

ISSP 2025 Performance Report

Organisation	RMIT University		
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RMIT ISSP Performance Data on Student Access, Participation and Success

Table 1. Commencing Indigenous students for All RMIT Higher Education, 2016-2025				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Commencing Students	101	62	94	97
	2022	2023	2024	2025
EFTSL -all	161.125	137.75	155.25	166.50
EFTSL -regional/remote	37.5	35.125	42	46.5
Table 2.1 Indigenous student retention rates (%)				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Retention Rate	58.95%	66.13%	78.89%	N/A*
Table 2.2 Indigenous student success rate (%)				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Success Rate	79.26%	82.90%	83.95%	84.47%
Table 3. Indigenous student completions				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Award completions	41	36	47	N/A*

*2025 data to be available by June 2026

NOTE (i): There may be a slight variation in the historical data provided in Tables 1-3 in the 2025 ISSP Performance Report when comparing to previous year submissions due to continuous refinement that takes place in RMIT's underlying data sources. These variances are not material.

NOTE (ii) where 2025 data is listed, it is preliminary to be verified in June 2026.

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.

2. Enrolments (Access)

The Ngarara Willim Centre's Senior Advisor, Access and Engagement worked closely with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants to support their entry into study at RMIT. The Indigenous Access Program assisted 27 applications, with 15 applicants supported into study in 2025. We saw a small increase in overall commencement numbers in 2025 with 97 commencing students, up from 94 in 2024 (see Table 1).

In 2025 we launched the RMIT Indigenous Student Recruitment Strategy. The development of this strategy provides a strong foundation and commitment across the University in supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people into study at RMIT. The strategy focuses on recruitment of prospective Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, outreach collaboration, improving Indigenous representation in marketing materials and enhancement of communications, review of admissions processes and the Indigenous Access Program, improving conversions and providing a supported and culturally aware environment.

The Ngarara Willim Centre delivered 25 Outreach programs to regional and metro schools and community groups engaging 796 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and community. The Indigenous Outreach Coordinator and student mentors attended events on and off campus across Victoria. The Indigenous Outreach program continued to work closely with other recruitment and outreach teams across the University supporting the I Belong team in their delivery of camps to Worawa College and Kurnai College.

The Ngarara Willim Centre has continued to engage and work closely with our community partners, schools and community organisations to connect with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people and community members to provide information and support about educational pathways and study options. Tailored campus experiences have been a focus for school and community partners to individually support the interests and aspirations of their participants/students.

Community partnerships have continued to progress through the development of a new relationship with the Worawa Aboriginal College. Ngarara Willim Centre staff visited the Worawa College campus, attended the Worawa debutante ball and continued the annual sponsorship of one of the Worawa end of year graduate awards. This partnership aspires to build engagement with Worawa and their students. We continue to build on our partnerships with current community partners and supporting community events involving Weenthunga Health Network, Ganbina, 3KND radio station, and the Koorie Heritage Trust with students participating in the Blak Design program.

Scholarships

2025 saw 140 individual students assisted with scholarships worth approximately \$1.45 million. In 2025, three new Indigenous scholarships were established: the BAE Systems Australia First Nations Scholarship in Engineering, the Uncle Brian McKinnon (Dodd) Scholarship, and the H&H Group Indigenous Scholarship.

The BAE Systems Australia First Nations Scholarship in Engineering, a philanthropic scholarship, was created to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students undertaking eligible Bachelor of Engineering degrees. In addition to financial support, recipients may be offered paid work placements with BAE Systems Australia.

The H&H Group Indigenous Scholarship, an industry scholarship, supports Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in eligible business, marketing, or communication programs. Scholarship benefits include a living allowance, mentoring opportunities, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities, and a full-time paid graduate position at H&H Group for 12 months following graduation.

The Uncle Brian McKinnon (Dodd) Scholarship, a philanthropic scholarship, was created to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, with a preference for those studying visual or fine arts.

