

IDEA Annual Report

2025



**Inclusive by design.
Everyone, everywhere.
All the time.**



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Acknowledgement of Country



RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



Artwork 'Sentient' by Hollie Johnson
Hollie is a Gunaikurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman from Gippsland who graduated from RMIT with a BA in Photography in 2016.

Message from the Executive Sponsors

At RMIT, inclusion, diversity, equity and access are central to who we are and how we work. They shape our decisions, our culture and the way we design education, research and the university experience for our students and staff.

The RMIT IDEA Annual Report 2025 highlights the progress we are making across the University to embed inclusion by design — for everyone, everywhere, all the time.

It showcases achievements across our five IDEA domains and demonstrates the collective effort of our community to remove barriers, strengthen belonging and create environments where people can participate, contribute and thrive.

This work reflects a shared responsibility. Inclusive education supports student success and creates environments where diverse voices, perspectives and experience can thrive. At the same time, inclusive cultures, leadership and workplace practices are essential to ensuring our staff feel respected, supported and empowered to do their best work.

This report reminds us that inclusion is ongoing work. It requires sustained effort, accountability and a willingness to listen and learn, particularly from those whose voices are too often marginalised. Progress depends on continued collaboration across the University and with our partners, guided by evidence and lived experience.

We sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to the outcomes captured in this report. Your commitment and leadership continue to strengthen RMIT as an inclusive, values driven institution.

We invite all members of our community to engage with this report and reflect on how each of us can continue to contribute to an RMIT where diversity is celebrated, equity is advanced and everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging.



Professor Sherman Young
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Vice-President



Gaynor Witts
Vice-President, People and Culture



Inclusion is one of RMIT’s core values

The RMIT Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework is our blueprint for designing an inclusive and accessible RMIT.

It aims to improve student and staff diversity, particularly among under-represented groups, and to ensure that everyone is included and enabled to thrive, by designing an RMIT that is ‘Inclusive by design, for everyone, everywhere, all the time’.

The Framework is informed by principles that call us to:

- Drive an intersectional whole-of-institution approach.
- Embed ‘Responsible Practice’ in our thinking and doing, by every member of our community.
- Be ‘inclusive by design’ by planning for the diversity of the community from the outset in everything we do.
- Support insight and action on inclusion, diversity, equity and access across all locations and operations in the RMIT Group.
- Have the flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities.

The IDEA Framework identifies five domains with aspirations and priority action areas to drive action across the RMIT Group:

- 1. Access, participation and success:** a more diverse student and staff profile with equity in retention, success and outcomes.
- 2. Culture, capability and leadership:** an environment where all individuals are supported, are respected, and feel a sense of belonging.
- 3. Education and research:** demonstrating best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access through our education and research.
- 4. Infrastructure, service and operations:** inclusive facilities and services, and planning, resourcing and communicating our IDEA aspirations and achievements.
- 5. Community and partnerships:** engaging reciprocally and in partnership with the communities we serve, promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

This report includes some recent achievements as well as spotlights on selected initiatives and their impact.

Domain 1: Access, Participation and Success

We aim to create a more diverse student and staff profile with equity in retention, success and outcomes.

This domain focuses on enhancing diversity among our students and staff while ensuring everyone can thrive in learning and careers. We implement strategies to attract underrepresented groups, facilitate successful transitions, and develop responsive policies and targeted initiatives.

Key Achievements

Inclusive Education Strategies at RMIT: In 2025, RMIT commenced development and implementation of key strategies to strengthen equity and inclusion in education. The Inclusive Access Plan sets targets and actions to increase participation by priority equity cohorts, including students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, First Nations students, and women in selected disciplines across STEM and Architecture/Building. The Inclusive Action Plan outlines a whole-of-RMIT approach to embedding inclusive teaching practices. This includes greater adoption of Universal Design for Learning principles, ensuring learning environments, curricula and assessments are more accessible, flexible and responsive to diverse student needs, and supporting staff capability to deliver inclusive education.

Robust Scholarship Program: 2,200 equity scholarships worth \$5.7m across 84 scholarship schemes have been awarded in 2025 to equity group students, providing support with study expenses, accommodation, assistive technology, laptops, travel grants, and WIL expenses. 12 new equity scholarships worth nearly

\$460k have been secured from industry and donors, providing cash stipends, work placements or paid work, and a range of other support to equity group students in particular programs.

Increased Equity Access via VTAC: SEAS applications rose 46% from 2024 with offers up 34%. 4,604 offers were made through SNAP access, a 19% increase on 2024. Overall low-SES enrolments remained steady at 9% of the commencing higher education cohort, indicating that equity schemes are effectively targeting almost all low-SES commencing students.

Enhanced career support for women: The STEM mentoring for women and gender diverse students expanded significantly in 2025, with over 200 applicants from Engineering and Information Technology. In total 77 students were matched to industry mentors. The program included a series of 1:1 mentoring sessions, a site visit, a networking evening, a CV and career preparation session, a job interview preparation workshop and an academic pathways panel with Q & A.

Disability Support Program: RMIT provided services, tailored plans and reasonable adjustments for 2,412 individual students, an increase from the 2,042 in the previous year, with an increased number of student appointments (more than 600 greater than the previous year) including across multiple campuses. Equitable Learning Services made appointments with over 3,500 students, a 22% increase from 2024, which is in keeping with a year-on-year increase in demand since 2017.

More than 500 students studying education, nursing and social work have received a **Commonwealth Prac Payment** since the scheme launched in July, helping alleviate the financial pressure of undertaking a mandatory industry placement during their studies. RMIT has so far administered more than \$1.2 million on behalf of the federal government indicating strong student demand for financial support during the ongoing cost of living crisis.

