested, with debates around tokenism, failure to recognise diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the lack of institutional 'buy-in'. This paper explores some of the challenges of advancing Indigenous Cultural Competence through a survey and interviews with academic staff at two universities. Academic staff identified the need to understand social and cultural factors affecting Indigenous students' access and retention, and the need for more training and support around their cultural competence. Most felt the concept was largely superficial and lacked understanding of power, racism and white privilege, preferring the term cultural safety. We argue that all universities must recognise the scale of the challenges involved, especially at a systemic level, and adopt policy and resourcing practices appropriate for whole-of-institution implementation and capacity building.
- Carter, J, Hollinsworth, D, Raciti, M & Gilbey, K, 'The role of academics in making university a place of belonging for Australian Indigenous students'.
Abstract: Place is a concept used to explore how people ascribe meaning to their physical and social surrounds and their emotional affects. Exploring the university as a place can highlight social relations affecting Australian Indigenous students' sense of belonging and identity. Themes are presented from research at two Australian universities, based on three focus groups with Indigenous undergraduate students, interviews with two Indigenous postgraduate research candidates, and four Indigenous and eight non-Indigenous staff. Students prioritised relationships with academics, stressing their flexibility and understanding affected their persistence at university. Students situationally manage self-identification, implying academics need to engage effectively with all students; however, academics felt they required professional development in appropriate pedagogy. Universities were seen as tokenistic in valuing Indigenous community and culture. Students highlighted that academic workload stresses sometimes deterred them from seeking help, requiring institutional recognition and resourcing to foster Indigenous students' sense of place and belonging through relational learning.

Chapter 7: Links to other OLT projects and fellowships

The findings of this project add to previous OLT projects and fellowships. Collectively, these enable broad systemic adoption. Details ensue in Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10.

TABLE 8: Links to Henderson-Yates OLT project

Project title	Can't be what you can't see: the transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into higher education.
Project leader	Henderson-Yates
Completed	2014
Points of difference with this project	▪ Henderson-Yates project focused on factors that optimise transition into higher education for Indigenous Australians while this project examined 'place' factors that optimise persistence in higher education for Indigenous Australians.
Points of parity with this project	▪ Highlighted Indigenous students are diverse yet the sectorial status quo is to homogenise Indigenous students as one group with similar backgrounds, needs, wants, knowledges and perspectives. Students expected to know and represent 'all things Indigenous'. ▪ Indigenous Education Units expanding scope of responsibilities. ▪ Lack of cultural competence among university staff members and the need for opportunities for continued cultural training. ▪ Issues of self-identification and definition. ▪ Whole-of-university view and the importance of relationships.
How this project adds to Henderson-Yates project	▪ Moves beyond transition to optimisation of persistence. ▪ Highlighted and integrated differences among Indigenous students into project tools to both acknowledge and be inclusive. ▪ Identity-based view of the 'university place' noting intersecting identities (as a student, as Indigenous and as an emerging professional). ▪ Recognition of the role of the maturity of universities' Indigenous agenda and how this is projected in praxis. ▪ Moved beyond student-lecturer relationships, noting student-student and Indigenous-Indigenous togetherness as seminal relationships that occur in the 'university place'. ▪ Included psychological moderating factors and distinguished between proximal outcomes and distal impact. ▪ Adoption of an ecological worldview rather than a mechanistic one to address continuous cycling of interplay between factors including university-focused, student-focused and interplay-focused dynamics.

TABLE 9: Links to Asmar OLT fellowship

Fellowship title	Indigenous teaching and learning at Australian universities: developing research-based exemplars for good practice.
Recipient	Asmar
Completed	2011
Points of difference with this project	Asmar's project focused upon practical exemplars for teaching Indigenous students and Indigenous curricula effectively. This is relevant to the curriculum elements in The iPlace Ecology Tool, however this project examined broader 'place' factors and their interplay from a whole-of-university perspective.
Points of parity with this project	- Highlighted the important role that curriculum plays in the experience of Indigenous students in higher education. - Notes the experiences of non-Indigenous academic teachers and concerns about teaching Indigenous topics and through teaching exemplars. Asmar (2011) provides practical tools and advice, including about questions of credibility and confidence. - Teaching exemplars include linking to relevance for future jobs/career, role of student-student relationships, navigating in-class interactions and the need for teachers to be open to change.
How this project adds to Asmar fellowship	- Moves beyond in-class curriculum to a comprehensive, whole-of-university ecology to optimise the persistence. - Highlighted and integrated differences among Indigenous students into project tools to both acknowledge this point and be inclusive. - Identity-based view of the 'university place' noting intersecting identities. - Recognition of the role of the maturity of universities' Indigenous agenda and how this is projected in praxis, as well as the importance of Indigenous-Indigenous togetherness. - Distinguished between proximal outcomes and distal impact.

TABLE 10: Links to Barney OLT fellowship

Fellowship title	Pathways to postgraduate study for Indigenous Australian students: enhancing the transition to Research Higher Degrees (RHD).
Recipient	Barney
Completed	2016
Points of difference with this project	Barney's fellowship focused upon pathways and transition to higher degrees by research. This project examined persistence of Indigenous undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Points of parity with this project	- Noted the role of various university stakeholders and divisions and ways they can work together to enhance enrolments. - Highlighted personal and professional benefits accrue for Indigenous RHD students.
How this project adds to Barney fellowship	- Extends focus beyond postgraduate students entering RHD studies to a comprehensive, whole-of-university ecology to optimise the persistence of undergraduate and postgraduate students across all programs. - Highlighted and integrated differences among Indigenous students into project tools to both acknowledge and be inclusive. - Identity-based view of the 'university place' noting intersecting identities as a student, as Indigenous and as an emerging professional. - Recognition of the role of the maturity of the universities' Indigenous agenda and student-student and Indigenous-Indigenous togetherness as important factors in the 'university place'.

Final reports for the following related OLT projects and fellowships were not available at the time of submission of this report. Hence, Table 11 presents anticipated linkages.

TABLE 11: Anticipated linkages to related OLT projects and fellowships

OLT Projects	Anticipated linkages
Title: Sociology teaching and Indigenous issues Project leader: Butler Awarded: 2015	Both projects note program differences occur and attending to these will aid in Indigenisation of curricula.
OLT Fellowships	Anticipated linkages
Recipient: Bond Awarded: 2014 Title: Subject of inquiry and mode of instruction: Indigenous bodies, Indigenous studies and cultural safety in Australian universities	The findings of this project will corroborate this fellowship. This project and the fellowship share two themes, being: practices to Indigenise curricula; and concerns about cultural safety.
Recipient: Martin Awarded: 2014 Title: Aboriginal studies in higher education in the 21st Century: a framework for learning, teaching, leadership and change	This project and this fellowship share an interest in the role of curriculum and how Indigenisation is best to occur from a whole-of-university perspective.
Recipient: McDermott Awarded: 2014 Title: Having the hard conversations: strengthening pedagogical effectiveness by working with student and institutional resistance to Indigenous health curriculum	This project and this fellowship both note program differences occur and both examine student and university roles, the role of curricula and the impact on professional practices. Ergo, complementary linkages are anticipated.

Chapter 8: Future research directions

While attention to the sustainability of the outputs are incorporated in their design, future opportunities to leverage these outputs may include:

- Usage of the project tools to map, traverse and evolve ‘university places’.
- Investigating the achievement of distal impacts of ‘university place’ attachment and connectedness as per the The iPlace Ecology, including improved quality-of-life.
- Enacting project conclusions and recommendations for the sector (Appendix E).

It is recommended that future research inject new thinking from disciplines not traditionally associated with higher education research, such as marketing. Service design thinking is relatively new to the marketing literature. Central to service design thinking is the generation of personas from which tailored programs can be developed. A persona is a research-informed, semi-fictional representation of a sub-group within a population that has distinct attitudes, motivations and behaviours (Scott 2007).