The Coursework Scholarship Office continued a proactive approach to scholarship support, offering accommodation scholarships prior to program offers. Accommodation-based scholarships, valued at over \$200,000 (non-ISSP funding), were provided to assist commencing students. Details of scholarships awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are outlined in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4. ISSP Scholarships - breakdown of 2025 payments¹

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total ii	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
Enabling ⁱⁱⁱ	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Undergraduate ^{iv}	\$291,272.00	39	\$68,653.21	14	N/A	N/A	\$359,925.21	53
Post-graduate ^v	\$10,020.00	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$10,020.00	3
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	\$301,292.00	42	\$68,653.21	14			\$369,945.21	56

Table 5. Additional ISSP Scholarships/Grants paid in 2025

Scholarship Name	Number of recipients	2025 Total value
Gama-dji Grant	12	\$6,000.00
Indigenous Empowerment Grant	11	\$11,000.00
Indigenous Resource Grant	12	\$15,094.06
Indigenous Student Success Grant	3	\$750.00
Ngarara Willim Graduate Award	2	\$14,000.00
Ngarara Willim PGRD CW Schol	5	\$21,648.00
Grand Total	45	\$68,492.06

Table 6. Non-ISSP funded scholarships to new and continuing vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate by coursework students in 2025

Scholarship name	Number of recipients	2025 Total value
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Aboriginal SEWB Scholarship	11	\$210,352.77
BAE First Nations Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
Bruce Henderson Architects Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
Calleo Indigenous Scholarship	6	\$25,000.00
Carey Lyon Scholarship	1	\$5,568.00
Cedar Pacific UniLodge Royal Melbourne Scholarship	19	\$340,644.00
Commonwealth Prac Payment	3	\$7,627.95
Evelyn Boekemann Scholarship	1	\$8,000.00
Gama-dji Grant	16	\$8,000.00
George Alexander Foundation Schol	1	\$8,000.00
Gerard Driesen Scholarship VE	2	\$10,000.00
H&H Group Indigenous Scholarship	2	\$40,000.00
Indigenous Juris Doctor Scholarship	1	\$21,600.00
Indigenous Resource Grant	10	\$11,119.00
Indigenous Student Success Grant	12	\$3,000.00
Jillian Weaven Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
Marion Fletcher Textiles Schol	1	\$7,000.00
Ngarara Willim Graduate Award	1	\$7,000.00
Ngarara Willim Grant	6	\$12,000.00
Ngarara Willim Hardship Grant	3	\$1,820.51
Ngarara Willim Community Grant	13	\$13,000.00
Ngarara Willim Grant - Tuition	30	\$74,031.00
RMIT Equity Notebook Grant	23	\$23,500.00
RMIT Global Learning Grant	5	\$26,572.00
RMIT Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship	3	\$12,000.00
RMIT Indigenous Study Schol-HE	17	\$37,440.00
RMIT Indigenous Study Schol-PG	1	\$1,500.00
RMIT Indigenous Study Schol-VE	25	\$49,740.00
RMIT Technology Grant	1	\$418.00
STEM Women in Eng Scholarship	1	\$5,000.00
Uncle Brian McKinnon Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
WIL Placement Grant	1	\$1,500.00
Grand Total	220	\$1,011,433.23

3. Progression (outcomes)

2025 was a year of both continuity and development through the implementation of the second year of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy 2024-2025 (ISSS). We delivered a strong, holistic program of academic, cultural, and wellbeing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with increased participation and engagement across all areas. While we continued to deliver established and trusted programs of support, there was also a strong focus on strengthening our practice by improving how data is collected, analysed, and interpreted. By having a more

consistent and meaningful approach to data across our work practices, we aim to better understand student engagement, presenting issues, service access, and outcomes, allowing us to identify trends, gaps, and emerging needs. This approach supports more strategic evidence-informed planning, clearer reporting, and continuous improvement in the services we provide.

Our connected care model underpins our whole-of-university approach to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student success. It positions university service providers to operate with the same standard of care, accessibility, and cultural responsiveness that students experience at the Ngarara Willim Centre. The model is student-centred, community-minded, and culturally safe, recognising the whole-of-student experience and the importance of trust, relationships, and collaboration. Through this shared approach, we seek to reduce barriers to support, strengthen referral pathways, and ensure students experience coordinated, respectful, and culturally affirming care across the university.