RMIT’s semester one **orientation reached new heights in 2025**, welcoming thousands of new students across five activated campuses and more than a dozen events. Orientation

focused on inclusion by design, with themed zones, inclusive campus tours and record growth in student club memberships. New technologies, including CVENT event management and a dedicated Instagram broadcast channel, enabled students to personalise their experience and made it easier to access information, register for events and connect with campus life.

“Every year, we strive to enhance the orientation experience to meet the evolving needs of our students.” - Dene Cicci.

Outdoor activities reduce loneliness and empower CALD women. A joint study by RMIT University and not-for-profit Out Doors Inc has shown how outdoor activities can help culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women overcome loneliness and build stronger community connections. The “Social, Accessible, Fun, and Equitable” (SAFE) project found that participation in outdoor programs significantly reduces isolation, enhances belonging and improves both physical and mental health.

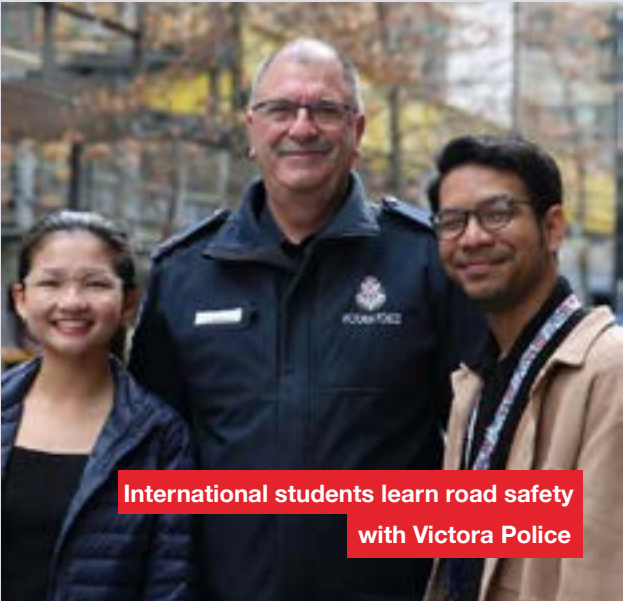


Orientation reaches new heights in 2025

Lead researcher Dr Ancy Gamage said outdoor activities provide empowering, inclusive spaces where CALD women can share culture, gain confidence and even progress to leading activities themselves. The study recommends community-based, culturally relevant programming, multilingual information and practical supports to make outdoor spaces more welcoming and accessible.

International students at RMIT have taken part in a successful new pilot program designed to **build confidence and safety on Victoria’s roads**. Delivered by the Fit to Drive Foundation and supported by RMIT, Victoria Police and Medibank, the program saw 70 students from more than 20 countries attend five interactive workshops. Sessions covered reading road signs, getting a Victorian driver licence, tram etiquette, pedestrian awareness and what to do at the scene of an accident, as well as safe e-bike and scooter battery charging. Students valued the chance to learn directly from Victoria Police, reporting feeling safer, more informed and more connected to the community.

RMIT University’s College of Vocational Education has launched a **new Diploma of Leadership and Management, co-designed with and for people working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations**. Developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), the program supports existing staff stepping into, or already in, leadership roles to formalise and extend their skills.



International students learn road safety with Victoria Police

Open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff in ACCOs and other Indigenous-led organisations, the diploma is grounded in strong relationships, listening and culturally informed design. With a solid first cohort drawn from VAHS, the program will help grow leadership capability that supports community-led, sustainable organisational success.

The RMIT community can now use audio name pronunciation tools in Workday and Microsoft 365 to **help others say their names accurately and respectfully**. By recording how your name is pronounced and adding it to your profile, you make it easier for colleagues, students and partners to address you correctly. This simple step supports a more inclusive culture, where diverse identities are recognised and valued, and helps build confidence and connection in meetings, classes and collaborations across the University.



More than 500 education, nursing and social work students recieved Commonwealth Prac Payment

Spotlights

1. Inclusive Access Plan

In support of the overall objective, the Inclusive Access Plan outlines a set of actions that RMIT will undertake during Horizon 2 to:

1. Articulate an institutional aspiration to improve participation rates of equity and Indigenous students, driving coordinated activities across RMIT
2. Provide students with a seamlessly integrated and consistent tertiary experience
3. Offer flexible, attractive and supportive study options and environments for priority-group students

The Inclusive Access Plan establishes a coherent, whole-of-institution approach to equity and inclusion that strengthens access, participation, retention, completion and graduate outcomes for students from low socio-economic and other equity cohorts. It aligns strategy, governance, programmes and funding within a single framework, ensuring that data, partnerships, outreach and scholarships are mutually reinforcing. The Plan also embeds equity priorities within core RMIT planning and operations so that inclusion is systemic and sustainable, rather than dependent on isolated projects.

2. Equity outreach with secondary schools

In June 2025 RMIT welcomed 53 students from our Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) on campus as part of the I Belong in Computer Science and IT (CSIT) equity outreach initiative.

Over two days, year 9 and 10 students were immersed in a hands-on learning experience that introduced them to the exciting world of coding, iOS app development, and design thinking. Delivered by Apple Foundation Program mentors and current RMIT student ambassadors, learners explored how technology can be used to solve real-world problems while building essential skills for the future.

The I Belong equity outreach initiative is designed to inspire and empower secondary school students from under-represented and low socioeconomic backgrounds to explore tertiary education and the various study and career opportunities available to them.

By creating inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environments, the program helps students to explore various disciplines, connect with RMIT staff and students, and envision themselves thriving in university study and beyond.