The following is offered as a starting point of how service design thinking and research-based personas may be used. This project’s findings indicated that Indigenous students could distinguish between different types of lecturer/tutors. Data from the staff interviews and surveys of Indigenous students and academic teaching staff provided further indications of distinct attitudes, motivations and behaviours of academic teaching staff that influenced the ‘university place’ experiences of Indigenous students. Synthesising and layering these findings and insights, a lecturer/tutor persona named ‘Hesitant Hugh’ was constructed (see Appendix F for full persona narrative). Table 12 below presents an abridged ‘Hesitant Hugh’ narrative and shows how targeted strategies and tactics may be mapped to a persona. Unlike ineffectual ‘one size fits all’ approaches, persona-based approaches are more likely to lead to meaningful improvements in the ‘university place’.

TABLE 12: ‘Hesitant Hugh’ persona as part of service design thinking approach

HESITANT HUGH	Hugh is new to academia and to his current university. He does not have extensive teaching experience or training and is still learning what his current university expects of him. Hugh teaches large classes and while he has heard of the importance of embedding Indigenous topics in his curriculum, he is not clear as to why this is important. He questions how it is relevant to what he is teaching and if it is part of his job to prepare relevant materials for his classes without an additional workload allocation.
	
Strategy	Communication of importance of and priority to Indigenise curricula.
Tactic #1	Onboarding program that requires participation in tailored workshops following first semester of teaching for which a workload is allocated.

Appendix A: Project evaluator report

Evaluation report: Seed Grant: The 'university place': how and why place influences the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students

For: Department of Education and Training

Evaluator: Associate Professor Gary Thomas BA PgDipEd PhD PFHEA

About the evaluator

Gary Thomas is an Aboriginal and Australian South Sea Islander man from North Queensland and is an Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching at the Queensland University of Technology. Gary is the Associate Director, Academic Indigenous Knowledges. He is a former honorary auditor for the Australian Universities Quality Agency and is currently a registered expert for the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

Gary has led programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education for twenty years. In 2016, Gary was recognised through the Higher Education Academy (UK) and awarded status of Principal Fellow.

Associate Professor Gary Thomas provided advice to the project team during the implementation of their seed grant.

Introduction

This seed grant project focuses on the reading, imagining and shaping of universities as places. It is predicated on acknowledgement of physical campuses being located on the lands and waters of Aboriginal peoples. This evaluation report acknowledges the Gubbi Gubbi/Kabi Kabi peoples of the Sunshine Coast and the Giabal and Jarowair peoples of the Toowoomba area as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the locations upon which the University of Sunshine Coast and the University of Southern Queensland are located.

The project team of Associate Professor Maria Raciti and Associate Professor Jennifer Carter from the University of the Sunshine Coast and Dr Kathryn Gilbey from the University of Southern Queensland have used their home institutions as case studies through which they unpack elements of a positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student experience. The project's overarching objective was to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and retention by highlighting this group of students' articulation of connectedness and conversely disconnectedness with their institutions as 'place'.

Place is considered as contributing to and at times dissuading students from their authentic selves in their pursuit of a university education. Raciti, Carter and Gilbey have produced two tools for use by institutions to consider motivations and actions for optimising persistence and improving the educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Background

Aims and intended outcomes

The project team sought to use notions and understandings of place as a means to determine characteristics or elements that would positively impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student engagement and retention. This approach extends the university experience beyond proximity and interaction with the physical and aims to discover interdependencies contributing to social, cognitive and emotional belonging. Linking marketing (Rosenbaum 2006; Jaakkola 2014) and higher education student engagement (Kuh 2009; Kahu 2013) theory is a novel way to think about student engagement as the pursuit of the authentic self.

The aims of the project aligned with the Office for Learning and Teaching Seed Grants 2015 priority area of improving access to and outcomes in higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Using the research question ‘How and why does place influence the engagement and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students?’, the project has successfully achieved its aim to discover contributing positive factors and presents two tools, specifically the iPlace New Thinking Prompts and the iPlace Ecology. These provide an opportunity for an institution to self-assess current practice and map, plan or develop future activities at a variety of levels. These tools are both accessible and meaningful for students, staff and senior executives.

Evidence

This case study involved the deployment of mixed methods. The qualitative sample whilst small provided evidence to refine the theoretical model and the directions for the quantitative survey. The research design and execution has been thorough and the team has identified significant findings. The approach taken by the team has ensured stakeholders across the two institutions have been included throughout planning and execution. The final report indicates future research directions which are clearly linked to the outcomes of this seed project.

The report includes an analysis of the impacts and relationship of this seed grant to other OLT projects focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics. Synergies and opportunities are highlighted as potential future research.

The strength of this project lies in the development of the iPlace Ecology which articulates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student experience not as a linear production requiring inputs by the university at various points in a degree program but by examining the experience holistically through the lens of place. In this way the iPlace Ecology moves thinking beyond a series of individual and transactional moments to a multiple and relational platform.

Relevance and contribution

The iPlace project makes a valuable contribution to whole-of-university approaches. Australian universities have been considering what a whole-of-university approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education would look like since Behrendt et al.'s (2012) recommendations within the 'Review of higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'. In March 2017, Universities Australia launched its Indigenous Strategy 2017 – 2020 (Universities Australia 2017). The document commits its members to:

- increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in higher education as students, as graduates and as academic and research staff;
- increase the engagement of non-Indigenous people with Indigenous knowledge, culture and educational approaches; and
- improve the university environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Currently, there are 17 Australian universities with registered Reconciliation Action Plans (Reconciliation Australia). The University of the Sunshine Coast and the University of Southern Queensland have had Reconciliation Action Plans for quite a number of years. The iPlace project has enabled students and staff to take stock and reflect on their achievements.

The iPlace New Thinking Prompts provides a simple tool by which institutions can examine their current practice. The iPlace Ecology provides a holistic guide for institutions to grasp the interdependencies of elements that contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success.

The project identifies an opportunity to apply niche marketing strategies to enact whole scale change. The presentation of personas as contributors within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student experience is innovative and is proposed as the alternative to a 'one size fits all' approach.

Achievement of outcomes

This project has been efficiently managed across two institutions and showed agility and flexibility to deal with changes in the project team, external opportunities awarded to project members, and national and international dissemination of findings.

The project team have undertaken significant opportunities to disseminate the findings of this seed grant. These have included national and international presentations and workshops, reports for participating institutions, and publication of two journal articles with a further two articles in development. An E-booklet has been developed which provides an excellent balance between research evidence and promoting the overarching narrative of

the iPlace project. The project team is commended for their publications and making use of opportunities as they have arisen for promotion and dissemination of the findings.

The tools produced by this project have great potential for use by Australian universities. They simultaneously provide opportunities for self-assessment and critique of success and gaps in provision. The iPlace Ecology enables institutions to identify elements for consolidation or development but does so without proscription or assigning value. The ecology demonstrates a profound understanding of the nature of education environments and encourages service design approaches to engage students.

The strength of the tools is they may be applied to experienced and high performing institutions as well as those who are establishing or rather seeking to further enhance their approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education. In this way the tools may be revisited by executives, staff and students in order to articulate aspiration and then evaluate achievements.

Congratulations to Associate Professor Maria Raciti and Associate Professor Jennifer Carter from the University of the Sunshine Coast and Dr Kathryn Gilbey from the University of Southern Queensland for a successful seed grant project.

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Appendix B: Stage 2 qualitative study

Eight key themes were identified across both Indigenous student focus groups and university staff interviews. While the eight themes reflected the literature to an extent, there were novel issues within each theme that emerged. Each is now summarised.

Theme 1: Identity

Key issues raised:

- Student identities are very diverse regarding their own sense of Indigeneity, knowledge of Indigenous communities and so forth.
- University provides a forum and stimulus for formation of Indigenous identities.
- A significant number of students choose not to identify in class, even though they may have identified administratively in their enrolment process.
- Students often display significant attachment to their identity *as a student*, pride in achievements and so forth.
- A very strong sense of students coming to university to change their lives, to give their families new options and pride, and to contribute to their communities.

Novel issues uncovered:

- Both academic and APT staff are almost always unaware of Indigenous status in the absence of a student's self-identification.
- When engaging with the university Indigenous students identities include: a) as a student; b) as Indigenous; and c) as an emerging professional.