Transition

The participation in the Gama-dji Orientation Program and Welcome Dinner continued to grow, supporting early connection and transition to university. Students received start-up grants and personalised support where needed. Student Success Plans strengthened relationships between students and advisors, enabling tailored referrals and goal-focused support, with incentives encouraging participation. Planning for 2026 will shift and will include expanding the program duration and focus on not only support but also academic skills, improved accessibility and seamless transition into further education.

The Parents and Families Guide was introduced as a new initiative to better inform and engage students' support networks outside of RMIT and the Ngarara Willim Centre. Its purpose was to provide clear, accessible information about the supports available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and how these can be accessed as they transition through study.

The guide aimed to help parents and families better understand the university academic journey, build awareness of the Ngarara Willim Centre and its role in supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learners, and strengthen their understanding of the broader support services available at RMIT, enabling them to more effectively support students throughout their studies.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

In 2025, the complexity of student well-being presentations increased. Anxiety, depression, burnout, and academic stress remained prevalent, alongside rising housing and financial insecurity linked to cost-of-living pressures, all contributing to increased mental health impacts and referrals to Student Welfare for emergency assistance. To assist in addressing some financial pressure, the RMIT University Student Union (RUSU) provided weekly fresh market produce for students to take home to reduce students' food costs and to promote healthy eating habits.

Demand for support related to diagnostic assessment (ADHD, autism, learning difficulties, acute psychiatric conditions) increased. There were significant barriers identified for students to access these assessments, including long public waitlists and high private costs. This is an ongoing issue that staff are supporting students to navigate.

An increase was also observed in students seeking support for interpersonal relationship issues, family conflict, social isolation, unresolved trauma, and family violence.

Specific initiatives undertaken to support student social and emotional wellbeing included:

- Ongoing case management and contact with students formed part of Ngarara Willim Centre Student Advisor's weekly routines. Reaching out and checking in generated case load and support, resulting in improved student outcomes.
- Complex case management meetings were held fortnightly or as needed to discuss complex student cases as a collective, with guidance from the Senior Advisor, Indigenous Social and Emotional Wellbeing.
- Weekly 'Crafternoons' sessions were held, providing an opportunity for students to connect with the counsellor and student advisors to create an informal environment to share conversations. In instances where students presented with undiagnosed conditions, support was offered for students to engage with diagnostic testing to better manage conditions and access required support.
- Case management debrief sessions were provided for Indigenous student advisors dealing with student caseloads and working with challenging students.

Equitable Learning Service (ELS)

A total of 38 students were registered with ELS, including 13 in Vocational Education (VE), 18 in Higher Education (HE), and 7 postgraduate students. Overall, mental health and neurodevelopmental conditions are the most prevalent, particularly anxiety, depression, ADHD, and autism. Many students have multiple co-occurring diagnoses, indicating complex and overlapping support needs. A smaller but significant number of students experience chronic illness, neurological, or pain-related conditions, often alongside mental health conditions, further increasing support requirements.

The Ngarara Willim Centre and the Equitable Learning Service case-managed students and facilitated flexible learning adjustments. The most common supports include assessment extensions, assistive technologies such as Genio audio notetaking software, Goblin Tools for executive functioning, and text-to-speech software, as well as flexibility with attendance and additional breaks, as outlined in many Equitable Learning Plans (ELPs). This continues to have a major impact on our students' success, hence why we embed a connection to this service as early as possible into the student journey.

Student Engagement

The volume of students presenting to NWC increased with general enquiries, success planning, enrolment, wellbeing, and equitable learning as well as financial hardship, scholarships, academic support, and advocacy being the most utilised support throughout 2025.

Looking at our student data, we learned that students are primarily seeking assistance with navigating university systems, managing enrolment requirements, and accessing funding. Following on from that, financial pressures remain a significant driver of engagement - Scholarships and Financial Hardship combined. Our data also shows us that academic progression support (Tutoring, Equitable Learning, Success Plans) is consistently accessed.

Student engagement initiatives focused on building community and belonging, particularly for students in accommodation and studying off campus. Increased attendance at student lunches helped alleviate cost-of-living pressures, while cultural activities and events strengthened

connection to culture and community. New data collection processes were introduced to better understand and tailor student engagement, including seeking student feedback and insights throughout the year.

