



Indigenous Student Success Program

2024 Performance Report



Australian Government

Indigenous Student Success Program

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

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

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

Indigenous Student Success Program

2024 Performance Report

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

Charles Darwin University acknowledges and respects the many Australian First Nations traditional custodians of the lands upon which our campuses and centres are located.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Larrakia who are the traditional custodians of the lands upon which our Education and Community Precinct, Casuarina, Waterfront, and Palmerston campuses and centres are located.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We acknowledge Australian First Nations peoples' long tradition of sustaining their communities and environments over thousands of years. They are the first educators and first innovators.

They are the holders of knowledge that makes an important contribution to the improvement of our local, national and global communities.

We extend our respect to Elders - past, present and emerging - and to all First Nations people.

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1. Declaration

In providing this Performance Report, it is acknowledged that it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

We acknowledge that throughout Australia's history, various terms have been used to refer to the original inhabitants of the lands now known as Australia. This includes terms such as 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', 'Aborigines', 'Indigenous peoples' etc. In more recent times the term First Nations has been used. As such, we have opted to use the term 'First Nations' throughout this report. Albeit, we acknowledge that the term 'First Nations' has been used in other contexts, such as Canada. We confirm and reiterate that when this term is used in this report, it specifically refers to First Nations peoples of Australia.

2. Context

Understanding our First Nations students' Higher Education (HE) access, participation and success must recognise the educational background, socio-economic circumstances, and cultural diversity of First Nations communities. CDU's First Nations Student Support Services continue to respond to this unique profile in terms of the scope and focus of the First Nations support services at CDU.

In 2024, there were a total of 857 First Nations student HE enrolments at CDU; a slightly higher number compared to 2023 (n=847). The First Nations student profile shows that they were more likely to be at least 25 years old (75.7%), much more likely to be women (80.5%) and more likely to be studying online (69.3%). Compared to 2023, an increasing proportion of our First Nations students identified a disability (17.5%) and were from low SES areas (21.7%). Nearly 8 in 10 of all First Nations students were classified as coming from regional or remote areas (79.5%), while nearly 60 per cent had a home location in the Northern Territory (58.3%). For our NT First Nations students, the HE Access Rate was 15% and the HE Participation Rate was 11% which is quite positive. For the total First Nations student population at CDU, the HE Access Rate was 8.5% and their HE Participation Rate was 7.4%.

Of the 857 First Nations student enrolments, almost a quarter (24.4%) were in enabling courses, while those in undergraduate degrees approached almost two-thirds of the total (62.2%). Of note was the largest enrolment of First Nations Higher Degree by Research students: at 25 students, this is an increase of 11 since 2019. The need for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers remains critical in HE. Research is not just about generating knowledge—it is about influencing change and shaping the direction of HE disciplines in ways that reflect lived experiences. These students are embracing the opportunities that postgraduate study presents, stepping into these spaces with confidence and purpose to ensure that First Nations voices, perspectives, and knowledge continues to lead the way in understanding and doing research.

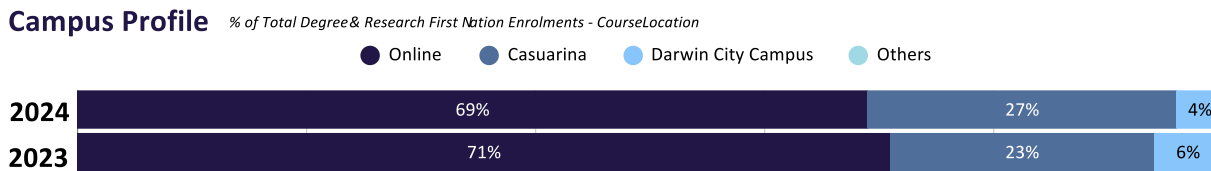
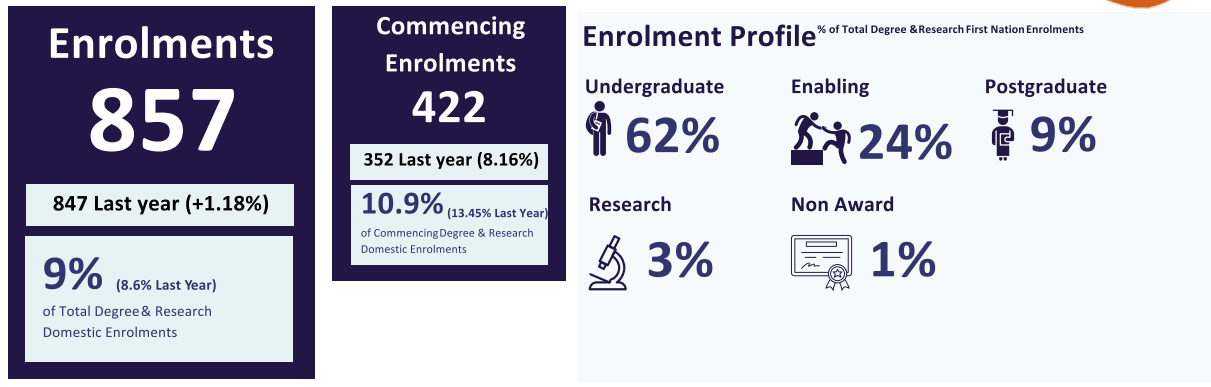
Our student profile emphasises that CDU's First Nations students have a high level of intersection with all traditional equity groups and are likely to need extra supports from university student service areas to successfully achieve their educational goals. Whilst CDU is a dual sector, we focus our analysis and commentary on First Nations students enrolled in HE.

Figure 1: CDU's First Nations Higher Education Student Profile, 2024

First Nations in Degree and Research Courses

Key Statistics 2024

as at 9th April 2025, Data Subject to Change until Government Data verification is completed in May 2025

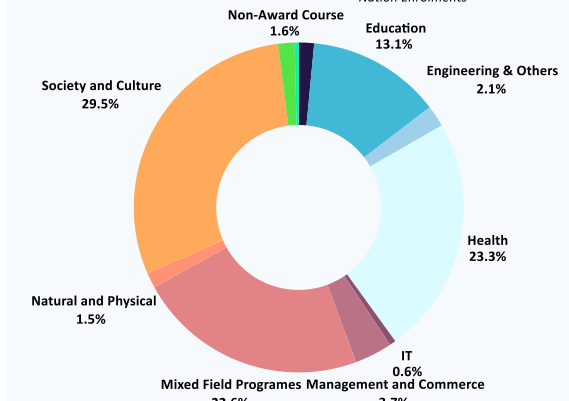


Success & Completion Rate

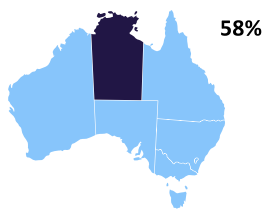


Course Field of Education

% of Total Degree & Research First Nation Enrolments



NT Home Location

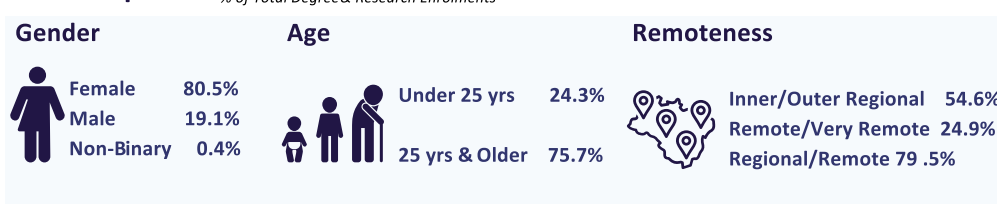


Access & Participation Rate



Student profile

% of Total Degree & Research Enrolments



3. Enrolments (Access)

3.1 School Outreach programs

CDU invests in programs that support the aspiration of Northern Territory's First Nations school students to participate in post school education and lifelong learning. While our signature program – the Bidjipidji School Camp – had a hiatus in 2024 to allow for our internal evaluation to assess its impact and effectiveness, CDU continued to undertake targeted school engagement activities and supported our growing VET in school's program through participation in school visits and career expos.

Evaluation of Bidjipidji School Camp

A total of **119 students from 20 different remote Northern Territory schools have participated in the Bidjipidji School Camps** across 2021, 2022, and 2023. Our 2024 evaluation of the camps employed a program logic methodology to assess the Bidjipidji program's success in encouraging First Nations senior school students to aspire to post- school education and/or training. The evaluation also sought evidence of increased student confidence and whether the camps provided a supportive, culturally safe experience of living and studying on a university campus away from their communities.

From the very first camp, evaluation was integrated into the program design to allow year- on-year comparison and apply continuous improvements. Students shared their goals and experiences through pre- and post-camp questionnaires, and student and school reflection surveys were conducted after each camp.