Melissa Keenan, Equity Outreach Program Advisor, said participants not only gained technical knowledge but also developed problem-solving and teamwork skills, and a deeper understanding of how digital innovation can shape the world around them.

“The I Belong outreach program was a fantastic opportunity to showcase what’s possible with a future in computer science and IT.” - Melissa Keenan.



3. Supporting Care Experienced Students through our Raising Expectations partnership

In partnership with Raising Expectations, RMIT is strengthening its commitment to widening participation under the IDEA framework, with a particular focus on improving access and outcomes for care experienced learners. Together, we are working to dismantle historic and systemic barriers to post-secondary education. Between January and May 2025, 459 care experienced students were studying at RMIT across higher education and TAFE, including 12 First Nations students and 84 students who identify as living with a disability. Most (66%) are aged 24 or under, with a significant mature-age cohort balancing study, work and caring responsibilities. These learners bring rich lived experience, diverse skills and perspectives that enhance classroom discourse and strengthen our campus community.

Through this partnership, RMIT’s Student Equity team delivers bespoke outreach programs on campus and in schools, connecting young people with care experience to RMIT staff, current students and specialist support. These discipline-based workshops and interactive activities demystify tertiary study, promote equity access schemes and scholarships, and foster a sense of belonging in a welcoming environment.

Recognising that access alone is not enough, RMIT provides staff training to build understanding of the strengths and challenges of care experienced students and to support inclusive teaching practices. Looking ahead, a tailored Open Day in 2026 will further support young people in care, their carers and support workers to navigate tertiary pathways and participate on an even footing with their peers.

Domain 2: Culture, Capability and Leadership

We provide an environment in which all individuals are supported, are respected, feel a sense of belonging, and are thriving, and our leaders are diverse and empowered to apply IDEA.

This domain focuses on the core enablers of inclusion in our cultures and practices at RMIT. It recognises that the visible artefacts, the values, beliefs and behaviour, and the implicit assumptions and norms we adopt at RMIT will shape inclusion and belonging.

This domain also recognises the critical roles leaders at all levels play in setting the tone and in modelling inclusion. Actions in this domain aim to improve diversity among our student and staff leaders and ensure that all of our community is empowered to develop and apply best practice in IDEA.

Key Achievements

A **Gender Equity** Source Document was completed and reviewed with information provided by key teams including Gender Based Violence, Women's Research Network, RUSU Women's Officer, Research Action Gender Equity, Athena Swan, People Team and Women in STEM. This collaboration will enable the development of resource and consistent messaging across RMIT, including the development online modules for students and staff.

Training update 2025 saw a number of staff compliance programs updated to include IDEA content. Of particular note, compliance modules were updated to include IDEA related content including information on gender identity, pronouns, and disability.

1447 staff and students participated in **IDEA professional development opportunities** through online, face-to-face or hybrid training programs and events during 2025, to improve diversity and inclusion capability and awareness. Topics

included inclusive practices re LGBTQIA+, accessibility, race, gender, disability and neurodivergence.

RMIT celebrated key cultural events including LGBTQIA+ days (Midsumma Carnival, Pride March, IDAHOBIT, and Wear it Purple), Global Accessibility Awareness Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and multicultural celebrations like Diwali and Lunar New Year.

Ongoing support for **staff communities and student networks** continues through funding, leadership structures, and inclusive practice development.

Inherent requirements: The College of Design and Social Context are currently undertaking curriculum architecture review and supporting 18 programs to develop and/or review their inherent requirements.

RMIT Anti-Racism and Religious Discrimination Commitment Statement and Action Plan: The development of RMIT's Anti-Racism and Religious Discrimination Commitment Statement and Action Plan of RMIT's anti-racism strategy centred staff and student voices, guided by evidence and sector best practice. Student Listening Sessions and yarning circles, facilitated by MindTribes, ensured students' lived and living experiences shaped the framework. Co-design workshops with student leaders allowed key ideas to be tested and refined, while a formal submission from RUSU informed the framework and action plan. Implementation is supported by a student quantitative data framework to measure experiences and outcomes, and a gap analysis mapping sector, national and state requirements. Together, these actions strengthen governance, accountability and alignment with RMIT's broader equity, inclusion and anti-racism commitments.

RMIT is a key partner in the creation of the **Gender Equality Evidence Hub**, which brings together insights from academic research on "what works" to close gender gaps. Supported by RMIT's Global Business Innovation and Information in Society Enabling Impact Platforms, the Hub responds to the need for practical, evidence-based solutions for organisations and governments seeking to advance gender equality. Its mission is to bridge academic research and the change-makers who can put this knowledge into action.

RMIT's **Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025** concluded in December, with the next iteration currently in development. The Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030 will serve as RMIT's roadmap to gender equality, setting out actions to drive measurable progress on the gender pay gap, gendered work, and equitable supports across the organisation.

The **How can ITS better support assistive technology Working Group**, operating within the ITS Accessibility Working Group, is focused on enabling equitable, reliable and sustainable access to digital and assistive technologies so that staff with disability can thrive at work. In recognition

of its impact, the **Working Group received an award in 2025** for its contribution to accessibility and inclusion. The Working Group adopts a whole-of-system approach to accessibility by reviewing and maintaining an accessible software and hardware catalogue, streamlining ordering and approval processes, and clarifying licensing, security and Defender requirements for commonly used assistive technologies. This includes improving how tools are described and categorised—such as enabling solutions to be tagged across multiple access needs (e.g. vision, neurodiversity)—to support informed decision-making by staff and managers.