Cultural experiences remained central to student engagement, including the Ngarara Willim Cultural Camp and growing participation in global study opportunities. We continued to build on the partnership with the University of Victoria (Canada) with two of our students engaging in a semester of study there. The RMIT Global team were proactive in working with the centre to connect students to the philanthropic funded Vietnam Study Tour- Big Industry Challenge where seven students participated. signalling future demand for financial and program support to undertake these opportunities.

Staff Cultural Capability

Staff, both at the Ngarara Willim Centre and across RMIT student support services, strengthened cultural capability through targeted professional development and sector engagement. This included attending the Indigenous Student Success Conference and completing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

Ongoing engagement with Elders, community members, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations continued to inform practice, ensuring service delivery remains culturally safe, community-informed, and responsive.

Indigenous Learning Success Program

The Ngarara Willim Centre and RMIT Library continued to deliver programs that support the academic and study needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. This was particularly evident through the Ngarara Willim Tutoring Program, which demonstrated strong academic impact across the year. Students who accessed tutoring achieved higher average course grades than those who did not engage with the program, reflecting the success of targeted academic support to student success. (see Table 7 below).

Table 7. Tutoring access impact on average Course Grade for Indigenous Students in 2025

Semester	Access Tutoring	Not Accessing Tutoring
Semester 1 2025	69.99	63.69
Semester 2 2025	70.19	65.91

The Ngarara Willim Centre provided a generalist tutor throughout the year that students could connect with for academic support each week. Drop-in sessions were available in person and online and assisted undergraduate and post-graduate students throughout the year.

In Semester 1, the Ngarara Willim Centre City Campus introduced weekly study nights to further support student engagement and connection. These three-hour evening sessions ran throughout both semesters and provided a flexible study environment. The students could choose how they studied, inviting their existing tutors, accessing a tutor for the first time, working collaboratively in groups, or studying independently. Participation steadily increased over the year, with students reporting consistent participation of course content, strengthened sense of community and peer accountability due to the sessions.

Table 8. Tutorial assistance provided in 2025

Level of study	Number of unique students assisted ²	Total number of tutorial sessions attended ³	Total hours of assistance ⁴	Expenditure ⁵ (\$)
Enabling	0	0	0	0
Undergraduate	12	395	641.99	63,975.86
Post-graduate	16	183	688.58	68,618.66
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	28	578	1330.57	\$132,594.52

The Ngarara Willim Centre continues to build on previous years through increased engagement in the ITAS tutoring program. In 2025, the program demonstrated significant growth in reach, supporting 28 unique students, an increase from 2024. While overall tutorial sessions and total hours were slightly redistributed, this reflects a broadening of access across academic levels.

Notably, post-graduate participation increased substantially in total hours of assistance. Post-graduate students now represent the majority of program participants, highlighting the program's expanding relevance and visibility across advanced coursework and research pathways.

RMIT Library

The Ngarara Willim Centre and RMIT Library have continued to build engagement and promotion of Library services available to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. The Library and the Centre connected monthly throughout the year to improve library services and support to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. Progressing work on improving resources and supports for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander HDR students, supporting the development of student study resources and supporting the Centre to include academic readiness into the Gama-dji Orientation Program.

The library prioritised the First-Place project, transforming library spaces to be more welcoming and inclusive for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. The project included consultations with key research staff, University Executive, members of the Indigenous Research Network, and the Indigenous HDR Student's Network.

Additionally, the library delivered sessions that brought RMIT staff, students and the Indigenous community together. The first session invited a First Nations illustration agency 'Solid Lines' to share more on their work in the creative space and the second session 'Untold Narrm', a collaboration with the School of Design and Leila Gurruwiwi discussed working in industry, the trickiness of studying as a creative practitioner, influences on their work and from Community, and the future for 'good allyship'.

The RMIT Library, Colleges and the Ngarara Willim Centre collaborated on the Great Book Swap event providing cheap books and resources to RMIT students and staff. The book swap raised funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) – a national charity that provides books, literacy

resources and publishing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

4. Completions (outcomes)

Indigenous student success rate increased from 83.95% in 2024 to 84.47% in 2025 (see Table 2.2). Indigenous student completions saw a strong increase in 2024, noting that we are unable to provide 2025 data on completions at this stage (see Table 3).