The collected evidence strongly supports the program's efficacy in offering a 'university taster experience' that inspires First Nations senior school students to think about education beyond school. Students reported that the camps fostered their confidence and growth (academic, cultural, and personal) and connected them with a supportive network of First Nations peers and staff. They also emphasized feeling safe at the camp physically, emotionally, and culturally. Below are some student testimonials:

- "I am so privileged to be one of the many Aboriginal students being picked for this trip. I liked all of the activities and free time we had..."
- "I loved the fact that the Bidjipidji Camp involved cultural activities and for hiring Aboriginal people..."
- "It was life-changing for me, truly. Coming from Alice Springs, it really is different. It has opened my eyes to see where I want to be in the future and what I want to study. I hope I will have the chance to improve and come and study."
- "The Bidjipidji camp was really good because we got to know everyone, communicate with people from different communities, and learn new things. We had a lot of fun."
- "Trying new things in CDU, had lots of fun learning new skills and meeting new friends."
- "Bidjipidji Camp was fun, interesting, tiring, and pushed me out of my comfort zone."

The evaluation confirmed that the Bidjipidji Camp design is successfully fulfilling its purpose and objectives. Recommendations for future camps took into account the risks of transporting, accommodating, and supervising remote-living First Nations students away from their schools and communities, as well as opportunities for improving program efficiency.

Starting early – CDU’s Children’s University

In 2024, the **CDU Children’s University program was exclusively offered in Alice Springs**. The program expanded its reach, increasing participation from 12 to 16 schools and achieving over 500 student memberships.

Family engagement saw significant growth that year, aided by the launch of a Facebook page and regular newsletter. A tailored approach was introduced to support schools with lower ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) ratings. This involved providing additional resources, such as lunchtime learning sessions and enhanced coordinator support. As a result, participation among children from low-ICSEA schools increased, and subsequently created meaningful connections with CDU and sparking enthusiasm for future educational opportunities.

The CDU Saturday Learning Opportunities program was also strengthened, engaging over 38 families in regular weekend activities. These events were hosted both at CDU and in collaboration with Learning Destination Partners, including Alice Springs Desert Park, Alice Springs School of the Air, and the Road Transport Hall of Fame.

Through 2024, the program offered students from 14 schools the chance to visit CDU for an excursion. During these visits, students explored various higher education disciplines, including paramedics, nursing, science and technology, tourism and hospitality, arts, and trades. The excursions featured structured activities designed to help students identify their strengths, interests, and potential career paths. Students were also provided with a take-home activity to complete with their families, to foster shared aspirations and goals.



Participants in the CDU Alice Springs Children’s University Program, 2023.

3.2 CDU Pathways Programs

First Nations Pathways to University Programs

CDU recognises the unique needs of NT First Nations students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend university. Accordingly, we have designed pathway programs that are specifically tailored to such support requirements. These programs aim to prepare students for HE, boost their confidence, and demystify the university experience. Students can select a program focus aligned with their career interests, including health, arts, education, engineering, STEM, law, business, and accounting. Each program offers in-class mentors and tutors, along with access to additional support services to help students thrive.

In 2024, approximately two-thirds of pathway program participants lived in remote and very remote areas of the NT, including the Tiwi Islands, Arnhem Land, Jabiru, Tennant Creek, and Katherine. The remaining third were Darwin-based students. Most Darwin participants spoke English, while students from remote regions came from backgrounds where Aboriginal languages and/or Kriol were their primary languages spoken at home.

Pathway courses and options include **Pre-Law, Pre-Business, and Pre-Accounting** which are First Nations-focused discipline-specific courses, designed to provide direct entry into related bachelor's degrees. The **First Nations Introduction to University (FNIU)** course takes a slightly different approach providing students with 20 credit points upon completion. This course can serve as a pathway to diverse tertiary options, including direct entry into diploma-level Higher Education courses, further Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP) units, or Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificate-level courses.

The FNIU program includes two "shell units":

- One focuses on building academic literacy skills within the chosen discipline.
- The other introduces disciplinary knowledge while exposing students to a wide range of experiences within the field.

A co-design approach, grounded in Both-Ways learning and language scaffolding, underpins the course content to ensure relevance and accessibility. The FNIU course is delivered in 2 x two-week blocks, offering flexibility for students to balance work, family/community, and travel/study commitments. Students may choose to complete one unit in one year and the other in the next. The program also leverages Away From Base funding to provide support for transport, accommodation, and food allowances for students that are required to travel from away from their home base.

Feedback from students who participated in FNIU courses highlights significant benefits, including a sense of belonging, strengthened academic confidence, and improved skills. Student testimonials reflect these experiences:

- "All the academic articles used were written by Aboriginal scholars and professors, so it was easy for us to understand and connect with."
- "It's a really good opportunity to grow, and be more open to new perspectives, because I've only had my cultural perspective, and I was a little bit stubborn to learn Western ways. The more I opened up and the more I learn about it, it's more like working together in an understanding and mutual respect..."
- "I think doing this has given me the framework and given us all the foundation to know what's expected, what kind of writing is expected, all that kind of thing referencing and all that stuff and how to do it."

Nearly two out of three First Nations students who were enrolled in a First Nations university pathways program successfully completed their course (66%): a higher completion rate compared with 2023 (Table 1). On completion of the pathway course in 2024, 25 students went on to enrol in further tertiary studies at either the Higher Education or TAFE level.

Table 1: Profile of participating students

Courses	2023		2024		Articulated education pathway
	Enrolled	Completed	Enrolled	Completed	
Pre-Law	26	18	12	8	Tertiary Enabling Program x 1 Diploma x 1 Bachelor x7
Pre-Business	2	2	1	0	n/a
Pre-Accounting	3	3	2	2	Certificate IV x 1 Bachelor x 1
FNIUP (All streams)	31	8	50	32.6 (c)	Tertiary Enabling Program x 4 Certificate IV x 2 Diploma x 2 Bachelor x 4 RATE program x 2
Total enrolled	62	31	65	42.6	25 students are enrolled in further tertiary study
Completion rate		51%		66%	
Tertiary Enabling Program (a)	140	23	133	21	n/a
Preparatory Studies			11	3.85	n/a
Completion rate		10%		17.3%	

- (a) Automatic withdrawal processes were not applied consistently to TEP in 2023. This significantly impacted course enrolment and unit success.
- (b) RATE is the Remote Area Teacher Education program.
- (c) 5 x students enrolled in the other FNIU unit in 2025 so did not complete in 2024.
- (d) NA = not available

3.3 Commonwealth Scholarships

Scholarships provide successful student applicants with assistance for cost-of-living expenses and allows them to invest in education resources to support their study. These financial payments continue to make a positive contribution to First Nations student success at CDU. In 2024, a total of 174 scholarships were awarded, amounting to \$417,000 (see Table 2). Compared to 2023, this was a decrease of the total number of scholarships (174 compared to 303), however there were higher numbers of awarded scholarships that covered undergraduate and postgraduate education costs (95 and 16 compared to 86 and 12), with a similar overall amount awarded to students. Fewer reward scholarships were given out in 2024 (51 compared to 186).

Table 2: ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2024 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ^[iii]	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ^[iii]	17,500	7	4,000	1	6,000	3	27,500	11
Undergraduate ^[iv]	237,500	95	4,000	1	72,000	36	313,500	132
Post-graduate ^[v]	40,000	16	12,000	3	24,000	12	76,000	31
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	295,000	118	20,000	5	102,000	51	417,000	174

3.4 Research focus on student access

In 2024, Dr Tracy Woodroffe, a CDU Senior Lecturer, Researcher, and Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) First Nations Fellow, released research outputs that will support improved First Nations student access to university education.

As of 2020, workforce data revealed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers accounted for only 4.6% of educators in the Northern Territory, despite First Nations students constituting 40% of the school population. Encouraging these students to become teachers carries potential for embedding cultural perspectives into education, increasing school attendance, and promoting positive classroom behaviours. Consequently, Dr Woodroffe posed the simple question to Northern Territory senior school students: “Do you want to be a teacher?” Her research aimed to inspire First Nations students to consider teaching as a career path, addressing a critical need for their representation in the education profession. She explored First Nations students' perceptions of teaching and their awareness of it as a viable career option. Understanding First Nations students' views on the teaching profession will enable the creation of targeted promotional materials to reach this underserved group.