Theme 2: Support

Key issues raised:

- Proactive efforts of the Centre/College pre-enrolment and at commencement of study made the difference for some Indigenous students in their choice of university. Knowledge of special entry provisions and Centre/College outreach activities seemed significant in the engagement of Indigenous students from the outset.
- The need for student-student and Indigenous-Indigenous connection/togetherness.
- Postgraduate students often experience isolation (only Indigenous student doing a PhD in that area) and crave support from peer/networks perhaps at other universities. Stark contrasts in responses about the usage of the Indigenous Centre/College.

Novel issue uncovered:

- Considerable support is garnered from other Indigenous students, which can be a problem for students in programs with no other Indigenous students who feel alone. Often families/communities are inconsistent in their support.

Theme 3: Curriculum

Key issue raised:

- Students want a major in Indigenous Studies.

Novel issues uncovered:

- Indigenous Studies courses and content affirms Indigenous students' identity.
- Many programs have little or no Indigenous content, which influences Indigenous enrolments.

Theme 4: Staff

Key issues raised:

- Students cited examples of staff being racist or engaging in culturally unsafe practices.
- General support that all academics need training in being culturally competent.

Novel issues uncovered:

- Academics have a profound effect on student experiences, especially evident at USC. Many students comment on how staff go above and beyond to support them and academics often can cite examples where this has made a difference.
- Students and academics were highly sensitive to university cost-cutting and the subsequent impact on academics' capacity to support students.
- Low salience of APT staff in students' lives. Most students said that APT interactions had been fine, although like any student, there are examples of problematic bureaucracy. APT staff are mostly unaware when an inquiry is from an Indigenous student.

Theme 5: Observation and experience of racism

Key issue raised:

- Indigenous students are highly sensitive to disrespect shown to Indigenous staff.

Novel issue uncovered:

- Racism shown by non-Indigenous students to Indigenous staff.

Theme 6: Physical attributes of the university

Key issues raised:

- Students asked for designated accommodation or more flexible accommodation to be provided by the university.
- Students had problems accessing transport.
- Many students enrolled at the nearest university because the university was small.
- Some students declared they were unable or unwilling to study online.
- Some students attended three or four days a week for most of the semester, citing it was easier to study on-campus than at home or they were seeking social and/or academic support.

Novel issue uncovered:

- Alienating physical environments were noted.

Theme 7: Sense of belonging

Key issues raised:

- Residential students felt less certain about their sense of belonging because they were occasional visitors, but still felt strong attachment to the Indigenous Centre/College.
- Sense of belonging was often intimately linked to the support available from academic teaching staff (Theme 4). Support and sense of belonging even extended to young children who might spend long periods of time at university with parents who are studying.

Novel issue uncovered:

- Students often felt a strong sense of belonging but this could be to the group of Indigenous student peers, or divisions of the university (e.g. Indigenous Centre/College), or their program, rather than the university entity as a whole.

Theme 8: University recognition of Indigenous culture and community

Key issues raised:

- Students and staff were very aware of efforts to acknowledge culture (e.g. Welcome to Country, flags, gardens) but raised concerns about tokenism.
- There was a general concern that a lot of activities were organised and funded by the Centre/College and, consequently, were seen as being primarily 'for' Indigenous students and perhaps the wider Indigenous community. Students called strongly for events to be organised and funded by other divisions and advertised for all staff and all students.

Novel issue uncovered:

- Generally, staff and students felt their university was trying to value Indigenous culture and to include the Indigenous community; however, there were concerns about the genuineness of these efforts, without the lack of accompanying governance or decision making efforts, and expressed a sense that much more needed to be done.

Appendix C: Stage 3 quantitative study

C.1 Survey data preparation

Survey data was prepared prior to analysis. Data preparation activities included survey a) checking; b) numbering, labelling and coding; c) data cleaning; d) outlier assessment; e) sample repetitiveness and homogeneity assessment; and f) the creation of composites for multivariate analysis.

First, all surveys returned during the collection period were reviewed for completeness. Returned surveys were checked to determine if: i) parts of the survey were incomplete; ii) the response pattern indicated that the respondent did not understand or follow the instructions; and iii) the respondent used acquiescent response patterns (Malhotra 1996). For the Indigenous student survey, a total of 18 surveys were incomplete and removed from analysis, leaving 51 useable surveys. For the academic teaching staff survey, 32 incomplete surveys were removed from analysis resulting in a useable sample of 64 surveys. The useable surveys did not contravene the remaining criteria.

Second, online surveys were automatically numbered chronologically. Paper-based surveys were collated immediately upon receipt and numbered. Both the Indigenous student survey and the academic teaching staff survey was labelled and pre-coded prior to administration, except for the open-ended questions. The paper-based surveys were entered manually into SPSS and checked for data entry accuracy upon conclusion.

Third, data were cleaned to ensure that there were no violations of the assumptions of the data analytic techniques. Data was checked for out of range, logically inconsistent or extreme values. The percentage of missing values was assessed for each question and each respondent with all questions and respondents retained as none reported more than the threshold of 15 per cent missing data (George & Mallery 2001). The missing values were all interval scaled data and were replaced with the mean as the measure of central tendency, which is a widely-used method of treating missing data (Hair et al. 2010). Interval scaled items in both surveys ranged from 1 (most positive statement) to 5 (most negative statement).

Fourth, outliers were assessed. All data for both the Indigenous student survey and the academic teaching staff survey was retained to encapsulate the diversity present among the sample population. Z-values greater than + 2.58 were reported for 18 of the 54 interval scaled variables in the Indigenous student survey and 10 of the 26 interval scaled variables in the academic teaching staff survey. This indicated that the data was skewed, kurtotic or both. As the presence of non-normal data is not uncommon in survey research, all data was retained for analysis as it was deemed that these were moderate deviations from normality.

Fifth, this project collected data from two universities. Stage 1 Baseline Data provided some point of comparison against which to ascertain if respondent characteristics were representative of their respective university populations; however, it proved difficult to establish sample representativeness in any conclusive way. Due to the small sample size, sample homogeneity could not be established with an ANOVA post-hoc test. As to be expected, both participating universities have unique characteristics and as the intention of this project was to explore the 'university place' and its influence on Indigenous Australians to create a tool for the sector, data from both universities was pooled, resulting in 51 useable Indigenous student survey responses and 64 useable academic teaching staff responses.

Lastly, while some scales used in the survey were drawn from the literature, many were developed from the Stage 2 qualitative study. For multivariate analysis, constructs were assessed in terms of their factorability (sample greater than 50; KMO > 0.5; significant Bartlett's Test for Sphericity), and where this assessment produced favourable results, scale reliability was assessed (Cronbach's alpha > 0.5; standardised loadings greater than 0.7) and then composites created. As the useable sample for both surveys met the minimum of 50 as recommended by Barrett and Kline (1981) and Comfrey and Lee (1992), factor analysis proceeded using principal components extraction and varimax rotation.

For the Indigenous student survey, four composites were created, being:

- a) Studenthood quality-of-Life: Survey questions related to: i) being ('I feel like I can be myself in my classes'); ii) becoming ('I feel like I am becoming who I want to be in my classes'); and iii) belonging ('I feel like I belong in my classes'). The items and scale was developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.57, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 2.09; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.77$, $\lambda = 0.78 - 0.93$.
- b) Sense of university Indigenous community: Survey questions related were: i) in-class sentiments ('I feel a sense of connection with the other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in the same classes as me at my university'); ii). Centre/College sentiments ('I feel a sense of community with other students, staff and visitors when I spend time at the university's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Centre (USC) or College (USQ)'); and iii) local Indigenous community sentiments ('I feel a sense of community with the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who come onto campus for events [e.g. Elders Welcome to Country events]'). The items and scale was developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.64, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 2.27; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.84$, $\lambda = 0.75 - 0.94$.
- c) Indigenous-Indigenous togetherness: The four, associated survey questions had the question stem, 'In general, your university experience would be enhanced by ...'. The items were: i) 'Interacting with more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students on the campus'; ii) 'Interacting with more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

students enrolled in the same degree as you'; iii) 'Interacting with more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander lecturers/tutors on the campus'; and iv) 'Interacting with more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander lecturers/tutors teaching classes in your degree'. The items and scale was developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.69, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 3.05; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.84$, $\lambda = 0.81 - 0.90$.