A core focus of the Group is strengthening collaboration and shared ownership across key stakeholders, including workplace adjustment services for staff, student accessibility support, ITS and Microsoft. Improved alignment across these functions aims to reduce duplication, improve consistency of advice and deliver a more cohesive accessibility experience for staff and students.



RMIT march with pride at Midsumma Carnival

Domain 3: Education and Research

Our education and research demonstrate best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

We aim to ensure that our learning and teaching are inspiring, inclusive, accessible, and flexible. By embedding equity and inclusion principles into the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, we value diverse thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. Our goal is to develop graduates who are Ethical Global Citizens, capable of leading and applying IDEA best practices. We also seek to enhance the diversity of our researchers and support them to apply and lead best practice on inclusion, diversity, equity and access matters, benefiting the diverse communities we serve.

Key Achievements

Recognising the wealth of good practice across RMIT alongside the need for a shared direction, we ran workshops in Melbourne and Vietnam to co-design a set of **aspirations and principles for Inclusive Practice and UDL at RMIT**.

Enabling Local Leadership: Additional government equity funding has been secured and position descriptions developed for new roles to enable local leadership and coordinate the advancement of Universal Design for Learning implementation. In place by early 2026 will be the new Senior Coordinator, Inclusive Teaching, two specialist College Accessibility leads, and a specialist on Assistive Technology.

Building Capability: Our [‘Universal and Inclusive by Design’ Community of Practice](#) has continued to meet to share good practice, and we funded over twenty staff to attend the national UDL Symposium in Sydney in June. CEIQ and Student Equity continued to collaborate on a range of workshops and other resources.

Executive Sponsor for Disability and Accessibility at RMIT: After hosting the panel session at the 2025 Global Accessibility Day event, RMIT’s Chief Operating Officer Fiona Notley kindly agreed to take up the role of Executive Sponsor, opening up lots of positive opportunities in cross-RMIT leadership and in the Operations portfolio.

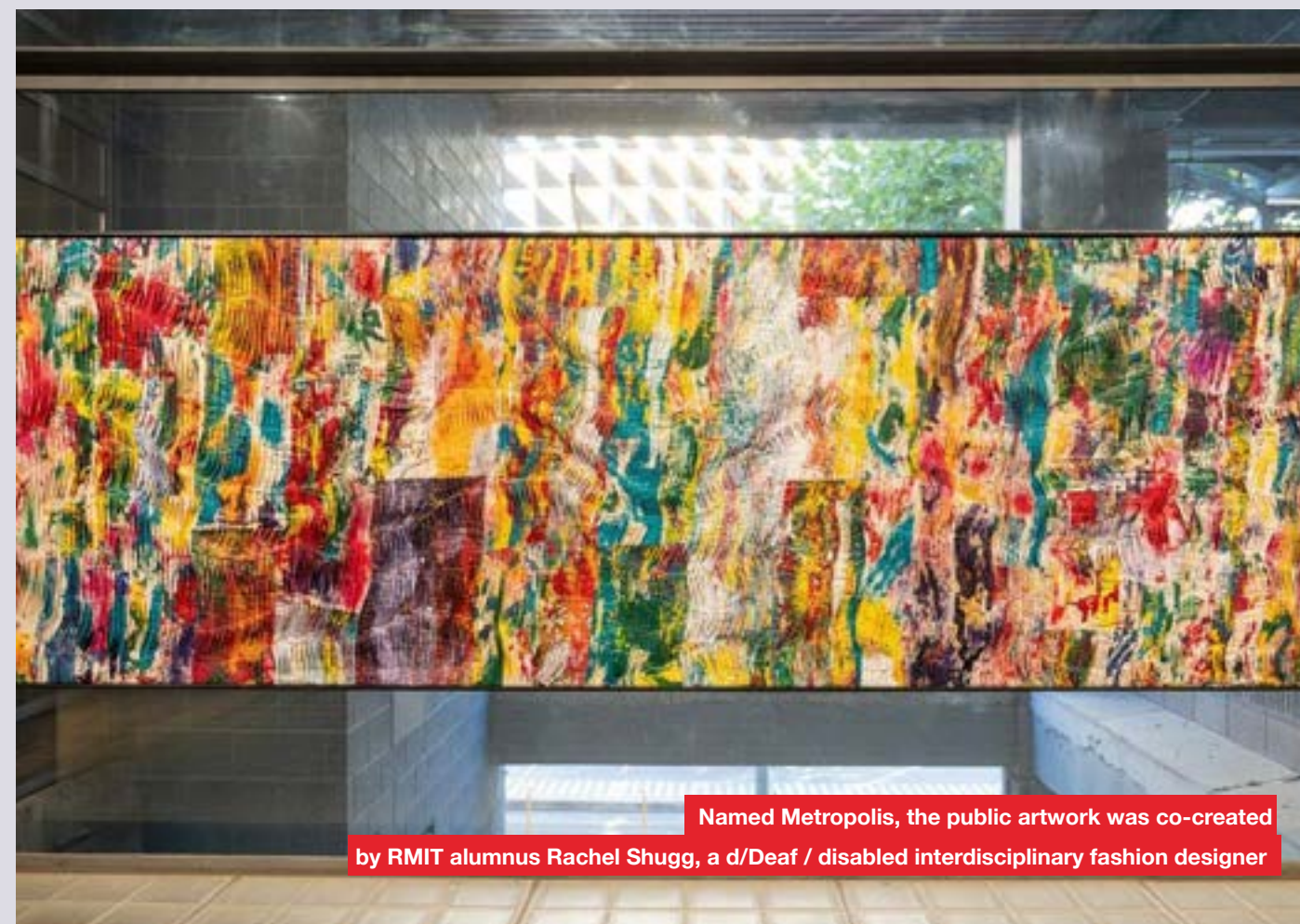
A new report from RMIT Online and Deloitte Access Economics has found that **increasing women’s participation in technology careers could deliver a \$6.5 billion benefit to Australian businesses**. The Women in Tech: How Skills and Talent Diversity Drive Business Success report shows reskilling women into tech roles is a fast, practical solution to the nation’s looming tech skills shortage, with 661,300 women identified as able to transition within around six months. Women stand to gain an average salary boost of 31%, while businesses benefit through higher profits, stronger team performance, and greater innovation.