First Nations Teacher Education Hub

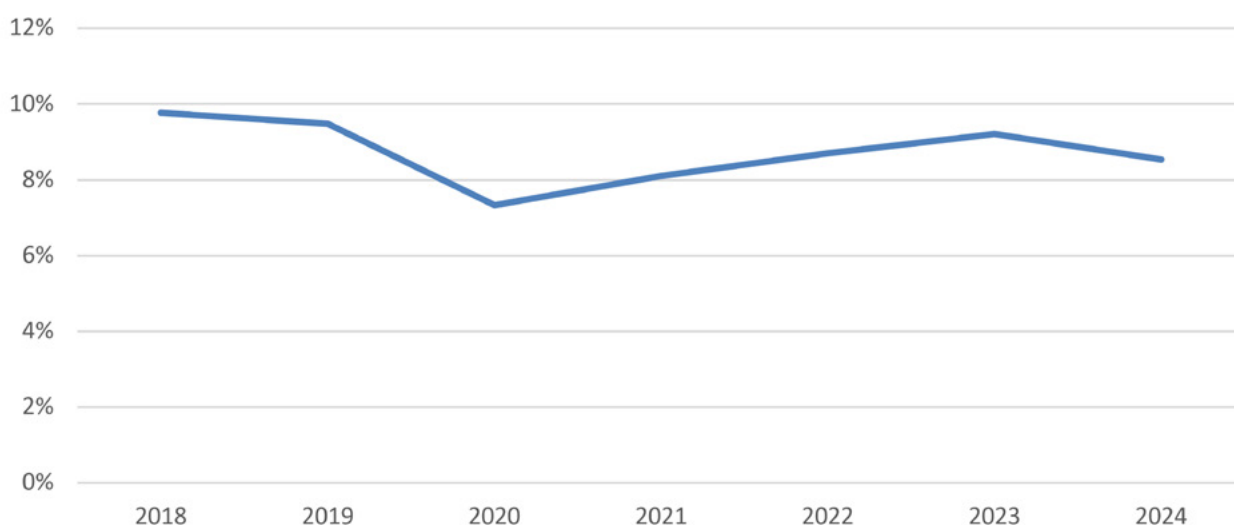
The findings of Dr Woodroffe’s research have contributed to the establishment of CDU’s new **First Nations Teacher Education Hub**. Established in 2024, the focus of the Hub is on delivering the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE) which, in partnership with the NT Department of Education, streamlines support for Aboriginal educators through delivery of both VET and HE education qualifications.

The RATE program builds the capacity of existing Aboriginal educators in remote and very remote NT schools at every step of their education career. The Hub provides the physical space for student teaching and involves sequenced teacher education qualifications through Undergraduate Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor level awards.

3.5 Impact – Access

In 2024, the First Nations Student Access Rate was 8.5%, and for NT First Nations students it was even higher at 14.6%. Although lower than the 2023 access rate of 9.2%, it is much higher than the national parity target.

Figure 2: CDU's First Nations Student Access Rate, 2018-2024



Student Stories - Introducing Lala

What made you choose CDU?

My journey to Charles Darwin University (CDU) was inspired by respected language professionals who consistently recommended Darwin as the premier destination for Indigenous language education. Drawing from seven years of language preservation work alongside my father and his uncle, a qualified Meriam Mir linguist, I wanted to do this course so it could support me in facilitating the current Erub Living First Language Program. The Diploma of Arts and Linguistics at CDU represents more than an academic pursuit; it's a strategic pathway to bridge my traditional cultural knowledge with academic linguistics.

CDU offers a culturally safe learning environment among fellow First Nations students, providing the national qualifications necessary to formally teach my native language. This program allows me to explore diverse linguistic traditions, enhance my understanding of language structures, and prepare for future academic advancement. My ultimate goal extends beyond personal achievement. I aim to develop professional credentials that will empower me to become an effective language educator and cultural preservationist. By expanding my linguistic horizons through the Erub Living First Language Program, I am positioning myself to give back to my community, ensuring our sacred language continues to thrive for generations to come.



What is your language?

My Language is Erub Mer (the words of my Erubam People). It is the sacred heartbeat of my people from Erub (Darnley) Island, representing our ancient way of communicating that has echoed through generations since time immemorial. I've been raised in a family where the one before us have taught us that Language maintenance is not just a choice, but a profound, inherited obligation passed down by our ancestors. We are duty-bound to preserve this linguistic treasure for our current generation and those yet to be born. Our language is more than words; it is our identity, the unique cultural signature that distinguishes us as a distinct community in the Torres Strait and as First Nation Australians. Just as we protect our land and sea, we must protect our language, they are intrinsically linked, each nurturing and sustaining the other in a reciprocal relationship that defines our very existence. Preserving Erub Mer is an act of cultural resilience, a living connection to our heritage that continues to breathe life into our community's past, present, and future.

4. Progression (outcomes)

Our understanding of progression (outcomes) is directly linked to First Nations Student Services (FNSS), and (and this is critical), the ways in which students understand how this informs their university experience and education success. To demonstrate this, we draw on the First Nations Student Satisfaction Survey which is conducted annually by CDU's FNL&E Portfolio in partnership with the Central Performance and Planning team. All First Nations HE students were invited to participate at the end of the 2024 calendar year and the survey achieved a response rate of just over 25%. Thus, in total, 197 First Nations students participated in the survey.

4.1 First Nations Student Support and Engagement Team

CDU's First Nations Student Support and Engagement (FNSSE) team actively assisted First Nations students during the 2024 reporting year to feel welcome and connected to networks of support across the university. The range of support services/programs included student advocacy, pastoral care, academic support, HE course information and pathways, and referrals to other specialised support services. They also worked in partnership with lecturing staff in all faculties to provide targeted support to students who had shown early signs of learning disengagement. The *2024 Student Satisfaction Survey* showed that almost 70% of First Nations students were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the academic support provided by the FNSS team and there were similar levels of satisfaction with their student advocacy service (68%). This fed into high proportions of students saying staff were helpful and supportive (85%), had appropriate knowledge of CDU services (83%) and that they engaged with students in a culturally sensitive way (83%).

Two well established First Nations student Centres at CDU provided a culturally safe and culturally enriched environment for students visiting CDU campuses. The Gurinbey Centre located on the Casuarina campus in Darwin, and the Akaltje Centre located on our Alice Springs Campus, have a range of support programs and Services designed to support first Nations students increasing their rates of success in the higher education endeavours.

4.2 First Nations Student Tutorial Support Program

One of the most significant academic support programs provided by the FNSS team is the Tutorial Support (TS) program. This program is directly funded by the ISSP program and is cost-free to individuals and groups of students that are eligible First Nations students. In 2024, 156 students utilised the TS program with most enrolled in Undergraduate study (59%) – see Table 3. The *2024 Student Satisfaction Survey* showed that, of the students who had accessed the TS program, 69% believed that it was a very important factor for success in their studies. More than 9 in 10 of these students agreed that their tutor provided a high level of academic assistance (91%), engaged in culturally sensitive ways (91%), and that they had an appropriate subject knowledge base (92%).

A total of 122 casual tutors were employed in delivering the program, of which 16 identified as First Nations (13%). Compared to 2023, overall tutor numbers are lower, which we believe was impacted by the introduction of a new CDU HR system which required all tutors to reapply and undertake onboarding activities, taking more time to work through. It is expected that the number of employed tutors will bounce back in 2025.

For the first time, a feedback survey was circulated to all tutors of First Nations students, providing them with an opportunity to report on their experiences of supporting students, and to feedback ideas on any initiatives that might potentially improve the program into the future. Results from the survey particularly pointed to the Language, Learning, Numeracy and Digital Literacy challenges of some First Nations students, and tutors suggested a range of actions they thought could benefit students. The FNSS team are looking closely at the information collected to help improve future design and development of support initiatives specifically addressing LLND needs.

Table 3: Tutorial assistance provided in 2024

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ^[i]	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ^[ii]	Total hours of assistance ^[iii]	Expenditure ^[iv] (\$)
Enabling	31	360	929.75	\$59,458.75
Undergraduate	92	2,495	5,069.75	\$309,507.50
Postgraduate	16	353	754.00	\$45,240.00
Other	17	244	456.00	\$28,346.25
Total	156	3,452	7,209.50	\$442,552.50

[i] Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance

[ii] Total number of tutorial sessions attended by students

[iii] Total hours of instruction received by the students excluding staff planning or organising time

[iv] Including costs associated with providing tutorial assistance (staffing costs, materials, facilities)

4.2 New Student Support Initiatives

First Year Student Success Program

Data analytics showed a significant proportion of all 1st Year students at CDU received a *Failure Did Not Submit* (FNS) grade. The risk of failing units in first year feeds directly into retention. First Nations students were included in CDU's education success focus on all 1st Year students in 2024. The pilot program was introduced by the central Student Engagement Team in the Summer Semester of 2024, targeting courses with the highest levels of FNS, and focused on early intervention by student support services, including the FNSS team. It also established a partnership approach with the associated academics. The program is data driven and brings support directly to the student by identifying early vulnerability. A Senior Student Success Advisor is now embedded in each Faculty, with the program rolling forward into 2025.

Camp Fire – First Nations student portal

A First Nations student portal named 'Camp Fire' was launched in October 2024. It is an online space located on the CDU intranet which was created specifically for CDU's First Nations students to connect and find the supports they need in one easily accessible place and was designed to respond directly to the high proportion of students studying online. The site facilitates building a community of First Nations learners at CDU, highlighting scholarship opportunities, grants, cadetship/studentship programs, pathways to careers and a series of 'hero stories' about successful graduates. Although only launched late into the second semester of 2024, our *Student Satisfaction Survey* showed that 44% of students (i.e. those that participated in the survey) were aware of the Camp Fire portal.