- d) Competence in teaching of Indigenous content: Survey questions had the question stem 'Since commencing your current degree at your current university, how often have you ...'. The items were: i) 'Felt lecturers/tutors were well-meaning but inaccurate in their discussion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics in class'; ii) 'Felt lecturers/tutors were nervous about discussing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics in class'; iii) 'Felt lecturers/tutors were ignorant of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics that related to the class'; and iv) 'Without forewarning, been asked by a lecturer/tutor to share your experiences or opinions as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in a class'. The items and scale were developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.82, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 2.76; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.85$, $\lambda = 0.79 - 0.86$.

For the academic teaching staff survey, two composites were created being:

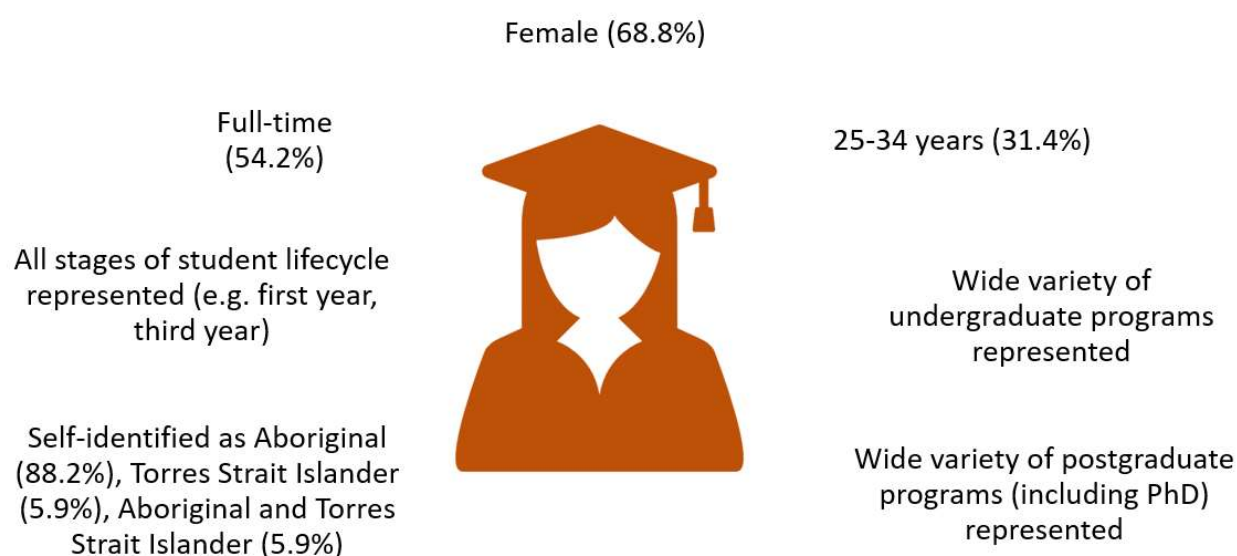
- a) Confident teaching Indigenous content: Survey questions had the following question stem: 'Regarding the teaching of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics relevant to your discipline in your classes, you are best described as ...'. On a five-point bipolar semantic differential scale, respondent rated the following terms: i) 'enthusiastic' to 'unenthusiastic'; ii) 'comfortable with' to 'uncomfortable with'; and iii) 'confident about' to 'not confident about'. The items and scale was developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.67, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 2.27; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.84$, $\lambda = 0.82 - 0.88$.
- b) Fearful teaching Indigenous content: Survey questions had the following question stem: 'Regarding the teaching of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics relevant to your discipline in your classes, you are best described as ...'. On a five-point bipolar semantic differential scale, respondents rated the following terms: i) 'not anxious about' to 'anxious about'; ii) 'not confused' about' to 'confused about'; and iii) 'not fearful about' to 'fearful about'. The items and scale was developed from the qualitative study. Composite details: factor analysis KMO = 0.74, $p < 0.000$, eigenvalue = 2.51; scale reliability $\alpha = 0.90$, λ range 0.90 – 0.94.

Both the Indigenous student survey and the academic teaching staff survey was organised into five sections (e.g. Part A 'Your university experience'). Next, for each survey the univariate results of each section are reported in the first instance, after which the results of multivariate analysis are presented.

C.2 Indigenous student survey: univariate results

C.2.1 Respondent profile

Of the 51 useable Indigenous student survey responses, 49 were completed online and two were paper-based surveys. The profile of the respondents is depicted below.



C.2.2 PART A: 'Your university experience'

There were more student respondents from USQ (54.9%) than USC (45.1%) and, apart from 65+ years, all age groups were represented with most respondents being between 25-34 years (31.4%). Most respondents self-identified as Aboriginal (88.2%) with Torres Strait Islander respondents (5.9%) and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents (5.9%) represented.

The survey commenced with an open-ended question asking students to explain why they chose to come to university and why their current university. Responses referred to desire for a career change, influence of others such as parents and university outreach staff, logistics (e.g. proximity to home), wanting to make a difference for self and others, university attributes (e.g. smaller, felt comfortable in environment), modes of study options (e.g. on-line and on-campus), good experiences had by others they knew and sense of inevitability (e.g. valued education, formalise work experience).

Prior to enrolling at their current university, more than half of the respondents did not know any (54.9%) other Indigenous people who had attended or were attending the same university or knew of only one to two people (29.4%). For respondents—on a scale from 1

(most positive statement) to 5 (most negative statement)—getting a degree was best described as a high priority ($m = 1.6$, $StDv = 1.0$), would enhance their quality-of-life ($m = 1.6$, $StDv = 0.9$), will improve how much money they could earn ($m = 1.7$, $StDv = 0.9$), and is something they valued ($m = 1.3$, $StDv = 0.7$).

Respondents described their university experience as generally good ($m = 1.9$, $StDv = 0.7$), interesting ($m = 1.8$, $StDv = 0.7$), neither easy nor hard ($m = 3.2$, $StDv = 0.9$), and somewhat engaging ($m = 2.0$, $StDv = 0.8$). Respondents indicated they were satisfied (39.2%), very satisfied (35.3%) or extremely satisfied (17.9%) with their university experience thus far. A smaller percentage were very dissatisfied (5.9%) or extremely dissatisfied (2%).

Since commencing their degree at their current university, most respondents felt supported in their studies by their family (always = 35.3%; frequently = 41.2%; occasionally = 11.8%; rarely = 9.8%; never = 2%). Most felt they were frequently supported in their studies by their lecturer/tutors (47.1%), while others felt such support was provided 'always' (25.5%) or 'occasionally' (25.5%). Since commencing their current degree at their current university, respondents felt part of the university student community occasionally (43.1%) and generally felt part of the university's Indigenous student community (always = 27.5%, frequently = 23.5%, occasionally = 19.5%), although this was not the experience of all respondents who rarely (17.6%) or never (11.8%) felt part of the Indigenous student community.

Most respondents (43.1%) never spent time at the university's Indigenous Centre/College, while around a quarter always (25.5%) spent time at Centre/College. While many respondents never (39.2%) attended Indigenous cultural events held at their university, the remainder did so always (17.6%), frequently (11.8%), occasionally (13.7%) or rarely (17.6%).

C.2.3 PART B: 'Your experiences in the classroom'

Respondents 'frequently' attended classes either on-line or on-campus (54.9%) and contributed to class discussion (51.0%). Results about students' choice to identify themselves as Indigenous to their lecturer/tutor indicated that this tended to occur either 'always' (35.3%), 'never' (27.5%) or 'frequently' (21.6%), with some 'occasionally' (9.8%) or 'rarely' (5.9%) choosing to identify. Similar results were reported regarding choice to identify to fellow students in their classes ('always' = 37.3%, 'never' = 23.5%). Close to half of the respondents indicated that they have 'never' (45.1%) been identified as Indigenous by a lecturer/tutor from their student enrolment records, but this did occur—'rarely' (15.7%), 'occasionally' (15.7%), 'frequently' (7.8%) and 'always' (15.7%).

A variety of responses were reported regarding how many of the respondents' lecturers/tutors were Indigenous ('some' = 21.6%, 'none' = 39.2%, 'do not know' = 39.2%) and how many students in their classes were Indigenous ('some' = 33.3%, 'none' = 13.7%,

'do not know' = 52.9%). In general, Indigenous topics were mentioned in classes 'occasionally' (37.3%) or 'rarely' (31.4%).