In 2025, the Ngarara Willim Centre delivered targeted, culturally safe careers support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students with a strong focus on creating real pathways into employment and further study. Across the year, the Centre strengthened student career readiness through practical support, direct employer engagement, and proactive graduate transition work, while also continuing to celebrate student achievements in culturally affirming ways.

A major highlight of the year was the delivery of the RMIT Indigenous Careers Fair. The event supported Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student engagement with employers and pathways and included a panel featuring past and present students sharing their experiences with employment and placements. Attendance included 23 students and community members and 25 industry and community partners. The event also contributed to tangible outcomes, with multiple people securing jobs following the Careers Fair and strong feedback received from both students and employers.

Across 2025, the Centre continued to support individual student career aspirations through tailored guidance and pathway support. This included ongoing student engagement to connect students with employment opportunities, build job-seeking confidence, and strengthen career planning. The Centre also continued graduate transition support, with a focus on assisting students as they moved from study into employment and/or further study and supporting students to stay connected to opportunities beyond graduation.

Overall, 2025 demonstrated strong impact across careers engagement and graduate outcomes. The employment rate for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates was 92.9%, higher than the domestic student average of 84.9% (2024). This result reflects the strength of culturally safe careers support, active employer engagement, and the Centre's ongoing focus on ensuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are connected to meaningful opportunities during and after study.

5. Regional and remote students

In 2025, 51% of all Indigenous scholarships awarded went to regional and remote students. We continue to support students transitioning to study through initiatives focused on building a sense of belonging within the university and community, whilst connecting students with the various support services offered at RMIT.

An important aspect in addressing the financial and accommodation stresses for students from regional and remote locations is through administering student scholarships. Students from regional

and remote locations are prioritised in our scholarship's scoring matrix, with all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students able to apply and receive a Study Support Scholarship and, if relocating to study, a Student Accommodation Scholarship. Purpose Built Student Accommodation Scholarships are preferred to cash-based scholarships as the student accommodation provides a fostering community environment with other residents close to the university.

In addition to student accommodation scholarships, RMIT also offered a range of scholarships to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander vocational and higher education students from regional and remote areas. These were predominantly to assist with study costs, tuition and overseas mobility activities. Specific scholarship information relating to students from regional and remote areas can be found in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9. Purpose Built Student Accommodation Scholarships & non-ISSP funded accommodation scholarships to regional/remote vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate by coursework students

Scholarship name	Number	RMIT contribution	Donor contribution
Cedar Pacific Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship @ UniLodge Royal Melbourne	19	\$135,597.00	\$205,047.00
RMIT Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship	2	\$6,000.00	\$0

Table 10. All scholarships to vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate by coursework regional/remote students (new and continuing students)

Scholarship Name	Number of recipients	2025 Total value
Aboriginal SEWB Scholarship	4	\$65,303.45
BAE First Nations Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
Bruce Henderson Architects Scholarship	1	\$10,000.00
Calleo Indigenous Scholarship	6	\$25,000.00
Carey Lyon Scholarship	1	\$5,568.00
Cedar Pacific UniLodge Royal Melbourne Scholarship	14	\$238,214.00
Gama-dji Grant	7	\$3,500.00
Gerard Driesen Scholarship VE	1	\$5,000.00
Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship	15	\$68,653.21
Indigenous Commonwealth Education Scholarship	27	\$207,352.00
Indigenous Empowerment Grant	4	\$4,000.00
Indigenous Resource Grant	3	\$3,000.00
Indigenous Student Success Grant	3	\$750.00
Marion Fletcher Textiles Schol	1	\$7,000.00
Ngarara Willim Graduate Award	2	\$14,000.00
Ngarara Willim Grant	1	\$2,000.00
Ngarara Willim Hardship Grant	1	\$596.11

Ngarara Willim Community Grant	3	\$3,000.00
Ngarara Willim Grant - Tuition	9	\$18,700.00
RMIT Equity Notebook Grant	4	\$4,000.00
RMIT Global Learning Grant	3	\$13,260.00
RMIT Indigenous Accommodation Scholarship	2	\$6,000.00
RMIT Indigenous Study Schol-VE	5	\$10,710.00
Grand Total	118	\$725,606.77

All eligible remote and regional students were offered an accommodation scholarship in 2025. Eight eligible remote and regional students received a purpose-built student accommodation scholarship offer in place of an Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship offer as was their preference. In addition, seventeen new eligible remote and regional applicants received Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship offers, however only five out of the seventeen recipients accepted the scholarship and commenced study at RMIT in 2025.