Embedded in Camp Fire is the newly published printable copy of CDU's *First Nations Student Guide: Information for Higher Education Students*. The published version also welcomes First Nations students to CDU and connects First Nations students to academic and wellbeing supports, events, student ambassadors, and the CDU careers centre.

A-Z of First Nations Terms: CDU Student Guide

To ensure all students are culturally appropriate and respectful in their discussions with First Nations peoples, and within the formal classroom, as well as within their assessment tasks, CDU launched the A-Z of First Nations Terms during the reporting year to provide all CDU students with background and context about First Nations history in Australia, particularly in the NT. It recognises differences across First Nations communities, clans and language groups and includes suggested terms for commonly used words and relevant references.

The release supports CDU's goal to be a university of choice for First Nations peoples and incorporating First Nations perspectives and knowledges into our core business.

First Nations Governance Committees at CDU

First Nations governance committees at CDU continue to play a key role in the university. Consisting of the Vice-Chancellors First Nations Engagement Committee (VCFNEC), the First Nations Workforce Committee (FNWC) and the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee (FNLSC), these formal governance committees provide opportunities for First Nations issues to be embedded in the core business of the university. These committees consist of many of the Senior Executive Team (SET) members including the Vice Chancellor, DVC First Nations Leadership, DVC Research and Innovation and Provost, ensuring First Nations issues, particularly First Nations success in Higher Education, is part of the core business of the university.

YAGWA – First Nations Committee in Faculty of Health

The YAGWA committee, which is a First Nations committee established within the Faculty of Health, has been established and running now for more than 2 years. This is a key committee (at a faculty level) that allows the university to track and monitor the issues that apply to students studying within the Faculty of Health. This is important because, our student data continues to identify the First Nations enrolments in the Faculty of Health (FoH) as one of the highest across CDU (i.e. 207 student enrolments in 2024). The Yagwa Committee (meaning 'This Way' in Larrakia) represents the FoH's strategic commitment to addressing First Nations learning needs and supporting First Nations students to success.

The Committee's initiatives focus on strengthening leadership in First Nations health education, research, and employment, as well as embedding First Nations Cultural Safety into educational practices. Although established in the second half of 2023, the Committee launched a fully developed program of work in January 2024, including several key actions:

- Developing and supporting health pathway programs tailored for First Nations students;
- Increasing the enrolment of First Nations students in the FoH;
- Integrating First Nations knowledge and cultural practices into FoH curricula;
- Promoting awareness of First Nations Student Support (FNSS) resources;
- Expanding the pool of registered tutors within the FoH; and
- Offering cultural responsiveness training to Faculty staff and students.

During the reporting year (i.e. 2024) the FoH introduced specialised support for First Nations students enrolled in midwifery and nursing programs, leading to notable improvements in student success and retention. Bachelor of Midwifery students achieved an impressive success rate of 91.8% (n=19 students), while Bachelor of Nursing students attained a success rate of 78.9% (n=78 students). This is outstanding given that both had significantly exceeded the average First Nations Unit Success Rate of 63.5%.

Yagwa's commitment to offering cultural responsiveness training saw nearly 80% of all FoH staff undertake Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) training through 2024. The training is delivered in three main online blended learning stages: 1) What do 'we' need to know; 2) whom do 'we' need to be; and 3) How do we transform behaviours and systems to be culturally safe and responsive. Feedback from FoH staff about the training has been overwhelmingly positive and is scheduled to continue into 2025.

CDU research on First Nations culturally responsive learning and teaching

In 2024, Dr Tracy Woodroffe released resources to support improved First Nations student success at CDU. The hard copy publication of two guidebooks: a pocket-sized First Nations student guidebook and a lecturer guidebook were direct outputs from the HEPPP funded project *Higher Education and First Nations Students: The CDU Story*. These resources emphasised cultural responsiveness in learning and teaching at CDU. Distributed to both students and lecturers, these guidebooks laid the groundwork for the development of targeted Professional Development programs tailored for lecturers in different disciplines— a significant step toward fostering inclusive education pedagogy. See below the links to the guidebooks:

[Student Guidebook - First Nations Success](#)

[Lecturer Guidebook - First Nations Success](#)

4.3 Ongoing initiatives

- **First Nations Academic Language Advisor** – a dedicated point of contact for First Nations students who require language and literacy support and advice in meeting the expectations of Higher Education;
- **Learnline Support Unit** – every enrolled First Nations student is provided access to a Learnline interface developed by the FNSS team;
- **Online workshops** – specifically designed for First Nations students, these workshops provide opportunities that develop skills, knowledge, and confidence in tertiary studies, including (but not limited to) essay writing, referencing, and reflective writing;
- **Science and Technology Mentoring Scheme** – directed to First Nations students undertaking science and technology disciplines. The Faculty of Science & Technology also collaborate with FNSS to create a group of registered tutors that have specific technical skills and knowledge to better support students enrolled in technical units;
- **Network of Indigenous Partnerships** – this network aims to enhance and support mechanisms for First Nations members across both CDU TAFE and HE. Membership is open to all First Nations students, staff, alumni and members of the broader First Nations community. They collaborate with the Faculty of Science & Technology through several initiatives including: networking opportunities to support professional development goals; provision of cultural and strategic advice to the Faculty on program, policies, and initiatives for First Nations students that impact learning, teaching and research activities; connecting with FNL&E to provide consistent and complementary programs and support, enhancing cultural support and understanding across the Faculty;
- **CDU Study Skills website** – this is a general self-access resource that aims to enrich students’ knowledge of language and learning, and encourages student autonomy;
- **CDU Counselling & Wellbeing Check** – this is a drop-in service for First Nations students on the Casuarina campus. It has an improved online booking system for counselling services available to all students; and
- **Access & Inclusion team** – provides a coordinate service and support to assist students with disability and/or to help them manage a significant health condition by putting in place reasonable adjustments that allow equitable access and participation in university life. In consultation with FNL&E, a Learning Access Plan is tailored specifically to First Nations students. These plans consider cultural observances and practices, such as for bereavements and other cultural obligations, that impact upon and potentially impede students’ study commitments.

CDU had active involvement in a range of activities that supported First Nations communities and our First Nations students, including:

- A full program of **NAIDOC week celebrations** and events that included a collaboration between FNL&E, Hoops4Health and Men@CDU which focused on raising awareness of mental health and other well-being issues amongst men;
- Student opportunities to attend the **Garma Festival**;
- The annual **Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture** (VLML) which commemorates the Wave Hill Station walk-off and honours Vincent Lingiari's legacy. In 2024, the VLML was delivered by Jack Thompson AM, actor, and supporter/advocate. Mr Thompson is the co-founder of an organisation that addresses unemployment and housing shortages in First Nations communities by teaching them how to build their own homes from materials available on-Country – the Jack Thompson Foundation. CDU supports the foundation through a current partnership agreement.



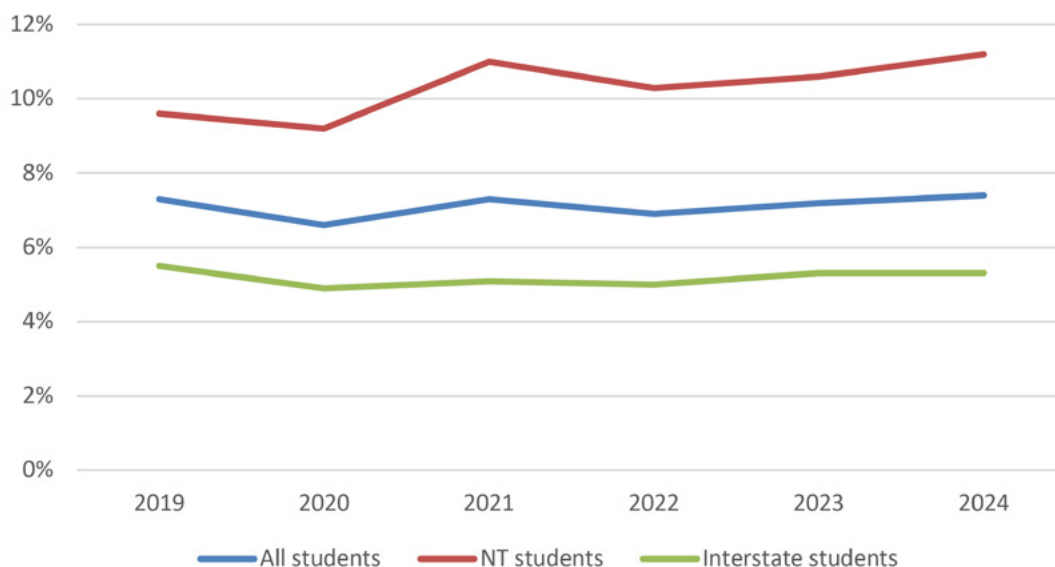
Photos: CDU's presence at the 2024 Garma Festival; Professor Reuben Bolt gifting a painting by Gurindji artist Sarrita King to Jack Thompson who delivered the 23rd Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture; Team 'Dungubila' at the 2024 Indigenous Nationals, University Games.