A 4.2-metre-long public artwork, Metropolis, was installed at RMIT’s City campus as a powerful **expression of accessibility, belonging and allyship**. Co-created by d/Deaf and disabled RMIT alumnus and fashion designer Rachel Shugg with more than 200 students, the textured fabric work captures “interrupted journeys” experienced by students who are d/Deaf, Disabled or living with disability. Developed in partnership with RUSU, Metropolis invites the University community to rethink how cities and campuses can be designed for everyone, and will remain on display until 2027.

The College of Business and Law’s Indigenous VR project uses **immersive technology to bring traditional wisdom to life and deepen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives**. Guided by realistic visuals, users journey through topics including a history of Country presented by Reconciliation Advisor Henry Purcell and an overview of cultural work underway in CoBL. The experience supports a more inclusive

educational environment by enabling students and staff to actively engage with Indigenous heritage, while helping to reduce the cultural burden often placed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

After years of navigating undiagnosed autism and ADHD, RMIT PhD candidate Jeremy Nagel has transformed his lived experience into innovation. Struggling with executive dysfunction and repeated job loss early in his career, Jeremy channelled these challenges into creating **Focus Bear, a productivity app designed for people with ADHD, autism, or anyone who finds it hard to stay on track**. With over 7000 users and a 4.9-star rating, Focus Bear helps users build routines and avoid burnout. Jeremy’s current research at RMIT evaluates neuroinclusive tools like Focus Bear to improve tech design for neurodivergent brains.



Named Metropolis, the public artwork was co-created by RMIT alumnus Rachel Shugg, a d/Deaf / disabled interdisciplinary fashion designer

Recognising generous donors: RMIT celebrated staff who generously donate to the University at a morning tea hosted by the Philanthropy team. Vice-Chancellor Professor Alec Cameron thanked colleagues for going above and beyond their day-to-day roles to widen access to education, support research and contribute to cultural initiatives such as Artothek and the Capitol. The event, the first of its kind, gave staff donors the chance to connect with like-minded colleagues. Director, Philanthropy and Public Engagement Amy Harrington said their growing generosity is a powerful expression of staff values and commitment to RMIT.

The School of Science put Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into practice through a series of targeted educator workshops. Led by DDLT Professor Jeff Shimeta and SLD Thoa Mai Phuoc Nguyen, the 2025 sessions built on earlier Canvas workshops to deepen understanding of UDL principles and their application. Educators explored designing inclusive learning outcomes, assessments and activities that offer multiple means of engagement, representation and expression. The initiative helped to embed flexible, accessible and learner-centred approaches across the curriculum, so all students can participate meaningfully in their studies.

Born with Hypermobility Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, RMIT textiles student **Peter Hagen is turning personal experience into fashion innovation.** Unable to

find clothing that was both stylish and accessible, Peter began designing bold, sensory-friendly garments using soft, adaptive fabrics. Their work champions disability and queer inclusion, proving adaptive fashion can be functional, expressive and beautiful.

RMIT's Workplace Integrity staff module is **helping embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and responsible practice** across the University. The module references UDL-informed approaches to creating accessible, inclusive learning and working environments, while also prompting staff to reflect on issues of integrity, fairness and accountability in their daily practice.

The following policies, programs and services participated in a Sustainability and Equity Evaluation Tool assessment in 2025:- five RMIT policies, including Assessment, Intellectual Freedom and Gender Based Harm; and one procedure, the Gender-Based Harm Response Procedure.

Networks for RMIT researchers continue to flourish, including the Women's and the LGBTIQ+ Research networks, bringing together diverse researchers and sharing good practice.

RMIT researchers continue to publish well-regarded research outputs on issues of diversity, inclusion and equity, contributing to awareness and inclusive practice and informing policy and service provision, and sharing our expertise with the broader researcher and public community.

Spotlights

1. Universal Design for Learning at RMIT builds capacity for inclusive teaching

Supported by additional government equity funding, RMIT is rapidly scaling Universal Design for Learning (UDL) through strengthened local leadership and targeted capability-building. New roles – including a Senior Coordinator, Inclusive Teaching, two College Accessibility Leads and an Assistive Technology specialist – will be in place by early 2026 to showcase existing good practice, and further embed inclusive teaching across Colleges and Portfolios. Our 'Universal and Inclusive by Design' Community of Practice continues to share and showcase good practice, complemented by joint CEIQ-Student Equity workshops, extensive College professional development, and multiple UDL-focused sessions at the RMIT Learning and Teaching Festival.

2. Indigenous-led study co-designed by RMIT builds on cultural knowledge

A new study highlights how Indigenous leadership, science and business can unite to protect coastal ecosystems while building long-term environmental and cultural knowledge.

Published in *Ocean & Coastal Management*, the study found the 300 hectares of mangrove forest on the Barron River estuary

around Cairns Airport – on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef – stores more than 2,000 tonnes of carbon annually, making ongoing care and monitoring of these and other coastal wetlands important for slowing climate change.