Regarding the discussion of Indigenous topics in class, respondents felt their lecturers/tutors were 'occasionally' (being the mid-point on the five-point scale) highly knowledgeable about the topics discussed (49.0%); well-meaning but inaccurate (41.2%); nervous about discussing (43.1%); and genuinely interested in the topic (51.0%). Respondents reported that their lecturers/tutors were 'rarely' (39.2%) ignorant of Indigenous topics that related to the class ('occasionally' = 25.5%, 'never' = 23.5%). Most respondents were 'never' (43.1%) or 'rarely' (31.4%) asked by a lecturer/tutor, without forewarning, to share their experiences or opinions as an Indigenous person in a class.

Regarding the discussion of Indigenous topics in class, respondents felt the other students in their class were 'occasionally' (being the mid-point on the five-point scale) highly knowledgeable about the topics discussed (45.1%, 'rarely' = 35.3%); well-meaning but inaccurate in their discussion ('occasionally' 45.1%, 'frequently' = 19.6%); nervous ('occasionally' = 41.2%, 'frequently' = 21.6%); genuinely interested ('occasionally' = 41.2%, 'frequently' = 27.5%); and ignorant ('occasionally' = 31.4%, 'frequently' = 25.5%). Most respondents 'never' (41.2%) or 'rarely' (33.3%) were asked by another student, without forewarning, to share their experiences or opinions as an Indigenous person in a class.

C.2.3 PART C: 'Your experiences with the university community'

Respondents reported that their on-campus experience would be enhanced by:

a) interacting with more Indigenous students on the campus ($m = 2.3$, $StDv = 0.9$) and in the same degree ($m = 2.0$, $StDv = 0.9$); and b) with more Indigenous lecturers/tutors on the campus ($m = 2.1$, $StDv = 1.0$) and teaching classes in their degree ($m = 2.0$, $StDv = 1.0$).

Much of respondents' lives were organised around university commitments ($m = 2.2$, $StDv = 1.1$). They felt that they could be themselves in their classes ($m = 2.4$, $StDv = 0.9$), that they were becoming who they wanted to be in their classes ($m = 2.3$, $StDv = 0.7$), and they felt like they belonged in their classes ($m = 2.3$, $StDv = 0.7$). They felt somewhat of a sense of connection to other students in their classes ($m = 2.6$, $StDv = 1.0$). Outside of classes, respondents felt that the Centre/College was an important place for creating a university community of Indigenous peoples ('strongly agree' = 47.1%, 'agree' = 25.5%), although a quarter of respondents were undecided (23.5%).

Regarding a sense of connection with other Indigenous students in the same classes as them, one third of respondents were 'undecided' (33.3%) or agreed with the statement ('agree' = 23.5%, 'strongly agree' = 15.7%); noting that this question was 'not applicable' to 17.6 per cent of respondents as there were no other Indigenous students in their classes or others that they were aware of. Respondents reported similar sentiments with regards to

their feeling of: a) a sense of community with other students, staff and visitors when they spent time at the university's Centre or College ($m = 3.2$, $StDv = 1.8$), with the question regarded as 'not applicable' by 21.6 per cent of respondents who perhaps do not visit the Centre/College; and b) a sense of community with local Indigenous people who come to campus for events ($m = 3.2$, $StDv = 1.8$), with the question regarded as 'not applicable' by 21.6 per cent of respondents who may not attend events.

C.2.4 PART D: 'Your professional identity'

Respondents, when at university, identify themselves to others in the first instance as being a student in the degree in which they are currently studying ('strongly agree' = 37.3%, 'agree' = 39.2%). Being a professional in the area in which they are currently studying is very important ('strongly agree' = 76.5%) to respondents. When asked if their professional identity is their focus to a greater extent than their cultural identity when at university, many indicated that they 'agreed' (31.4%) or 'strongly agreed' (27.5%) with this statement, while others were 'undecided' (13.7%), disagreed (15.7%) or strongly disagreed (11.8%).

C.2.5 PART E: 'About you ...'

Respondents were predominantly female (68.8%) and enrolled in a wide variety of undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees (coursework and research). The most common number of courses completed thus far in their degree was four (11.4%), followed by 10 (9.1%), 13 (9.1%) and 17 (9.1%), suggesting that respondents were not grouped around being at any one point in their program (e.g. first year). Thus, all stages of programs were represented. There were slightly more full-time (54.2%) enrolment respondents than part-time (45.8%). Transferring to another university was not considered by most respondents (45.1%), while dropping out of university all together was considered 'frequently' (15.7%), 'occasionally' (19.6%), 'rarely' (35.3%) or 'never' (29.4%).

In response to the open-ended question about ways their university could become an even better place for Indigenous students, respondents provided a range of suggestion. Key themes included:

Centre/College awareness and scope of role

- University-wide awareness of the Centre/College, where it is, who works there and what it does (and does not do).
- Broadening the Centre/College scope to a holistic support service ('one stop shop') by bringing local support services onto campus.

Addressing institutional deficits

- Raise staff awareness, understanding, knowledge and empathy for Indigenous peoples and their culture.
- Integrate the RAP into the Key Performance Indicators of *all* university staff.

- Include a cultural safety component in more programs to benefit non-Indigenous students.
- Comprehensive embedding of Indigenous knowledges in curriculum.
- More Indigenous community involvement in decision making at the university.
- Other parts of the university, beyond the Centre/College, taking carriage for the organising of Indigenous cultural events for all students and staff.
- More Indigenous students and academic teaching staff (not just teaching Indigenous courses).
- Providing more scholarships for part-time Indigenous students.

Connectivity and communication

- Facilitate greater involvement in national events or networks, e.g. Indigenous University Games, networks for Indigenous RHD students.
- Facilitate connections through more interactive activities that provide the opportunity for conversation including an online community (e.g. for socialising and/or online Indigenous Learning Space); providing activities spread over various weekdays and times to be more accessible to part-time students; and create program/school/faculty based networks.
- More and better communication from the Centre/College to students and greater provision for feedback from students to Centre/College. Improved communications about changes to Centre/College services provided, support available, employment opportunities, upcoming events and activities were recommended.

C.3 Indigenous student survey: multivariate results

The sample size ($n = 51$) restricted multivariate data analytic techniques to predominantly linear regression and moderation. SPSS was the primary data analytic software used, with Hayes' PROCESS software employed to test moderation.

First, the data was analysed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in terms of respondent demographics. Second, relationships between antecedent variables and mediator variables (see Figure 4) were tested. Third, relationships between the mediator variables, moderator variables and the outcome variables of the conceptual framework were examined. The following section reports only the statistically significant findings.

C.3.1 Demographic differences

Tested with a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc comparisons, the following statistically significant differences were found:

Age—Respondents 18-24 years were less likely to contribute to class discussion than those aged 45-54 years old ($F = 3.5$, $p = 0.01$).

Gender—Males felt lecturers/tutors were rarely ‘well-meaning but inaccurate’ in their discussion of Indigenous topics related to their classes more than females ($F = 4.35$, $p < 0.05$).

Enrolment status—

- Part-time students were less likely to feel other students were ignorant of Indigenous topics related to the class than full-time students ($F = 4.52$, $p < 0.05$).
- Part-time students were less likely to be asked by other students to share their experiences and opinions as an Indigenous person in a class without forewarning than full-time students ($F = 4.83$, $p < 0.03$).
- Part-time students were less likely to feel that a lot of their life is organised around their university commitments than full-time students ($F = 11.71$, $p = 0.01$).
- Part-time students were less likely to feel a sense of connection with other Indigenous students in the same classes as them at university than full-time students ($F = 6.86$, $p = 0.01$).

Self-reported heritage—Students of Torres Strait Islander heritage felt lecturers/tutors were rarely genuinely interested in discussing Indigenous topics in class than respondents of Aboriginal or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage ($F = 3.32$, $p < 0.05$).

C.3.2 Relationships between antecedent and mediator variables

Relationships between the antecedent and mediator variables were tested in SPSS using multiple regression.