- CDU participated in the **Indigenous Nationals** University Games for the 2024 reporting year. this was our third team to travel for the event. We travelled to Wollongong, NSW as the games were hosted by the University of Wollongong. Our team, 'Team Dungubila' consisted of 12 students and 2 staff members. The games were attended by students from 31 universities across Australia and competed in four sports: touch football, netball, basketball and volleyball. While teams are competitive and have their sights on the big prize, our hopes of beating our ranking of 10th from last years' games fell short, with a final standing of 11th place. Our students were provided the opportunity to showcase culture through sport, promote unity, health and fitness and to be role models to younger generations of mob aspiring to study university level education. The students made great friendships and were amazing ambassadors for CDU.

4.4 Impact – Progression

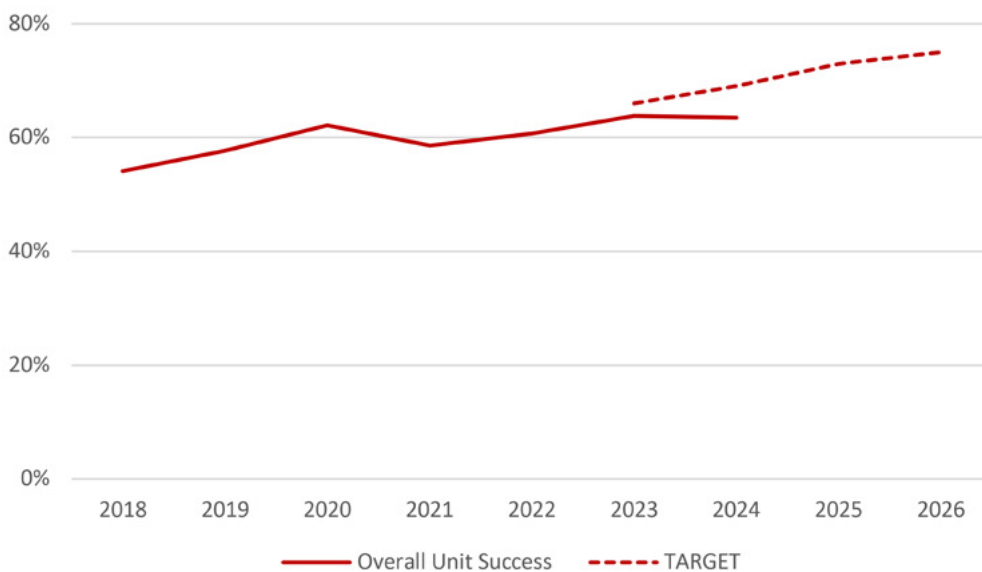
In 2024, our First Nations HE students had a Participation Rate of 7.4%. This was the highest in the data series since 2019, although only marginally so compared to the COVID influenced peak in 2021. For our NT First Nations students, the Participation Rate was higher again, at 11.2% while for those based Interstate it was 5.3% (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: First Nations Student Participation Rate, 2019-2024



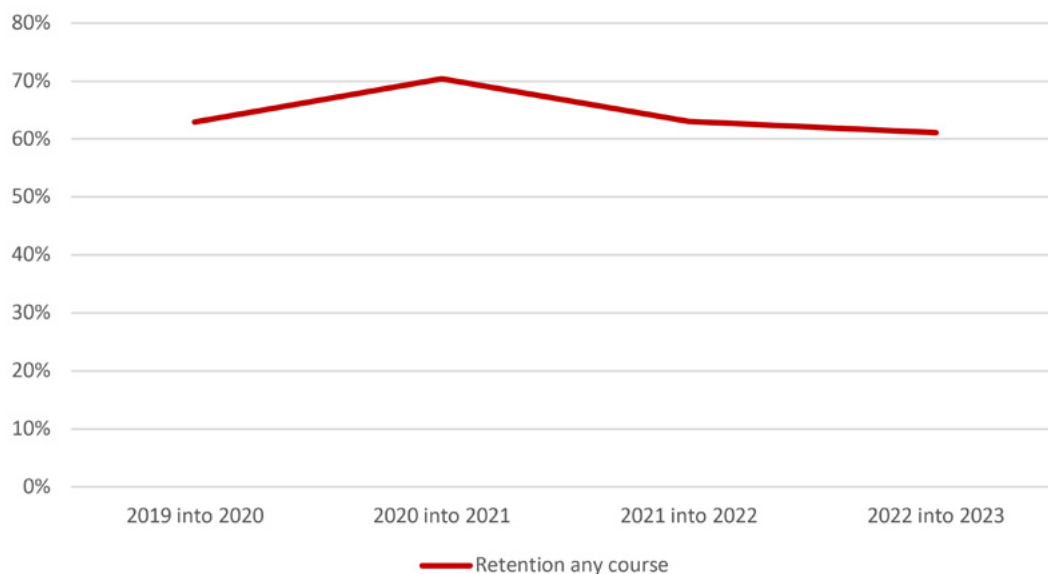
The 2024 **First Nations Student Unit Success Rate** was almost equivalent to the 2023 result (63.5% compared to 63.8%) – see Figure 4. CDU’s Whole of University First Nations Student Success Plan was implemented in 2023 and adopted a set of aspirational targets that aimed to achieve 75% Unit Success by 2026. The early success in lifting unit success rates has plateaued, however CDU continues to work across the university to use early intervention strategies to target at-risk students. This approach will be further refined and monitored through 2025.

Figure 4: First Nations Student Unit Success Rates, 2018-2024



The 2024 **First Nations Student Retention** data showed some decline in broad retention rates from a high in 2020-21 (70.4%) (which was influenced by numerous Covid-19 measures) to a low in 2022-23 (61.1%) – see Figure 5. Tougher economic conditions are likely to impact both access and retention data, and this is particularly the case for our First Nations students who generally juggle cultural obligations, family, and work, as well as study commitments. In the *2024 Student Satisfaction Survey*, students who had considered leaving were mostly likely to indicate reasons associated with family responsibilities (51%) and health and stress issues (39%), followed by reasons associated with financial stress - the need to do paid work and general financial difficulties (both 30%). CDU will continue to focus on retention metrics to ensure support services are well calibrated to First Nations student needs.

Figure 5: First Nations Student Retention Rates, 2019-2024



5. Completions (outcomes)

5.1 Impact – Completions

A total of 138 awards were completed by First Nations students in 2024 (see Table 4). Completion numbers improved across all course types with the exceptions of Enabling courses and Undergraduate short courses. Undergraduate degree completions have increased by almost 70% since 2022, increasing from 45 to 65 awards (Table 4).

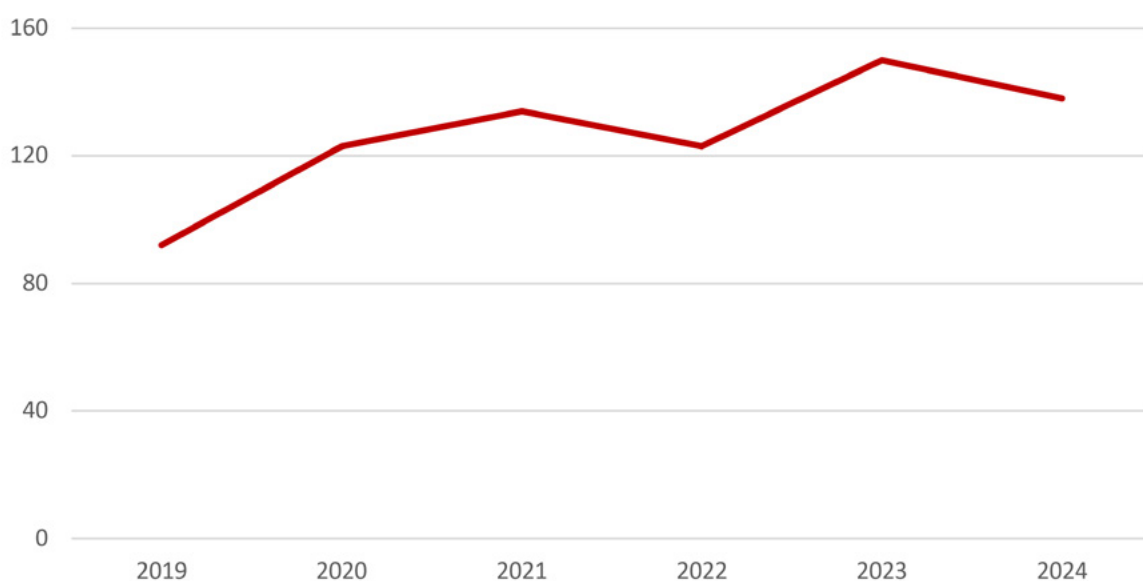
Table 4: Course Completions for 2022, 2023, 2024

Narrow course type	2022	2023	YTD 2024
Enabling (including pre-courses)	44	46	31
Undergraduate short course	10	12	1
Sub-Bachelor	9	13	19
Undergraduate	45	63	65
Postgraduate (by coursework)	15	19	20
Research	1	1	2
TOTAL	124	154	138

Graduation ceremonies at CDU are special events for First Nations students. As one of the most exciting times of a student’s academic journey, FNL&E provide each student with a gift of an Indigenous designed satin stole and pin to wear at their graduation ceremony. They also help students with graduation registration and provide guidance through the process. In 2024, First Nations Valedictory Ceremonies were held in both Darwin and Alice Springs providing the opportunity to celebrate our First Nations students’ successes with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Scott Bowman AO, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor FNL&E Professor Reuben Bolt, and other senior executive staff who joined with proud family members to honour student achievements, as well as to celebrate their cultural identity, their communities and their leadership.