The research was co-designed by the Yirrganydji Traditional Custodians along with Blue Carbon Lab and RMIT University scientists and Cairns Airport.

3. 2025 Inclusive Education Innovation Grants awarded

Fourteen projects from across RMIT Australia have each been awarded grants of up to \$4,000 for their focus on empowering students with disabilities, mental health issues and neurodivergence to succeed. The projects chosen for funding through the Inclusive Education Innovation Grants use research, resource development, curriculum design and other initiatives to enable students with disabilities, mental health issues or neurodivergence to participate, thrive and succeed at RMIT.

Grant funding is provided through the Australian Government's Higher Education Disability Support Program managed by the Students Group and is delivered in partnership with the Centre for Education Innovation and Quality. It supports existing or new projects that develop inclusive teaching practices and create accessible learning experiences.

Indigenous-led study, co-designed by RMIT shows Cairns mangroves store major carbon and strengthen long-term care

Domain 4: Infrastructure, Services and Operations

We provide inclusive facilities, tools and services. We plan, resource, review and communicate our IDEA aspirations and achievements.

Through this domain, we aim to build an RMIT that is 'Inclusive by design for everyone, everywhere, all the time.' This domain focuses on ensuring that our physical, digital and cultural environments are inclusive, accessible and safe. It is about demonstrating inclusion and welcome, while providing practical provision for our diverse community in our campus facilities, our digital tools and systems, and in our communications and operations.

Key Achievements

2025 saw the introduction of **extended gender identity options** in RMIT systems allowing students to choose from more options. We are now able to offer students their preferred name on Student ID cards for the purposes of gender affirmation. In 2025 this option was taken up by 10 students after being introduced in Semester 2.

Considering data insights to inform analysis and action, **additional dashboards were developed to support understanding of the representation, experience and outcomes for students from priority cohorts** including VE students and culturally and linguistically diverse students.

In 2025 there was a focus on supporting local area IDEA implementation with the establishment of College Equity and Inclusion Working Groups to drive local action.

The suite of diversity working groups, including 'IDEA in Action' continued to provide a forum for sharing insights, good practice, concerns and the development of associated strategy and action plans. For example, the Cultural Inclusion and Racial Equity Group played a key role in the development of the RMIT Anti-Racism Framework.

RMIT updated its Accessibility Statement in 2025, reaffirming our commitment to being "inclusive by design – everyone, everywhere, all the time". Guided by the IDEA Framework and our Digital Accessibility Procedure, RMIT aims to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines standard 2.2 AA across web and systems, support assistive technologies, and improve physical access on campus. Practical measures include accessible design standards, monitoring tools, training for content authors, sensory friendly spaces and clear contact points for reporting issues, so barriers can be identified and resolved in partnership with our community.

"Inclusive by design – everyone, everywhere, all the time."
- IDEA Framework

Spotlight

The **Property Annual Works (PAW) IDEA Program** supports an accessible and inclusive on-campus experience through annual improvements for disability access, all-gender bathrooms and signage across RMIT's Melbourne campuses. In 2025, the PAW (IDEA) program featured a project to support wellbeing services and the Equitable Learning Services (ELS) unit that created a calm, sensitive zone of consultation and support spaces in the heart of the City Campus (Building 8 Level 4).



Domain 5: Community and Partnerships

We engage reciprocally and in partnership with the communities we serve, promoting IDEA.

The Community and Partnerships domain considers how others contribute to our knowledge and success in relation to inclusion, diversity, equity and access, and how we can reciprocate.

It considers the ways we can have a positive impact in the communities we serve, sharing our resources and expertise and learning from others. We seek to be a source of good practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access and to address our mission to the broader community through a positive influence on public policy, academic practice and broader societal debate and practice. We partner with industry, communities and community organisations to identify and overcome needs and challenges.

Key Achievements

On Human Rights Day 2025, the **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission connected more than 130 leaders** from across Victoria's diverse communities, including RMIT participants Lara Rafferty and Gheran Steel, to discuss ways to protect human rights and inclusion in Victoria.

The longstanding partnership with the **Equal Employment Opportunity Network** continued in 2025, with events focused on workplace inclusion delivered to both the RMIT community, and external community. RMIT also partnered once more with the Australian Disability Network, to provide opportunities for staff to mentor mentees with disability and/or Neurodivergence.

RMIT proudly partnered with the **Victorian Multicultural Commission for the 2025 Multicultural Film Festival**, celebrating diversity, storytelling and community. This special RMIT x MFF screening at Cinema 80 showcased eight short films on migration, belonging and identity, followed by a panel with filmmakers Le Luo and Kaede Miyamura, and RMIT academic and filmmaker Pinar Fontini.

At RMIT's **2025 Higinbotham Lecture, Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities** Joe Ball urged Australians to confront rising authoritarianism by rebuilding trust in institutions. Reflecting on his own journey as a transgender man, he argued that genuine institutional trust must be earned through truth-telling, accountability and protecting the human rights of minorities against fear, resentment and scapegoating.

RMIT became a major sponsor and partner with Midsumma Carnival, Melbourne's largest LGBTIQ+ Cultural Festival. This partnership strengthens RMIT's connection to community, and creates opportunities for students and staff to connect with, and celebrate the LGBTIQ+ community.

An **RMIT collaboration brought together researchers, artists and dancers** with and without Down syndrome to explore new ways of making and understanding dance. By centring the lived experience and creative leadership of dancers with Down syndrome, the project challenged assumptions, expanded artistic practice and opened up more inclusive, disability-led approaches to performance.