Statistically significant results were:

- Where other students in classes were ignorant of Indigenous peoples and culture this had a negative impact on Indigenous students’ quality-of-life while enrolled (i.e. can ‘be’, are ‘becoming’ and sense of ‘belonging’) ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.01$).
- Where other students in classes were ignorant of Indigenous peoples and culture this increased Indigenous students’ need for interactions with other Indigenous peoples on campus (i.e. Indigenous students and Indigenous lecturers/tutors) ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$).
- Other students in classes who were knowledgeable of Indigenous peoples and culture had a positive impact on Indigenous students’ quality-of-life while enrolled ($\beta = 0.36$, $p = 0.01$).

C.3.3 Relationships between mediator and outcome/impact variables

Relationships between the antecedent and mediator variables (see Figure 4) were tested in SPSS using multiple regression.

Statistically significant results were:

- Higher Indigenous students' quality-of-life while enrolled lead to increased satisfaction ($\beta = 0.35$, $p = 0.01$) and lower dropping out intentions ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$).
- Higher Indigenous students' quality-of-life while enrolled lead to identity self-categorisation within the university context ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$).
- Higher Indigenous student's quality-of-life while enrolled leads to higher self-reported, student-perceived engagement ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$).

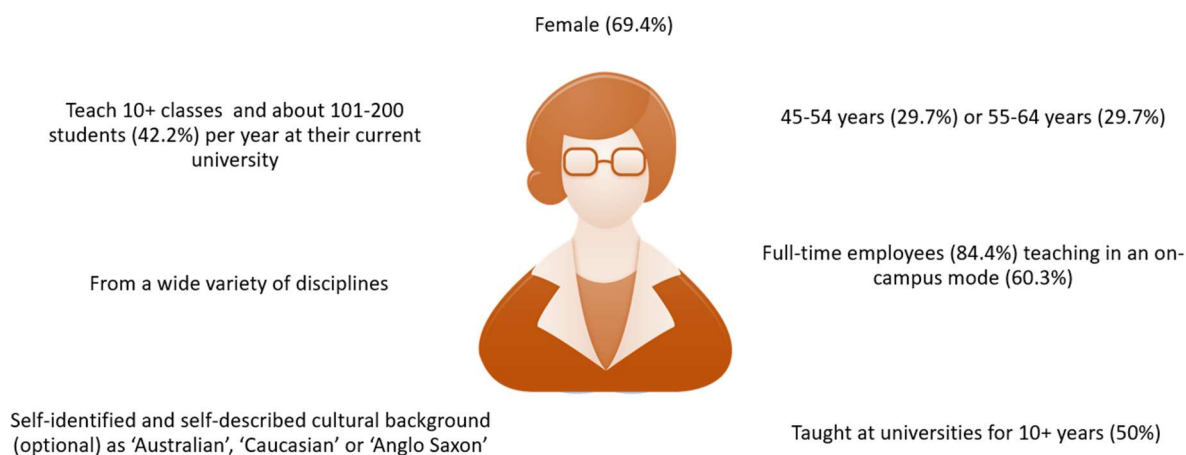
All the above relationships were moderated by the Indigenous students' social affiliation and perceived sense of connection with the university-based Indigenous community (being Indigenous students in general, the Centre/College and the local Indigenous community who come onto campus). When tested using Hayes' PROCESS software in SPSS the following statistically significant moderation relationships were found.

- Social affiliation and sense of connection with the university-based Indigenous community enhanced the relationship between Indigenous students' quality-of-life while enrolled and their:
 - Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$).
 - Lower dropping out intentions ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$).
 - Self-reported, student-perceived engagement ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$).
 - Identity self-categorisation in the university context ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$).
- The desire of Indigenous students to interact with more Indigenous lecturers/tutors and more Indigenous students was inversely related to identity self-categorisation ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that those Indigenous students who indicated that their professional identity was a focus to a greater extent than their cultural identity when at university had a lesser desire for interaction with Indigenous lecturers/tutors or Indigenous students.
- Where Indigenous students felt their lecturer/tutors were highly knowledgeable about Indigenous topics discussed in class, this enhanced their:
 - Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$).
 - Learning about Indigenous content relevant to their professional aspirations via frequent discussion of topics in classes ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$).
 - Self-reported, student-perceived engagement ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$).

C.4 Academic teaching staff survey: univariate results

C.4.1 Respondent profile

Of the 64 useable responses for the academic teaching staff survey, 44 were completed online and 20 paper-based. A profile of the teaching survey respondents follows.



C.4.2 PART A: 'Your teaching experience'

Most respondents were from USC (84.4%) with 15.6 per cent of respondents from USQ. All age groups were represented with 45-54 years (29.7%) and 55-64 years (29.7%) most prominent. Respondents had taught in universities for 10+ years (50%) and had been employed at their current university for various lengths of time—less than one year (14.1%), 1-3 years (26.6%) 4-6 years (18.8%), 7-9 years (15.6%) and 10+ years (25.0%). Responses were received from part-time (4.7%) and sessional (10.9%) academic teaching staff, with most being employed in a full-time capacity (84.4%).

In terms of classes taught, 45.3 per cent of respondents indicated they taught 10 or more classes per year at their current university with 4-6 classes per year the second most frequent number of classes taught (23.4%). In terms of the number of students in the classes taught, most respondents indicated they taught approximately 101-200 students (42.2%), followed by 301 or more students (25.0%), then 201-300 students (17.2%), and finally under 100 students (15.6%). On-campus only teaching (60.3%) was the most frequent mode of teaching, with dual on-campus and on-line teaching (38.1%) the second most prevalent mode.

C.4.3 PART B: 'General perceptions of teaching culturally diverse classes'

First, respondents defined a culturally diverse class as comprising a rich variety of students from various ethnicities, regions, religious, cultures (and sub-cultures), spiritual beliefs,

customs, abilities, ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, nations, linguistic diversity, socio-economic status, points-of-view, social behaviours, life experiences and educational backgrounds. A few respondents noted that all classes are heterogeneous with students and teachers from diverse backgrounds. As one respondent clearly articulated, 'a culturally diverse class is any class you find yourself in', and another noted, 'every class as everyone comes from their own unique cultures and creates a class culture when they come together for learning'. The general sentiment of the comments was best illustrated by a respondents' statement that a culturally diverse class is one 'where cultural differences are recognised, shared and appreciated'.

Second, when asked to rate their enthusiasm for teaching a culturally diverse class, over half of the respondents (53.0%) were very enthusiastic. For the remainder of respondents, 29.7 per cent described themselves as enthusiastic, 12.5 per cent somewhat enthusiastic, 3.1 per cent unenthusiastic or 1.6 per cent very unenthusiastic.

Third, all 64 respondents described a range of interactions (e.g. limited eye-contact, bilingual student experiences, religious observances, international students' worldview) with students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and how these interactions enhanced their own understandings and, in some cases, how they used these interactions to create a richer understanding among all students in the class.

Fourth, respondents were asked about the first three things that come to mind when they hear the term 'cultural competence'. Common responses included the following terms: empathy, respect, positive regard, sensitivity, dexterity, open-mindedness, inclusivity, knowledge and awareness (of self and others), and bridging differences. A few respondents noted that the term cultural competence suggested tokenism or that it was something they did not know much about.

Finally, respondents' attitude towards teaching culturally diverse classes was examined. Respondents rated themselves on range of statements on a scale of 1 (most positive statement) to 5 (most negative statement). On average, respondents teaching a culturally diverse classroom was best described as positive ($m = 1.52$, $StDv = 0.76$), neither easy nor hard ($m = 2.66$, $StDv = 0.99$), commonplace ($m = 2.09$, $StDv = 1.07$), enjoyable ($m = 1.69$, $StDv = 0.83$), something to look forward to ($m = 1.75$, $StDv = 0.85$), and something they were conscious of ($m = 1.78$, $StDv = 0.95$).

C.4.4 PART C: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture'

Respondents rated their knowledge of Australian Aboriginal people and their culture as substantial (15.6%), moderate (40.6%), limited (31.3%), very limited (10.9%) or no knowledge at all (1.6%). Respondents knew less about Torres Strait Islander people and their culture ($m = 3.09$, $StDv = 0.94$) than Australian Aboriginal people and their culture ($m =$

2.42, StDv = 0.94). Familiarity with the term 'cultural safety' was low ($m = 3.23$, StDv = 1.38) with 25 per cent of respondents not familiar with this term at all.