CDU is growing its First Nations Students Alumni network so that student success can be shared with other First Nations students, and mentor opportunities can be established.

Figure 5: First Nations Student Award Completions (total), 2019-2024



Note: TOTAL includes undergraduate short courses and research awards

Student Stories - Priscilla

On World Social Work Day 2024, a recent CDU graduate, Priscilla Smith, was awarded the First Nations Student Social Work Award by the Australian Association of Social Workers. After overcoming tragedy and her own self-doubts, Priscilla completed a Bachelor of Social Work. She had not finished High School, but Priscilla took advantage of the Tertiary Enabling Program as an entry pathway to Higher Education. It was not an easy, nor straight-forward journey, but she was inspired by the opportunity to work with, and for, her people. "Being an Aboriginal woman, I am always thinking about structural injustice that my people are faced with in Australia, with the hope to one day make a change," she said. Her degree continued as she balanced bringing up four children, and significantly, two were born while she was studying. Her Social Work placements provided the opportunity to gain real-world skills.



"Placement is an amazing opportunity to understand the demands and expectations of a social worker," Priscilla said. "The placement opportunities in child protection and Palmerston Hospital have given me the foundational skills and knowledge to embark on my social work career."

Other course completions

At CDU, **Indigenous Research Credentials** support research capacity development and engage traditional knowledge practice whilst being guided by First Nations authority. These awards operate as dual-academy credentials. They authorise research skills 'in place', with each award requiring authorisation by CDU and senior authorities within the community where the credential is awarded.

Student Stories - Charlotte, Amy and Virgil

In 2024, CDU's Northern Institute announced that three Tiwi researchers – Charlotte Portamini, Theresa 'Amy' Munara and Virgil Kerinaia – completed all requirements for their Indigenous Community-Based Researcher credentials.

They were funded as the first members of the CDU-CSIRO community-based research program. Each researcher pursued their own projects, working from the ground up with other Tiwi community members and focusing on bush medicines, recording ceremonies and the Tiwi story of the Mapularri Prown Farm development.

The research was supported by senior Tiwi authority Ron Poantimilui, Fiona Small-wood-Power and Terry Sparrow from CSIRO and Michaela Spencer from the Northern Institute.



6. Regional and remote students

Nearly 80 percent of CDU’s First Nations students have a home location that is classified as regional, remote or very remote. As such, our regional and remote student population is of particular importance to CDU’s strategic goals. Our students can be challenged by the distance to the nearest educational hub and the sufficiency of their digital connectivity. CDU continues to advocate for the required resources to deliver degree education needed in regional and remote areas through its network of regional Associate Vice-Chancellors.

To assist with many of the additional financial costs of Higher Education to regional and remote students, 80 per cent of ISSP scholarships were directed to such students (see Table 2 and Table 5).

Table 5: ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students²

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2023 Payments	172,000	86	36,000	12	156,615	141	364,615	239
B. 2024 Offers ^[vii]	255,000	102	20,000	5	78,000	39	353,000	146
C. Percentage ^[viii] (C=B/A*100)							96.8%	
2024 Payments	247,500	99	20,000	5	72,000	36	339,500	140

7. Eligibility criteria

7.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

As stated in our **Strategic Plan (2021-2026)**, CDU’s vision is to be Australia’s most connected University by being courageous and making a difference in the Northern Territory, Australia and beyond. Whilst we do aspire to make a difference beyond the Northern Territory, we purposefully articulated our vision as focusing on the Northern Territory first. In addition to this, our education commitment to First Nations students and communities are strongly articulated throughout the plan, including:

- Goal – to be the most recognised university for Australian First Nations training, education and research;
- Graduate Attribute 3 – our students will be culturally responsive in their engagement with First Nations communities and issues;
- Our enduring principle to prioritise the needs of the Northern Territory, of which nearly a third identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- Honouring Australian First Nations knowledges and cultures (supported by CDU’s First Nations Peoples Policy)
- Connecting and engaging with our stakeholders in meaningful partnerships, often established through our research foci; and
- Fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging and actively valuing our diversity (supported by CDU’s Anti-Racism Policy & CDU’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy).

Embedded Strategic Key Performance Indicators

CDU is a unique Australian University that has 2 x Strategic Key Performance Indicators (SKPIs) focused on First Nations student success. These are: 1) improvement in First Nations HE unit success rate; and 2) improvement in the First Nations VET unit success rate. They hold the university accountable to the delivery of strong educational outcomes for First Nations students. The measures of these SKPIs are included in reporting to a range of governance bodies include CDU's University Council and the CDU Academic Board.

Embedding First Nations Perspectives

One of CDU's seven Core Plans is the **First Nations Leadership Plan**. Of particular focus in 2024 was the Core Plan action of standing up the Embedding First Nations Perspectives Working Committee (WC). The WC leads progress on embedding First Nations knowledges, perspectives, and cultural practices into curricula across CDU. As a starting point, in 2024 CDU had committed to ensuring that in all HE Faculties, at least one core unit or major elective in each year of every course has an integration process in action. The process is guided by an internally established set of principles that will embody a strengths-based approach. It acknowledges the value and resilience of Indigenous peoples, knowledges, laws and cultures, and engages with Indigenous knowledges as the product of broader Indigenous knowledges systems which are different to Western knowledge systems.

7.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

During NAIDOC week 2024, CDU launched its **First Nations Workforce Plan, 2023-2026**. Contained in the Plan are CDU commitments to increasing the number of First Nations people employed in its organisation and supporting the careers of First Nations Staff. The Plan brings together initiatives to grow the CDU First Nations Workforce to a target of 8.2% of all employees by December 2026. To achieve this goal, the Plan focuses on both recruitment and attraction, as well as career development and retention, and has set out three goals:

1. To become a workplace of choice for First Nations people by 2026;
2. To increase retention rates and support career development opportunities for First Nations employees;
and
3. To embed a culture of increasing First Nations employment at CDU.

Table 6: First Nations Workforce Profile, 2024

Level/Position	Continuing		Fixed Term/Casual		Total
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic	
Casual Teaching Academic			15		15
Casual Professional				3	3
Executive/Snr Management				4	4
HEW 03		1			1
HEW 04		4		5	9
HEW 05		9		1	10
HEW 06		3		7	10
HEW 07		2			2
HEW 08		1		4	5
HEW 09		1			1
HEW 10				1	1
Level A	8		2		10
Level B	5		4		9
Level C	1				1
Level D	1		1		2
Level E			1		1
Grand Total	15	21	23	25	84

Note: Data presented as the headcount figure at 31 March 2024

At 31 March 2024, there were 84 First Nations staff employed by CDU, 2 fewer than at the same time in 2023 (Table 6). This represents 5 per cent of all CDU employees. In 2024, CDU was 17.9 FTE lower than the Plan's target (Table 7).

Table 7: First Nations employment target projections and actual numbers

Measure	Baseline at 31 December 2022		2023	2024	2025	2026
% First Nations employees at CDU	4.3%	Target	5.8%	6.6%	7.4%	8.2%
		Actual	4.8%	5.0%		
First Nations employees FTE* at CDU	51.8	Target	70	80	90	100
		Actual	59.1	62.1		

Note: Actual data is presented at 31 March each year

* excludes casual staff

The development and implementation of the Plan is underpinned by respect for the cultural, social, and spiritual practices of First Nations peoples, the recognition of First Nations people's knowledge as a significant contributor to other bodies of knowledge and the recognition of the scholarship that First Nations employees bring to the University including the intellectual property of First Nations communities. A series of aspirational targets are embedded in the Plan from the baseline measured at 2022 to 2026 (Table 7).