RMIT's 2025 Cultural Visions Grant was awarded to artist Alicia Isobelle Wiley for her project Laguna. The work will explore place, memory and identity through a distinctly contemporary lens, amplifying under-represented voices and perspectives. Laguna will contribute to RMIT's growing body of culturally engaged, community-connected creative practice.

RMIT University launched the **Business & Law Centre for African Engagement (CAE)**, a multidisciplinary hub focused on research, learning and public engagement with Africa and its diasporas. Led by inaugural co-chairs Professor Victor Gekara and Professor Sefa Awaworyi Churchill, the Centre is hosted within the College of Business and Law and will foster collaborative research, inclusive education and meaningful knowledge exchange. CAE will address critical issues affecting the African continent and Australia's African communities, strengthening partnerships and advocacy.

The Social Equity Research Centre (SERC), based in RMIT's School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, believes research should do more than observe – it should drive change. Bringing together researchers, policymakers, practitioners and communities, SERC tackles pressing social challenges and advances equity and inclusion. Its **Stories of Change initiative showcases how research evidence is translated into practical action that directly influences people, policy and practice.**

RMIT's Business and Human Rights (BHRIGHT) Centre co-organised and hosted the **inaugural United Nations Business and Human Rights Regional Forum for Australia and New Zealand at Storey Hall**. The summit brought together government, business, investors, educators and civil society to strengthen responsible business practice, address modern slavery, advance human rights due diligence and elevate respect for Indigenous peoples across global supply chains.



RMIT celebrates the launch of its Business and Law Centre for African Engagement

Spotlights

1. Women of Colour - empowering women through community building

This year’s event was the biggest yet, with more than 150 women of colour from RMIT and the wider community coming together around the theme, “Culture as Power: Amplifying our representation and voice in public discourse.” Women of Colour Melbourne is a grassroots not-for-profit dedicated to empowering women of colour across Victoria by creating safe spaces, fostering belonging and advocating for equity. RMIT Student Equity is proud to partner with them to host this event.

Its annual gathering features conversations, interactive sessions, cultural performances and opportunities to build lasting connections. RMIT has partnered with WoCM since 2019 to host the event on campus. RUSU Women’s Officer and current student Amellysha J Amran highlighted how meaningful it is for students to see the University backing women of colour “not just with words, but through action.” WoCM Chairwoman Nancy Samoya said the long-standing partnership with RMIT enables them to create safe, accessible, well-facilitated spaces where women of colour can gather, connect and lead.

“The Women of Colour Gathering brought new friendships, fresh ideas and a renewed sense of community” - Jessica Ankomah



Women of Colour event hosts its biggest gathering yet at RMIT City Campus

2. Staff awards – external partnerships

RMIT’s leadership in accessibility and Universal Design for Learning has been recognised nationally through various awards. The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) Accessibility in Action Awards 2025 awarded **Accessibility Coordinator Jacinta Jones O’Meara the individual award for Accessibility Leadership and Advocacy**, acknowledging more than a decade of work championing the lived experience of students with disabilities and driving institution-wide change. Her initiatives include Accessibility Capability Uplift training for over 180 library staff, the creation of RMIT’s first Sensory Friendly Study Space, and pioneering Neurodiverse Study Sessions that enhance student success and belonging.



Accessibility Coordinator, Jacinta Jones O’Meara, awarded for Accessibility Leadership and Advocacy

A cross-portfolio RMIT team from Education, International and Engagement, and the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies was also **recognised with an award for an accessibility-focused approach to assessment design**. Using ADCET resources and an adapted Universal Design for Learning Thinking Cycle, the team developed collaborative workshops to address exclusionary assessment barriers and model inclusive tools such as H5P, Canvas Studio captioning, AI-generated summaries and accessibility checkers.

The Australian Industrial Higher Education Association (AIHEA) recognised the **IDEA People team** for their leadership in fostering a more inclusive and accessible approach to the university’s workplace adjustment processes, enhancing support for staff with disabilities and neurodivergence.

These awards highlight the strength of RMIT’s external partnerships and national influence in advancing inclusive education.

3.RMIT Pilots Australia’s First Reverse Careers Fair for Students with Disability

In November 2025 RMIT Career Connect (Career Development and Student Employment) proudly piloted Australia’s first Reverse Careers Fair, where Engineering students and graduates with disability took the lead as stallholders. Employers came to meet them and offer them a career development opportunity. This innovative approach puts talent and lived experience at the centre, creating meaningful connections and breaking down barriers

4. Building Bridges: Strengthening Interfaith and Intercultural Understanding at RMIT

The 2025 Building Bridges Project is strengthening interfaith and intercultural understanding across RMIT and the wider community. The initiative uses shared meals and facilitated dialogue to foster empathy, respect and connection. In partnership with the Institute of Community Directors Australia, the project has delivered a series of interfaith and intercultural luncheons tailored for RMIT students, RMIT staff and leaders from Melbourne’s not-for-profit sector, creating safe spaces to explore difference, challenge assumptions and build common ground.