C.4.5 PART D: 'Teaching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics and peoples'

In terms of teaching Indigenous topics and peoples, most respondents regarded themselves as 'a novice, inexperienced' (31.3%) followed by 'an advanced beginner, somewhat inexperienced' (28.1%), 'competent, somewhat experienced' (23.4%), 'proficient, moderately experienced' (14.1%) and 'an expert, very experienced' (3.1%).

Next, respondents rated themselves with regards to their teaching of Indigenous topics relevant to their discipline on a scale from 1 (positive statement) to 5 (negative statement). On average, respondents indicated they were somewhat enthusiastic ($m = 2.03$, StDv = 1.04), somewhat comfortable with ($m = 2.34$, StDv = 1.13), somewhat confident about ($m = 2.80$, StDv = 1.28), moderately anxious about ($m = 2.31$, StDv = 1.14), not too confused about ($m = 2.39$, StDv = 1.11), not too fearful about ($m = 2.16$, StDv = 1.09) and relatively clear as to why it is important ($m = 1.80$, StDv = 1.13).

A subsequent open-ended question asked respondents to share the reasons for their answers, which included: a limited breadth and depth of knowledge; difficulty in finding information; lack of guidance as to what information to incorporate and how to do this; being seen as patronising; concern about misappropriating knowledge; fearful of student resistance and negative class discussions; fearful of getting information wrong; and not knowing who to ask for assistance. Others also noted that it was hard to make relevant to their discipline, and their limited personal experience with Indigenous peoples was a factor.

Preparing teaching materials that embed Indigenous topics in classes was something they are not trained to do ($m = 3.98$, StDv = 1.36), somewhat part of their job ($m = 2.83$, StDv = 1.42), something some do now ($m = 2.52$, StDv = 1.16), something that the university has not resourced them to do ($m = 4.25$, StDv = 1.04), and something the university has not factored into workload ($m = 4.28$, StDv = 1.09).

Most respondents did not know how many Indigenous lecturer/tutors (65.4%) or students (54.6%) were at their university. Awareness of Indigenous cultural awareness training at their university indicated that about half did not know (51.6%), while others did indicate it was available (42.2%). Nonetheless, most respondents (70.3%) had not undertaken Indigenous cultural awareness training. Respondents offered a range of suggestions as to how their university could support the teaching of Indigenous topics that focused upon adequate resourcing of libraries, professional development, access/employment of experts to mentor, dedicated courses, making relevant information accessible.

C.4.6 PART E: 'Your experiences in the classroom'

In the classroom, respondents occasionally (33.3%) or rarely (33.3%) had students choose to identify themselves as Indigenous. Most respondents never (60.3%) or rarely (15.9%) looked up student enrolment records to identify Indigenous students in their classes. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents never (77.8%) or rarely (17.5%) asked a student to share their experiences or opinions as an Indigenous person in a class without forewarning.

C.5 Academic teaching staff survey: multivariate results

C.5.1 Demographic differences

Tested with a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc comparisons, statistically significant differences were found. Specifically:

Gender—Male academic teaching staff were less likely to see the preparation of teaching materials that embed Indigenous topics into their curriculum as part of their job ($F = 4.42, p < 0.05$).

Employment status—Full-time staff were more likely to feel that the university had not factored into their workload the preparation of teaching materials that embed Indigenous topics in their curriculum ($F = 4.81, p < 0.05$).

Number of classes taught—Those who taught 4-6 courses per year were less likely to feel they were trained to prepare materials that embed Indigenous topics into their classes ($F = 3.18, p < 0.05$).

Number of students taught—Academic teaching staff who taught 301 or more students per year were more uncomfortable with the teaching of Indigenous topics relevant to their discipline in classes ($F = 3.40, p < 0.02$).

C.5.2 Relationships between mediator, moderator and outcome/impact variables

Relationships between the antecedent and mediator variables were tested in SPSS using multiple regression. Statistically significant results are reported next.

Academic teaching staff who were confident about teaching Indigenous topics relevant to their discipline:

- Were more familiar with the term 'cultural safety' ($\beta = 0.56, p = 0.000$).
- Had higher enthusiasm for teaching diverse classes ($\beta = 0.40, p = 0.001$).
- Were more knowledgeable of Indigenous peoples and their cultures ($\beta = 0.56, p = 0.000$).
- Were already teaching Indigenous topics ($\beta = 0.58, p = 0.000$).

- Regarded the preparation of Indigenous materials that embed Indigenous topics in their classes as part of their teaching job ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$).
- Felt they were trained ($\beta = 0.49, p = 0.000$) and resourced ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.01$) to teach Indigenous topics in their classes.

Academic teaching staff who had undertaken Indigenous cultural awareness training:

- Were more familiar with the term 'cultural safety' ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$).
- Reported an inverse relationship with level of expertise in teaching Indigenous topics relevant to their disciplines in class ($\beta = -0.59, p = 0.000$).
- Looked forward to teaching culturally diverse classes ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.05$).
- Were already teaching Indigenous topics ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$).
- Felt they were trained ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.05$) and resourced ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.05$) to teach Indigenous topics in their classes.
- Indicated that the preparation of material that embeds Indigenous topics in their classes had been factored into their workload ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.04$).

Academic teaching staff who were clear as to why it is important to embed Indigenous content into curriculum:

- Were more familiar with the term 'cultural safety' ($\beta = 0.48, p = 0.000$).
- Were enthusiastic about teaching culturally diverse classes ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.01$), more highly positive about doing so ($\beta = 0.48, p = 0.000$), enjoyable ($\beta = 0.44, p = 0.000$), and something they look forward to ($\beta = 0.39, p = 0.001$).
- Were more knowledgeable of Aboriginal people and their culture ($\beta = 0.44, p = 0.000$).
- Reported an inverse relationship with level of expertise in teaching Indigenous topics in classes ($\beta = -0.47, p = 0.000$).
- Were confident about teaching Indigenous topics relevant to their discipline ($\beta = 0.64, p = 0.000$).
- Was what they already did ($\beta = 0.49, p = 0.000$) as part of their job ($\beta = 0.63, p = 0.000$).

The length of time teaching and the length of time employed at their current university moderated the relationship between workload allocation to prepare materials to embed Indigenous content into their curriculum and perceptions that it was:

- Part of their teaching job ($F = 5.33, p < 0.05$).
- What they were trained to do ($F = 5.60, p < 0.05$).
- What they were resourced to do ($F = 61.03, p = 0.000$).

This suggests that those academic teaching staff who had taught longer and had been at their university longer were more likely to report that the preparation of materials that embed Indigenous topics in their curriculum has been factored into their workload.

Appendix D: Project impact plan

	Anticipated changes at:			
	Project completion	Six months post-completion	Twelve months post-completion	Twenty-four months post-completion
1. Team members	Enhanced research capabilities	Recognition for contributions (e.g. awards) and gains for USC Indigenous Studies Research theme (e.g. securing grants)		
2. Immediate students	Evidence presented in reports, workshops and presentations promote the need and frame changes		University changes are enacted based upon evidence in reports, workshops and presentations	
3. Spreading the word	Journal and conference publications and citations E-booklet downloads	Dissemination, use and citation of project tools will extend the reach of the project’s findings nationally and internationally		
4. Narrow opportunistic adoption	Workshops at non-participating universities prompt discussion and interest in tools	Workshop conversations lead to activity by individuals, groups and/or the non-participating university to use project tools to frame praxis	Workshop conversations lead to activity across the sector and potentially abroad to use project tools to frame praxis	
5. Narrow systemic adoption	Reports, workshops and presentations at the participating universities enhance understanding and provide recommendations for ways forward		Reports, workshops and presentations are a catalyst for meaningful changes to the ‘university place’ of the participating universities	
6. Broad opportunistic adoption	Journal and conference publications and citations E-booklet downloads Workshop-prompted engagement with project tools		Project tools disrupt status-quo thinking and praxis, prompting meaningful activity of individuals, groups and universities across the sector and abroad	
7. Broad systemic adoption	Journal and conference publications and citations E-booklet downloads		Invited to present seminars and to convene workshops using project tools	Changes to university praxis that attend to the ‘closing the gap’ agenda

The following seven questions and answers are also part of IMPEL Project Impact Plan.