7.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) at Charles Darwin University (CDU) is governed by the CDU Indigenous Governance Mechanism, ensuring effective leadership, oversight, and engagement in matters concerning Indigenous education, research, employment, and community engagement. This governance framework is vital to upholding CDU's commitment to Indigenous advancement and fostering meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities.

CDU's Indigenous Governance Mechanism (for the management of the ISSP) encompasses the roles of the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement (DVCFNLE) the Director First Nations Leadership, the Manager of Business Operations, the CDU Management Accountant and the Executive Officer, First Nations Leadership.

Name	Position	Duration of Service at 31/12/2024
Professor Reuben Bolt*	Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement	5 years
Kim Robertson*	Director First Nations Leadership	10 years
Ann Macabuhay	Manager Business Operations, First Nations Leadership (Financial updates)	15 years
Lesleigh Matheson*	Executive Officer First Nations Leadership (Secretariat/recording of decisions)	1.5 years
Michael Connell	CDU Management Accountant	2.5 years

* First Nations staff members

First Nations Leadership Senior Management Team

The DVCFNLE chairs the First Nations Leadership Senior Management Team Meetings where strategic projects, changes to policy, financial matters, and community engagement discussions occur, and where resolutions are developed. The group meets on a weekly basis whereby ISSP programs services are discussed. In addition to this, ISSP focused meetings occur quarterly, or ad hoc as required as part of the Senior Management Team meetings.

First Nations Leadership Management Team

The First Nations Leadership Management Team is chaired by the Director of First Nations Leadership or the Manager of Business Operations. This team convenes monthly to coordinate strategic initiatives and operational activities, several which are related to the ISSP. Membership includes the Associated Director First Nations Student Engagement, Manager Business Operations (overseeing finance matters, including ISSP), and the three Managers of First Nations Student Support and Engagement services. Updates on ISSP from the First Nations Leadership Management Team are conveyed to the First Nations Leadership Senior Management Team whenever resolutions are needed.

First Nations Leadership, Larrakia Academic-in-Residence

The appointment of a Larrakia Academic-in-Residence highlights CDU's commitment to reconciliation. The position was formed in recognition of the traditional custodians of the lands where the CDU Casuarina, Palmerston Waterfront and Danala (City) campus are located – on Larrakia Country. The role was developed in partnership with Larrakia National Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) and the Larrakia Development Corporation (LDC). The CDU Larrakia Academic-in-Residence provides a range of culturally informed and academically sound guidance, direction, and support to Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff (including senior executives), students and stakeholders.

A Senior Larrakia Elder with kinship ties across the NT, Aunty Dr Bilawara Lee, currently holds this very important position. Aunty Bilawara is acknowledged internationally as a community communicator, healer and teacher of ancient wisdoms. She has more than 30 years' experience in the areas of education and health and is an internationally published author. In 2024 she received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day 2024 Honours. She was also recognised for her exceptional contributions and support to the continued development and success of Menzies School of Health Research and was bestowed a Companion of Menzies at the 2024 Menzies Oration.

CDU First Nations Governance Structure

In addition to the internal governance structures within the First Nations Leadership and Engagement Portfolio, CDU's First Nations governance structure comprises three key committees: the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee (FNLSC), the Vice Chancellor's First Nations Engagement Committee and the First Nations Workforce Advisory Committee (FNWAC). These committees provide strategic direction, advice, and oversight on matters pertaining to Indigenous initiatives within the university.

The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee was established as an internal steering committee, reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. It is a permanent fixture of the Charles Darwin University (CDU) organisational structure. This committee monitors and provides guidance and advice to the Vice-Chancellor and the University in relation to matters including, but not limited to, the University's First Nations Leadership Core Plan, relationships between the University and government, and intra and inter University engagement. The committee meets quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement.

The Vice-Chancellor's First Nations Engagement Committee is a formal outward facing engagement committee of the University. The Committee has a jurisdictional and national focus and provides high-level advice to the Vice-Chancellor in relation to Australian First Nations matters. This committee assists the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement in providing robust advice to the Vice-Chancellor on the development of First Nations focused policies, programs and processes. All of these are designed to assist the University realise its goal of becoming the first choice for First Nations students and staff and a national leader in First Nations education and knowledges. It assists in guiding the whole of university engagement in Cultural Competency.

Membership consists of the CDU Vice-Chancellor & President, Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership, Director First Nations Leadership, and First Nations community leaders from across the Territory. The committee meets biannually, and the Chair (a First Nations leader from across the NT) is agreed upon by the committee members.

The First Nations Workforce Committee provides advice and support to the University on the First Nations Workforce Plan. It is co-chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership & Engagement, and the Director People and Culture, and its aim is to increase the number of First Nations staff. It is responsible for the delivery of the CDU Plan for attracting, recruiting, engaging, developing, retaining and advancing First Nations staff. It also has oversight of employee training on cross-cultural competency and evaluation of the First Nations Workforce Plan and its progress, recommending changes as needed. The committee meets quarterly.

CDU First Nations Contributions to Decision-Making across CDU

In his role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership, Prof. Reuben Bolt is a member of many decision-making committees/meetings across the university including the Senior Executive Team (SET), the Vice-Chancellors Advisory Committee (VCAC), Academic Board (AB), Academic Programs Committee (APC), Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC), the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) etc. Prof. Bolt is also an observer on the CDU Council, and he reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor where he provides advice and counsel to the highest levels of governance at CDU.

7.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

2024 was a challenging year for universities across the sector which saw a downturn in both domestic student enrolments, and international student enrolments. The latter, which was directly linked to Ministerial Directive 107, effectively prevented universities from recruiting international students to their degree programs. The impact was wide and far reaching with many universities in Australia making the decision to 'restructure' to prevent insolvency. CDU did not do this. Under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Scott Bowman, CDU held its nerve, and made the decision take a range of other less drastic measures.

By all accounts it is difficult to understate the full impact of MD107. It was felt across the sector, and significantly hindered universities' ability to invest in First Nations programs, services and initiatives. Given these circumstances (which were outside the control of universities) we here at CDU were not as impacted as others. Our performance across the range of metrics (access, progression, retention, success etc) has been relatively stable when compared to 2023, as we were able to continue to provide high quality services and programs to our First Nations students.

Strong governance, support services and First Nations leadership is required to ensure universities are appropriately equipped to provide learning engagements that are culturally appropriate, sensitive, and effective. And it is absolutely critical that universities employ staff that understand the cultural sensitivities and nuances unique to First Nations students from the range of communities they come from, as they are diverse and unique in their own right. This is a CDU strength - CDU has been operating in the Northern Territory for many, many years now, serving and supporting many of our most disadvantaged First Nations peoples in the country.

Understanding our First Nations communities, also requires of us to understand and empathise what impact national instruments (even if proposed or not) could have on our First Nations communities. For instance, the defeat of the Voice referendum in 2023 had a drastic impact on many First Nations peoples across the country. It also shaped much of the national discourse surrounding Australian identity and race relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens, to the point that there was an unease in the national consciousness. Much of this unease was exacerbated by the political discourse leading up to the federal election, causing further uncertainty for First Nations Australians at the back end of the reporting year. And whilst this uncertainty continued well into 2025, the landslide victory of the Labour government in the May 2025 Federal Election has brought back more certainty for many First Nations Australians.

Additional information for completing the template

- ¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2024. The figures for students should include the actual number (head count, not the EFTSL). Scholarship figures (head count and costs) should include the university award scholarships from the flexible finding pool as well as any preserved scholarships. Only payments made during 2024 should be included in this table. For multi-year scholarship agreements, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded in the performance reporting for the relevant future grant year.
- ^[i] This figures provide for the total number of students receiving scholarships and expenditure for those scholarships. For the student count, in cases where a student receives more than one scholarship, the student would only be counted once in the total (consequently the total figure may not be the sum of the preceding columns). For the expenditure, the total should be the total of the preceding expenditure columns.
- ^[iii] Include payments to all enabling students, including remote and regional students.
- ^[iv] Include payments to all undergraduate students, including remote and regional students.
- ^[v] Include payments to all postgraduate students, including remote and regional students.
- ^[i] Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).
- ^[ii] Record total number of tutorial sessions attended by students (each class a student attends counts as 1, the same student may attend multiple tutorial sessions throughout the year).
- ^[iii] Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).
- ^[iv] Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.
- ² Only record amounts which required payment during the 2024 calendar year. For multi-year scholarship offers, payments to be made in future grant years will be recorded against the reporting for the relevant future grant year. Note the data in this table is a subset of the scholarship data provided in Table 1.
- ^[vii] Record all verbal and written scholarship offers for the 2023 calendar year, including those offers that were not accepted by the student. Record the 2023 component of new scholarship offers and the planned 2022 value of previously awarded scholarships (including continuing scholarships).
- ^[viii] This data confirms the university's compliance with Section 21(3) of the Guidelines.