RMIT UP

RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP) delivers pathway programs into RMIT University and is committed to helping the global learning community achieve success in work and life. In 2025 they supported their student community through:

- International Women's Day forum and signing of pledges
- EID celebration
- RUOK? Vegan lunch
- Open Pantry addressing food insecurity
- Free period products dispenser installed
- Women only sport sessions on the basketball courts
- Wellbeing Service supporting students with Equitable Learning Plans
- Working with transgender and neuro-diverse students to build confidence and capacity
- Supporting students with anxiety and depression
- Rainbow Connect – events celebrating our LGBTQIA+ community and allies
- Launch of artwork to celebrate LGBTQIA+ History Month
- Communities of Practice to support staff and learn from each other
- Under 18s support – shared care model with RMIT Uni to support our youngest students
- Under 18 events to create connections
- Academic Support embracing more students than ever – one third of cohort supported
- Student Life – sharing knowledge & opportunities to socialise safely



Open Pantry addressing food insecurity



RMIT UP celebrates Eid



RMIT UP Orientation helping students feel confident and supported from their first days

RMIT Vietnam's year at a glance:



54

Submissions from 162 students across 21 universities in Vietnam participated in this year's Accessible Design Competition



14

Students and staff with disabilities co-led RMIT Active Accessibility Audit and report publication



19

Student teams (nearly 100 students) submitted projects to the "Hack the Gap" gender equity challenge



250+

Foundation Studies continuing and commencing students who attended the IDEA Homeroom sessions rated them as 9.34/10



100+

National organizations engaged around IDEA themes through a range of partnerships



1

New IDEA brand identity co-designed by students, adopted university-wide, and featured on RMIT website



1st

IDEA communications campaign developed as a WIL project with the Professional Communication Program



15

Australia Awards Scholarship awardees trained in IDEA in partnership with SEUP



Physical accessibility is a top priority in the RMIT Active Audit report in Vietnam

Staff:

In 2025, Vietnam's unique staff profile ensured a continued emphasis on the development of 'cultural inclusion' resources. Specifically, there were:

- 185 enrolments in the cultural awareness e-learning for Vietnamese staff (a 125% increase from 2024*) "Empowering Vietnamese Staff to Thrive in a Multicultural Workplace".
- 130 enrolments in the cultural awareness e-learning for expat staff (a 55% increase from 2024*) "Working in Vietnam - Do's and Don'ts".
- 70 staff participants in the 5 full-day, deep-dive cultural intelligence course offerings throughout 2025.

Students:

- 30 students in five teams, developed an IDEA communications campaign for a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) project as part of their Professional Communication Program. The projects will now be used as a framework for IDEA communication throughout 2026.
- Students led a review of the Opportunity Scholarship Program based on interviews with 13 of 42 awardees and produced a comprehensive report with recommendations. These recommendations — grounded in lived experience — will now be taken forward to shape future scholarship policy to ensure equitable access and sustainable success for recipients.
- The university continued to celebrate a range of cultural diversity days, including Pride, International Women's Day, the IDAHOBIT and Global Accessibility Awareness Day.

Case Study

The RMIT Active Audit stands as one of this year's most powerful inclusion stories.

Thirteen ELA students and one staff member with lived experience co-led accessibility assessments of sports facilities, producing [a beautifully designed report](#) that will now guide Active Hub improvements.

Beyond data, the project built belonging. Several participating students joined Sports Day for the first time, demonstrating that co-design not only breaks barriers but builds community. The student-designed report, printed and distributed to staff and students, now serves as a flagship example of student-driven inclusion at RMIT. Most importantly, the recommendations will form the corner stone of RMIT Active's approach to developing inclusive practices, some of which have already begun to be implemented (accessible lockers, improved accessible facilities etc.). "This was truly an experience to get your voices heard, and a chance to create more opportunities for others" said one co-creator. "At RMIT there are always people who listen to us and be ready to help us in growth." said another.



Student voices are at the heart of the RMIT Active Audit report

Culture, Capability and Leadership

- **An ELA student was commissioned to create the first visual identity for IDEA Vietnam.** After months of design and alignment with RMIT Brand standards, the logo launched through a feature on the university's external site — a powerful example of student co-creation and institutional pride.
- **Hack the Gap was a student-led gender equity innovation challenge** designed to explore and address gender inequalities experienced by students at RMIT Vietnam. Multidisciplinary student teams were invited to investigate issues affecting their academic, social, and professional lives and translate their insights into creative engagement tools.



The competition resulted in 19 original projects, including board games, short films, campaigns, and illustrated publications, demonstrating the depth of student creativity and lived experience. The projects were activated during a week of International Women's Day events, engaging staff and students through exhibitions, panel discussions, facilitated conversations, and interactive learning activities.

Education and Research

- **The Learning Design team co-designed digital accessibility solutions** with visually impaired students and created and implemented new standards for digital accessibility. The team also hosted two accessibility 101 workshops to encourage teachers to take some simple steps to enhance the accessibility of their Canvas courses, and the team were nominated for best concise paper at ASCILITE on our codesign solutions.
- Sixteen **IDEA awareness sessions were delivered to nearly 300 Foundation Studies students**, and achieved an exceptional 9.34/10 satisfaction rating overall. These sessions linked IDEA concepts to the Student Charter and aimed to foster a culture of among students on preparatory programs.

Community and Partnerships

- **IDEA training was delivered to Australian Awards scholarship recipients** under the SEUP partnership with the Australian Embassy, with the aim of preparing students for life in Australia.
- **We delivered two national webinars on strategic IDEA frameworks**, reaching 100+ organizations. Three RMIT student teams presented their inclusion projects to audiences. The session included representatives from UNDP, HASTONE, and PLT Recycle as participants.
- Organised by RMIT University Vietnam, the fifth edition of the **Accessibility Design Competition (ADC) welcomed more than 54 submissions** from 162 students across 21 universities in Vietnam. The 2025 program had 40+ mentoring sessions with 24 industry mentors & 10 accessibility mentors from 44 organisations, as well as 22 masterclasses on prototyping and presentation skills.



Infrastructure, Services and Operations

We expanded our Workday demographic recording systems, allowing staff to self identify across arrange of diversity fields for the first time, while providing a basis for more accurate monitoring of participation and success for staff equity groups.