1. What indicators exist that there is a climate of readiness for change in relation to your intended project?

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' higher education participation and success has been a stated priority for past and present Australian Governments (see Behrendt et al. 2012; Bradley et al. 2008), predicated the funding of OLT fellowships and projects such as that led by Asmar (2011, 'Indigenous teaching and learning at Australian universities') and Henderson-Yates (2014, 'Can't be what you can't see: the transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students into higher education'). Furthermore, 2014 OLT Fellowships that focus upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in universities indicate sector readiness.

2. In brief and indicatively, what impacts (changes and benefits) do you expect your project to bring about, at the following levels and stages of the Impact Management Planning and Evaluation Ladder (IMPEL)?

Please refer to previous table in this Appendix D.

3. What are your strategies for engaging with stakeholders throughout the project?

Please refer to Section 3.3 Project timeline in the final report, which details the stakeholders and many engagement opportunities provided over the life of the project.

4. How will you enable transfer that is ensuring that your project remains impactful after the funding period?

Please refer to previous table in this Appendix D. Additional journal and conference publications are planned for post-project completion. The e-booklet format enables wide-dissemination post-completion via traditional, digital and social media channels. The final reports to the participating universities are delivered at the project conclusion and the recommendations within may be enacted post-project completion.

5. What barriers may exist to achieving change in your project?

The strength of the project is that it adopts a whole-of-university perspective; however, a related barrier that may be encountered centres on the social psychology notion of diffusion of responsibility (Kassin & Buke 2013) or the bystander effect (Darley & Latane 1968). That is, individuals or groups within a university may assume others are responsible or have already taken action. The resulting inertia may see the maintenance of status quo thinking and/or fractured pockets of activity that on their own may be ineffectual to enacting wholesale changes to the 'university place' for all and as a whole.

6. How will you keep track of the project's impact? What analytics may be useful?

Journals and conference publication downloads and citations can be tracked using Google Scholar or Scopus. Interest in the project can be ascertained through requests via the ResearchGate profile of the project team leader. Downloads of the e-booklet can be monitored by the university website and the USC Research Bank. Altmetrics are non-traditional metrics for impact (e.g. social media sharing, media mentions) and are integrated into the USC Research Bank, thus automated monitoring of impact occurs. These will be used to track impact.

7. How will you maintain relevant project materials for others to access after the project is completed?

In addition to the final report and e-booklet being publicly available via the Department of Education and Training website, the project materials will be available on the Research Bank of the participating institutions, the ResearchGate profile of the project team leader and the USC Indigenous Studies Research theme webpage.

Appendix E: Project conclusions and recommendations for the sector

It is recommended that universities recognise and develop strategies to address the following:

Indigenous students identify in different ways when at university

When engaging with their university, Indigenous students may identify in three ways—seeing themselves as a student, as Indigenous and/or as an emerging professional. Indigenous students will self-categorise, in that some will choose to identify as an emerging professional to a greater extent than as Indigenous; while others may choose to identify as a student in a program (e.g., ‘I am a nursing student’) in the first instance. Many Indigenous students chose not to disclose their Indigenous identity to academic teaching staff and/or other students (as is their right) and similarly most academic teaching staff will not ascertain a student’s Indigenous identity from enrolment records. These issues can complicate initiatives aimed at supporting Indigenous students and the larger Indigenous agenda of the university, with protocols around self-disclosure in class and so forth worthy of discussion.

Recognise Indigenous diversity and avoid ‘one size fits all’ approaches

There is significant diversity among Indigenous students, Indigenous staff and Indigenous communities that is often unrecognised in university efforts. Similarly, the intersectional influence of other aspects of Indigenous student’s identity such as their gender, age, class, religious beliefs, residence, sexuality and ability/disability or impairments are often overlooked. In the absence of such recognition, strategic initiatives and policies within higher education can become generic (‘one size fits all’) and inflexible or perceived to be tokenistic or self-serving. This may lead to potential scepticism or disappointment by Indigenous students, staff and/or communities. University activities, including staff professional development, that embrace and celebrate Indigenous diversity and demonstrate that commitment at all levels has been sustained over time, will help university efforts be seen as genuine.

Assisting academic teaching staff to accept their shared responsibility

Academic and personal support for Indigenous students is a shared responsibility, with key accountability falling on academic teaching staff rather than an Indigenous Centre/College. Many non-Indigenous academic teaching staff (full-time, part-time and sessional) are uncertain, anxious or fearful about how best to embed Indigenous topics related to their discipline in their curriculum and how to best support and teach Indigenous students. Regarding this issue, it is important to recognise that academic teaching staff fall into different categories including: a) culturally proficient, congenial-type academic teaching staff who are supportive, respectful and responsive; b) academic teaching staff who are

well-meaning but incorrect or inaccurate in their understandings of Indigenous Australians; and c) uncongenial-type staff who lack cultural awareness, are unempathetic, inconsistent and ignorant of the impact they have on the experience of Indigenous students. It should also be taken into account that academic teaching staff may have had limited personal experience and/or professional interaction with Indigenous Australians and this is often unspoken but will influence university initiatives. Developing targeted strategies and tactics for different types of staff, in addition to understanding academic teaching staff concerns (e.g. being seen by students as patronising or misappropriating knowledge without permission) are important precursors to effective and ongoing training and resourcing.

Enacting a holistic rather than mechanistic approach to institutional change

While not a new point, the need to enact a whole-of-university approach is one worth restating. Mechanistic or piecemeal attention to some aspects of the ‘university place’ may be appealing; however, attending to recommendations concurrently and in a holistic manner is more likely to lead to optimal results for all stakeholders—Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Holistic approaches to embed Indigenous topics in curriculum are crucial but need to occur within a coherent framework that incorporate human resources, research and research protocols, and community engagement in order to ensure the cultural safety, effectiveness and sustainability of curriculum development. In recognition of the scale of the challenges involved, especially at a systemic level, adopting policy and resourcing practices appropriate for whole-of-university implementation and capacity building is recommended. When preparing and enacting policies and initiatives that form the university’s Indigenous agenda, care should be taken to not create or imply onerous responsibilities on Indigenous students, Indigenous academics or Indigenous Centre/College staff.

Adopting a whole-of-university approach is not without its challenges. One barrier that may be encountered centres on the social psychology notion of diffusion of responsibility (Kassin & Buke 2013) or the bystander effect (Darley & Latane 1968). That is, individuals or groups within a university may assume others are responsible or have already taken action. The resulting inertia may see the maintenance of status quo thinking and/or fractured pockets of activity that on their own may be ineffectual to enacting wholesale changes to the ‘university place’. Drawing from the marketing literature, strategies and tactics for targeted groups who share psychographic and/or behavioural qualities (‘niche marketing’) might be considered as these are generally more successful than broad, ‘one size fits all’ approaches (‘mass marketing’).

Appendix F: Future directions ‘Hesitant Hugh’ persona

‘HESITANT HUGH’ ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF PERSONA



Hugh is new to academia and to his current university. He does not have extensive teaching experience or training and is still learning what his current university expects of him and what its priorities are.

Hugh teaches large classes and while he has heard of the importance of embedding Indigenous topics in his curriculum, he is not clear as to why this is important. He questions how it is relevant to what he is teaching and if it is part of his job to prepare relevant materials for his classes without an additional workload allocation.

Hugh is not aware of the voluntary Indigenous cultural training offered by his current university and has had limited personal experience with Indigenous Australians. Teaching so many students, Hugh is concerned about saying the wrong thing in class and is not sure how he might handle negative class discussions that may emerge. Unsure of what Indigenous topics are relevant to his discipline—after all, this was not a part of his studies—he does not know where to start, who to ask for help and what resources he can call on.

Having spent much of his early career focusing upon his disciplinary research, Hugh feels inadequate, underprepared and unsupported with this teaching activity and wonders if it is the best use of his time at this stage of his career. Indeed, some of Hugh’s mentors caution him against spending too much time on his teaching at the expense of research.

Hugh has decided to wait until he is instructed by his Head of School to embed Indigenous topics in his curriculum with the hope that training, resources and workload will be made available at that time.

Appendix G: Certification

Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT grant/fellowship (remove as appropriate) provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

B. Lohman

Name:

Date: 6/4/17

SDVC Professor Birgit Lohman

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