Indigenous Student Success Program 2024 Financial Acquittal

Organisation

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

1. Financials – Income and expenditure

Table 1a ISSP income available to support Indigenous students in 2024 (excluding GST) ¹

Item	(\$)
A. ISSP Grant 2024 ²	\$2,419,331.91
B. Other ISSP Related Income	
Interest earned/royalties from ISSP funding ³	\$12,626.25
<i>If no interest has been earned briefly state why</i>	
Sale of ISSP assets	
2024 ISSP Grant Income (excluding rollovers)	\$2,431,958.16

Table 1b Other funding used to support Indigenous students in 2024 (excluding GST)⁴

Item	(\$)
A. Other non-ISSP funds ⁵	
Other funding provided under HESA ⁶	\$0
Other Commonwealth Government funding	\$0
Funds derived from external sources ⁷	\$19,413,459.96
Total of other non-ISSP funds for 2024	\$19,413,459.96

Certification

Table 1c ISSP 2024 Grant Expenditure on support for Indigenous students during 2024 (excluding GST) ⁸

Item ⁹	Actual ISSP (\$) ¹⁰
Scholarships from flexible ISSP funding	\$435,546.00
Salaries for staff working on ISSP activities ¹¹	\$2,117,920.75
Tutorial Assistance, Pastoral Care, Outreach activities, cultural competency strategies etc (non-salary components)	\$48,236.81
Travel – domestic (airfares, accommodation & meals)	\$23,153.53
Travel – international (airfares)	\$0
Travel – international (accommodation and meals)	\$0
Conference fees and related costs ¹²	\$0
ISSP Asset purchases made during 2024 ¹³	\$0
A. Total Expenditure of ISSP 2024 Grant (excluding expenditure from all rollovers into 2024)	\$2,624,857.09
B. Unexpended 2024 ISSP funds approved for rollover into 2025 grant year¹⁴	\$0
C. Unexpended 2024 ISSP funding to be returned to the NIAA	\$0
Total 2024 ISSP funding committed (A + B + C) ¹⁵	\$2,624,857.09

2. Rollovers

Table 2 Rollovers ¹⁶

<i>Outline excess rollover funds here. The sum of these columns should equal the project funds rollover total</i>				
	Project Funds Rolled over (\$)	Project Funds Expended/committed ¹⁷ (\$)	Excess Option 1: Unspent funds to be rolled into 2025 ¹⁸ (\$)	Excess Option 2: Unspent funds to be returned to the NIAA ¹⁹ (\$)
2021 funds rolled over into 2024				
2022 funds rolled over into 2024				
2023 funds rolled over into 2024	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Unexpended 2024 Funds (From Table 1c, Rows B is Option 1 and C is Option 2)			\$0	\$0
Total funds approved for rollover into 2025 or to be returned ²⁰			\$0	\$0

3. Goods and Services Tax

Table 3 Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid under ISSP - 1 January – 31 December 2024²¹

1. GST received by you in 2024 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Program funding under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> ²²		\$
2. GST remitted or committed for payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (in the remittance instalments shown below)		\$
Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$	Amount remitted: \$
Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /	Date remitted: / /

4. ISSP Assets

Table 4a ISSP Assets inventory²³

Asset Description/ category	Adjustable Value ²⁴	ISSP contribution ²⁵

Table 4b ISSP Assets - purchases during 2024²⁶

Asset Description/ category	Purchase Value	ISSP contribution

Table 4c ISSP Assets - disposals during 2024

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

5. Endorsement of the Financial Acquittal³⁰

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

2024 Financial Acquittal supported and initialled by Authorised Officer:

Name:

Title:

Phone: Email:

Signed:

Date:

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM 2024 CERTIFICATION

Complete this certification after reading the completed 2024 Performance Report and 2024 Financial Acquittal for the Indigenous Student Success Program.

I certify that:

- (i) the Institution has met the eligibility requirements of the Indigenous Student Success Program as set out in the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*; and
- (ii) the 2024 Indigenous Student Success Program Performance report presents an accurate summary of the Institution's use of program funds and of other activities undertaken by the Institution to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff outcomes; and
- (iii) the 2024 Indigenous Student Success Program financial acquittal represents a complete, true and correct summary of transactions that took place during 2024 under the Indigenous Student Success Program; and
- (iv) Indigenous Student Success Program funds, and any interest earned or royalties/income derived from these funds, was expended on activities consistent with the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

I understand that:

- (i) the Minister or the Minister's delegate may seek further information to support this certification; and
- (ii) the information contain in this report may be shared with Universities Australia; and
- (iii) in the event that I have not remitted GST paid under the Agreement to the Australian Taxation Office, that it is my obligation to remit those amounts, as required under the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*; and
- (iv) it is an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to provide false or misleading information.

Certification recommended by the university's Indigenous Governance Mechanism:

Name:

Title:

Signed:

Date:

Certification made by Vice-Chancellor or equivalent delegate³¹:

Name:

Title:

Signed:

Date:

Additional information for completing the template

- ¹ The financial tables have a dual purpose of itemising actual income and expenditure associated with the ISSP in 2024, as well as estimating other funds and expenditure supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the university. The information in tables 1a, 1b and 1c helps NIAA recognise the commitments your institution is making to lift and sustain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. Please feel free to add additional “item” lines as required.
- ² Do not include rollovers in ISSP 2024 Grant amount. Prior year’s rollover figures to be included in Table 2.
- ³ Interest earned on ISSP is considered to be ISSP funding and must be used in accordance with the ISSP Guidelines.
- ⁴ Please estimate the funds available if exact amounts are not known.
- ⁵ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- ⁶ Please include funding provided under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program.
- ⁷ Examples of other funding are philanthropic donations, other student payments, business income etc.
- ⁸ Where applicable, figures provided in this table must be consistent with the figures provided in the institution’s 2024 Performance Report.
- ⁹ Please insert additional lines if the listing below do not suit your university’s arrangements.
- ¹⁰ List the expenditure of the income listed in Table 1a, not including the funding rolled over from previous years (this is detailed in Table 2).
- ¹¹ If the staff member works on non-ISSP specific activities, only record the pro-rata amount that reflects the amount of time the staff member worked on ISSP-specific activities. Include expenditure on salaries for staff that provide tutorial assistance. May include pro-rata expenditure on salaries for staff time spent monitoring and recording tutoring and student withdrawals.
- ¹² Costs may include, but are not limited to, registration fees, presentation fees, equipment costs etc.
- ¹³ Assets are defined in the *Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017*, and are items that have an individual value of \$5,000 or more.
- ¹⁴ This should match the figure in Table 2.
- ¹⁵ This figure should equal the Grand total in Table 1a
- ¹⁶ All rollovers have to be agreed with the NIAA and listed in a relevant determination, check with NIAA if you are unsure of your rollover information.
- ¹⁷ For 2021, 2022 and 2023 funds rolled into 2024, the amount included here should be the amount expended in 2024.
- ¹⁸ This is the amount of the rollover not expended that has been approved to be rolled over into 2025.
- ¹⁹ This is the amount of the rollover not expended and not rolled over into 2025. NIAA will issue an invoice for any amounts listed in this column.
- ²⁰ Total funds in this row should equal the unspent ISSP balance in the Providers bank account at 31 Dec 2024.
- ²¹ If GST is not paid to you, do not complete Table 3. If GST is paid to you, the amount of GST funding included in each payment is set out in a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) issued to you at the time of the payment. State whether these amounts have been remitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or committed for payment to the ATO.
- ²² This amount is stated on your Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTIs).
- ²³ Record all active assets acquired using ISSP funding. Active assets are those that have not been sold or disposed of.
- ²⁴ Adjustable value means the cost of an asset less its decline in value determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office Guide to Depreciating Assets 2024.
- ²⁵ The ISSP contribution should be recorded in the same ratio to the ISSP funds used to purchase the item (this includes any sale of an older asset trade in of old assets purchased with ISSP funding).
- ²⁶ Include any assets purchased during 2024 using ISSP funding that are valued over \$5,000. Any assets in this category should have been agreed with the NIAA prior to the item being purchased.
- ²⁷ Where an item has been stolen or destroyed, the words ‘stolen’ or ‘destroyed’ should be listed in the sale price column.
- ²⁸ The ISSP component should be the proportion of the sale price in the same ratio as the proportion of ISSP funding that contributed to the purchase of the asset.
- ²⁹ Where groups of assets are disposed of, an average age can be provided.
- ³⁰ Appropriate endorsement/authorisation is required to ensure compliance with the ISSP Guidelines and the 2025 Outcome Letter. If the organisation is subject to audit by an Auditor-General of the Commonwealth or State or Territory government this endorsement must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or an executive officer with primary responsibility for the organisation’s internal audit function (e.g. an internal auditor). If the organisation is not normally subject to audit by an Auditor-General, then the organisation’s auditor should sign this authorisation.
- ³¹ For the purposes of this certification, an equivalent delegate is either the Acting Vice Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, a Provost, or a relevant senior executive who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