Table 11. ISSP Scholarship data for remote and regional students^x

	Education Costs		Accommodation		Reward		Total	
	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.	\$	No.
A. 2024 Payments	\$210,216.00	27	\$138,613.67	22			\$348,829.67	49
B. 2025 Offers ^{xi}	\$304,000.00	39	\$189,000.00	27			\$493,000.00	66
C. Percentage ^{xii} (C=B/A*100)							141.3%	
2025 Payments	\$207,352.00	27	\$68,653.21	15			\$276,005.21	42

6. Eligibility criteria

6.1. Indigenous Education Strategy

2025 saw 97 Indigenous students commencing in RMIT Higher Education programs throughout the year (see Table 1), which is slight increase to the 2024 number of commencing students. We also saw increases in the student success rate and retention rate, with the increase in retention rate from 66.13% (2023) to 78.89% (2024) particularly pleasing (see Table 2.1 and Table 2.2). The 2025 numbers for student completions are not available at this time.

2025 was the second year of RMIT's [Indigenous Student Success Strategy 2024-2025](#) (ISSS), focusing on implementation of the strategy's priority actions. With the strategy concluding at the end of 2025, evaluation was undertaken to understand its impact and areas to address in refreshing the strategy in the middle of 2026.

The evaluation highlighted a number of successes as well as challenges experienced over the life of the strategy. Strategy implementation successes included:

- A focus on providing students with personalised support through their time at RMIT
- A commitment to creating culturally inclusive spaces at RMIT campuses through the development of the Living Places Plan
- Increased collaboration by staff across RMIT to see Indigenous student success
- Scholarship uplift and financial support targeting retention and success
- New and innovative initiatives in Colleges that empower students to connect learning with community values and career aspirations.

In contrast, there were several areas that we will continue to address including:

- Simplifying accessibility to complex admission and application processes
- Enhancing our data systems to support decision making
- Addressing capacity constraints to priority initiatives
- Continuing to build staff Responsible Practice capability across the university.

Meanwhile, there continued to be a focus on the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges in curricula, graduate attributes and teaching practices. The Principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Learning and Teaching is a resource aligned to RMIT's Education Plan through value-driven aspirations for active engagement with global citizenship, diverse peoples and knowledges systems, and sustainability. It is designed for RMIT educators to support inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives, world views and lifeways as significant knowledge systems in learning and teaching.

The promotion of cultural capability continued throughout 2025 for both staff and students. Staff engaged with various learning opportunities including Cultural Awareness Training (delivered by the Koorie Heritage Trust), Wurundjeri Cultural Walks, and professional development modules including Cultural Safety at RMIT and Advancing Reconciliation. Students were able to grow their cultural capability through a series of online cultural learning modules and access to a wide variety of library resources to support cultural capability development.

6.2. Indigenous Workforce Strategy

RMIT University continues to advance its ongoing commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and workforce development through the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan 2024–2026](#). This year's progress reflects increased retention, strengthened cultural safety initiatives, enhanced leadership pathways, and improved local accountability across Colleges, Portfolios, and RMIT entities. Key achievements throughout 2025 included:

- A retention rate of 84.5% in Q4 2025, with an even stronger 89% retention rate in the first half of 2026. This continues to be a strong focus area, with ongoing implementation of targeted support programs through tailored recruitment, career development and leadership pathways.
- Growth in non-casual Indigenous FTE driven by new fellowship programs under the Research and Innovation portfolio. Indigenous staff now represent 1.07% of RMIT's non-casual workforce
- Ongoing progress toward the aspirational goal of 2% Indigenous workforce representation by 2026. This is outlined in Table 12. RMIT employs four senior academics in roles of Professor Digital Inclusion, Professor Nursing, Associate Professor Engineering (x2).
- Enhanced cultural leave provisions through the Enterprise Bargaining process, ensuring provisions reflect the cultural workload experienced by many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and help staff balance cultural and professional responsibilities. This initiative reinforces RMIT's commitment to a culturally safe and inclusive working environment.
- Strengthened leadership development through the new Emerging Leaders Training Program for First Peoples. The program, targeted at HEW 5–8 staff, supports leadership development, collaboration, and cultural capability—key to retaining and advancing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff across the institution.
- Recognition of excellence, including the awarding of the 2025 [Jillian Weaven Scholarship](#) to Kyle O'Brien, Bachelor Business, Major: Marketing.
- Continuing to embed local accountability across Colleges, Portfolios, and RMIT entities. Each now maintains a local Indigenous Employment Plan, reviewed annually through a continuous-improvement framework. Progress is reported annually to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Committee (ATSIEC), ensuring oversight and transparency across the university.

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate RMIT's commitment to building a culturally safe, accountable, and future-focused workplace that strengthens opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff across the university.

Table 12. Indigenous Staff – Enterprise Agreement Target*

Agreement	Target FTE (by 30 June 2027)	Target Workforce %	2025 End-of-Year FTE	Actual Workforce %	2024 End-of-Year FTE	Year-on-Year Change

Higher Education Enterprise Agreement	144	2%	50.3	1.01%	41.9	+8.4
Vocational Education Enterprise Agreement	8	2%	4.6	1.03%	4.6	0

*These figures reflect steady progress and the impact of strengthened recruitment and retention strategies across academic and professional roles.

6.3. Indigenous Governance Mechanism

RMIT reached a significant milestone in 2025 with the establishment of the University's first Indigenous Governance Committee (IGC). The role of the Committee is to assist, advise, and act under University Executive Committee delegation, especially in relation to RMIT's Knowledge with Action 2031 strategic plan, RMIT's Indigenous Strategic Commitments and other matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In addition, the IGC will formulate, define, and champion enterprise-wide Indigenous policy (including Responsible Practice) and the development and implementation of related messaging, processes, and support to embed within RMIT culture and community. The IGC will also receive reports from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Committee (ATSIEC) and take all necessary enabling action to remove impediments to achieving strategic goals.

IGC membership will consist of four representatives from community, including Traditional Owner Groups, and four representatives from RMIT's senior executive leadership, including the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Education, Research and Engagement, Professor Gary Thomas.

6.3.1. Statement by the Indigenous Governance Mechanism

The Indigenous Governance Committee (IGC) was established as a sub-committee of University Executive Committee (UEC).

Its purpose is to assist, advise, and act under UEC delegation, especially in relation to [Knowledge with Action\(KWA\)](#) adaptive roadmaps, Direction 3. Serving our communities, RMIT's Indigenous Strategic Commitments, and other matters relating to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The IGC met on Friday 17 April 2026 and received the written report and financial acquittal for the delivery of the Indigenous Student Success Programme (ISSP) 2025 as administered by the Ngarara Willim Centre (NWC). Ms Nicole Shanahan, Senior Manager Indigenous Education, provided a verbal report to the committee highlighting achievements of the ISSP.

The IGC noted that RMIT continues to provide programs aligned to the purposes and intentions of the Indigenous Student Success Program guidelines and recognised the efforts of NWC staff and whole of university progress against the first iteration of the RMIT Indigenous Student Success Strategy (ISSS). The IGC understands ISSS performance has been reported to Education Committee and on to Academic Board. An updated ISSS will be produced and delivered across the next three years.

The committee encouraged the university to identify internal and external good practice in the provision of an effective Indigenous Student experience as identified in the publicly available ISSP reports.

Professor Gary Thomas
Chair, Indigenous Governance Committee and
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Education, Research and Engagement
20 April 2026

¹ This information provides for the number of students and cost of the scholarships expended in 2025. 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 2025 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.

²Total number of unique students supported by tutorial assistance (if students have attended multiple tutorial sessions, still count them as 1 student).

³ 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).

⁴ Record only hours of instruction received by the students (do not include staff planning or organising time).

⁵ Include any costs associated with providing tutorial assistance, including staffing costs, materials, facilities etc.